

## BACK TO BACK

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You will be amused to know why I chose this subject. A very pseudo-homœopath from Flower Hospital, who shall be nameless, but who is a bone specialist, came to me and said, "You know, there is something in this Homœopathy, but I haven't the time to study it. I am just going out of business if somebody doesn't teach me how to cope with backaches. For some reason, doctors refer their backaches to me, because I am a bone specialist, and I am fed up with it."

So I kidded him and tried to get him to come to the homœopathic summer school, and he said, "My Lord, I am second in the department at the hospital and busy as can be. I have no time to go. Why don't you write me out an epitome of the symptoms calling for the best remedies for different kinds of backaches?"

I said, "Well, why don't you take out two weeks and come to medical school to me?"

We had a good laugh, and then I thought I hadn't given a title to Dr. Lipton, so I said, "All right, I will write a paper on backaches, and I will get a reprint from Allan Sutherland and send it to you, and you tell me how you get on doing it."

So this is really a paper for a novice in backache. I called it "Back To Back." I wanted to call it "Dosey-Do," but I thought nobody would understand, because "Dosey-Do," is where you turn your back to your partner and try to escape bumping, and this was what this doctor was trying to do with Homœopathy. That is why I called it "Back To Back."

If you are going to treat backache, you have got to know whether the backache is caused by fallen metatarsal arches; or some deep varicose vein trouble; or pure posture—or impure posture, that is—or whether it is caused by a slipped sacroiliac; or whether it is caused by a fibroid; or a

tipped womb