

HOMOEOPATHY IN MENTAL DISORDERS

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HYSTERIA

Hysteria may be defined as a disorder in which purely mental forces produce some special physical or mental disturbances peculiarly adapted for the solving of some particular problem or for realising some particular wish of the patient's inner and emotional life. In one case it may offer escape from a situation which is physically dangerous, such as shell-shock, in another from one that is irksome.

Traumatic or compensation neuroses are of similar nature.

On seeing these cases, and getting an abundant history of strange, rare, and peculiar symptoms, it sometimes looks easy to prescribe. My experience of this type of case has been disappointing. There is a tenacious clinging to whatever acts as a buffer against reality. They do not really want to get well. In these cases it seems that one cannot always depend on the totality of symptoms present. Strange, rare, and peculiar symptoms lose their significance, as it is on such symptoms that a diagnosis is made.

Jahr, to take one of the older men who had much experience of this difficult sort of patient, says: "Whether a physician ought to delude himself with the hope of ever effecting a perfect cure of hysteria may seem unreasonable; all that he can expect to accomplish is to combat the existing phenomena with the best means at his command, namely, with medicines that correspond most specifically with the nervous dissonances."

Kent says, "The hysterical diathesis is one that is very singular and very difficult to understand."

Lachesis and Sepia have been most useful to me in a limited number of cases. I have found it helpful to look on hysteria as the end product of disease and while certain acute symptoms can be treated by Ignatia for example, or another remedy which fits the acute state, as Hahnemann advised, deeper antipsoric remedies are required to cure, and the whole past history of the patient leading up to this disease end product gives symptoms on which to prescribe.

A young woman came complaining of "nervous exhaustion," "irritability with her colleagues"—she was a ward sister—and "irritated by noise." She fainted in a warm bath, and on a few occasions had collapsed because of transient paralysis of both inferior extremities. She flushed up on the slightest provocation, had fits of violent trembling and paroxysmal tachycardia.

Her past history was that she lost both parents before she was old enough to remember them. At school she was called "the orphan," and began to develop a feeling of being different, became broody, oversensitive, and jealous of other children, who had parents. Other symptoms such as loqua-

city, better in herself during menses, etc., led to a prescription of Lachesis. I gave her a high potency, omitting to warn her that there might be an aggravation.

She had a terrible two weeks; all symptoms were worse; old symptoms returned. Physical symptoms began to improve first; later she became less irritable, could stand noise better, and was less afraid of people. Two months after getting Lachesis she had a week's complete freedom from all ailments, then there was a relapse of mental symptoms: sensitivity to noise, fear of people, and irritability returned. She very definitely wanted sympathy, so she got Pulsatilla. She had nine months of splendid health, such as she had not experienced for several years. Then, working in an ear, nose, and throat hospital, she developed an antral infection which was treated by drainage and lavage. While she did not have her old symptoms back, she became thoroughly run-down. Bacillinum was given, partly on present symptoms, partly because of her having had pneumonia twice, and having had a mastoidectomy performed in childhood, together with the possibility of a tubercular inheritance. Four months later she came complaining that she had been having migraine ever since the antral puncture. She had been taking at least one grain of Luminal daily.

The headache was left-sided and worse after sleep sometimes. Her nights were restless with frequent awakenings. Lachesis covered her symptoms; she was given Lachesis 30; she said it was impossible for her to stand the pain without resorting to Luminal, so with the understanding that Luminal was to be used if really required, she departed.

A month later she had used a total of two and a half grains of Luminal (during the first few days); the migraine having disappeared in the first week.

While interpretations of Hahnemann's *Chronic Diseases* vary considerably, there is little doubt that Hahnemann looked on all chronic disease as resting on a basis of infection—venereal or non-venereal.

Some regard abnormal bowel flora as the basis of psora, and there is evidence of their efficacy in nervous and mental diseases. Gaertner, *Dysentery* co., etc., have been successfully used.

Others look on the acute infections as underlying chronic ill health and regard them as an extension or sub-division of psora.

This is mentioned here, as hysteria is such a difficult disease to treat that one may at least consider the bowel nosodes, or the nosodes of acute infections, as something on which to fall back. Hering considered all epidemic fevers, also many acute contagious diseases, as psoric. In his opinion there was "no dividing line between psoric and non-psoric diseases." A woman who had suffered for eight years from hysterical convulsions was given various remedies such as *Cicuta* which covered present symptoms, without much effect. The fits dated from the loss of a daughter, which caused profound grief, and on questioning she admitted that her predominant emo-

tion at the time of her bereavement was that fate had dealt her a "bad deal." *Staphisagria 10m* was given with marked diminution in frequency and severity of her convulsive seizures. After a few months improvement ceased. On a history of having had measles badly, I gave her *Morbillinum 200*, one dose. There was a still further improvement which has been maintained for several months, although she is not yet completely cured.

Regarding traumatic neurosis, the efficiency of *Cicuta* or *Natrum sulph.* is well known.

Natrum sulph. has been the most frequently indicated in my experience of head injuries which *Arnica* does not seem to help, in cases seen some days after injury. It covers the deep depression, sensitivity to pain, aggravation in wet weather, frightful dreams, photophobia, and sudden attacks of mania, symptoms which are not infrequently found in such patients.

Obsessional neuroses are more easily treated than hysteria. For example, *Lueticum* often covers cases where there is an obsession to "wash the hands." Abnormal tidiness, with its *similimum* in *Arsenic* or *Nux*, is common experience. *Sepia* has helped cases where this is a subsidiary symptom.

Neurasthenia is estimated to account for 2 per cent of all cases of psychoneurotic illness. Contrasted with anxiety states, hysteria and obsessions, neurasthenia is associated with a low blood pressure, and increased fatigue. Patients complain of insomnia, headache, and lack of power to concentrate; mild confusional states may be present, and sometimes a sense of unreality. Naturally, as the last-mentioned symptom often indicates focal infection, a search for septic foci has to be made. *Medorrhinum* which has this sense of unreality may cover the case.

Neurasthenia not uncommonly follows in the wake of influenza, when *Gelsemium* or other drugs may be needed, according to symptoms. Where cases following influenza are difficult to work out, *Influenzinum 200*, one dose, has, in my experience, been very useful.

Visceroptotic types are the most difficult, but even in these, *Sepia*, for example, gives homoeopathic treatment an extended sphere of usefulness.

DISORDERS OF CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

These are less definite entities than psychoneurotic disorders. While the latter give most trouble to the patient, the former annoy friends and neighbours more than the victim himself.

It has been said that one of the most important psychological discoveries of the twentieth century is that these disorders of character and conduct are really disorders of the mind and as such come within the province of every medical man—an example of the approach of modern medicine to Homoeopathy.

At present, attention is focused on the ductless glands, and such disorders are frequently attributed to an imbalance of the endocrine secretions. Certain secretions can actually be shown to be in excess or lacking in quan-

tity, and it looks scientific to give the appropriate glands or extracts in some cases. Agreed that there are endocrine disturbances, we look on these as other physical disorders, and according to our philosophy, search for symptoms which reflect still deeper discordances in the vital force behind physical and mental processes.

Quoting from Kent's *Lectures on Homoeopathic Philosophy*, "Well then who is this sick man? The tissues could not become sick unless something prior to them had been deranged and so made them sick. What is there of this man that can be called the internal man? What is there that can be removed so that the whole that is physical may be left behind? We say that man dies, but he leaves his body behind. We dissect the body and find all of his organs. Everything that we know by the senses belongs to physical man, everything that we can feel with the fingers and see with the eyes he leaves behind. The real sick man is prior to the sick body and we must conclude that the sick man must be somewhere in that portion which is not left behind. That which is carried away is primary and that which is left behind is ultimate. We say that man feels, tastes, hears, he thinks and he lives, but these are only outward manifestations of thinking and living."

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"It is the sole duty of the physician to heal the sick. It is not his sole duty to heal the results of sickness, but the sickness itself. When the man himself has been restored to health, there will be restored harmony in the tissues and in the activities. Then the sole duty of the physician is to put in order the interior of economy, i.e., the will and understanding conjoined. Tissue changes are of the body and are the results of disease. They are not the disease. Hahnemann once said, "There are no diseases, but sick people," from which it is clear that Hahnemann understood that the diseases so called, e.g. Bright's disease, liver disease, etc., were but the grosser forms of disease results, viz. appearances of disease. There is first disorder of government, and this proceeds from within outward until we have pathological changes in the tissues. In the practice of medicine today (1900) the idea of government is not found, and the tissue changes only are taken into account."

Taken from another modern view point, disorders of character and conduct are looked on as being based on a sense of superiority or the converse sense of inferiority. Although other factors enter in, sensitiveness, touchiness, self-consciousness, bullying, bombast, conceit, and intolerance of others, can be explained in the main, on the superiority-inferiority theory. It will be readily seen that there is nothing which does not fit into Hahnemann's conception; and practical results substantiate his view that underlying it all is psora: infection in the patient, or inherited.

Another factor which seems to have a bearing on prognosis in treatment of these cases is stunted emotional development. A baby loves itself, later

affection is bestowed on one of the same sex; still later on the opposite sex.

Irritability and bad temper are indications of a persistence of self-importance from babyhood. Self-pity is also a manifestation of self-love. Alcoholism and homosexuality, which are frequently associated, may indicate definitely stunted emotional growth. In later life, homosexuals do not wish to change, although in early life help is often very welcome.

Taking some of the innumerable symptoms of this type of disorder in general, an inferiority sense often shows itself as haughtiness. In Kent's *Repertory*, there are thirty-seven drugs listed under "Mind—haughty," including *Lycopodium*, *Platinum*, *Sulphur*, *Vcratrum* in black type, and *Causticum*, *Hyoscyamus*, *Ipecacuanha*, *Lachesis*, *Palladium*, *Staphisagria*, *Stramonium* in second. In *Staphisagria*, the frequently verified symptom complex of feeling he or she has had a bad deal can be looked on in the light of modern psychology as a compensatory mechanism whereby a sense of inferiority is masked by concentration on this bad deal. It is not, however, necessary to know this in order to prescribe.

Irritability is another common symptom, and often in this group we find irritability with those of whom the patient is most fond. *Sepia* or *Phosphorus* often cure these cases.

The alcoholic may need *Sulphur*, *Nux*, *Arsenic* or *Lueticum* in potency, or *Quercus T.I.D.* in tincture, *Arsenicum iodatum*, *Asarum europaeum*, *Aurum*, *Calcarea arsenica*, *Capsicum*, *Crotalus horridus*, *Hepar sulph.*, *Kreosote*, *Lachesis*, *Ledum*, *Lycopodium*, *Medorrhinum*, *Muriatic acid*, *Opium*, *Phosphorus*, *Pulsatilla*, *Selenium*, *Sepia*, *Spigelia*, *Staphisagria*, *Sulphuric acid*, *Tuberculinum* may also be required.

No less than four nosodes are given in Kent's *Repertory* in first or second type.

In children, it is common experience that the obstinate, headstrong child, the "no" child who is a problem to parents, often responds to *Tuberculinum*.

"Love with one of her own sex" has *Calc. phos.*, *Lachesis*, *Natrum mur.*, *Phosphorus*, *Platinum*, *Sulphur*, from which to choose, according to individual symptoms. With other sexual maladjustments there are numerous remedies according to the case.

—*The Layman Speaks*, February 1978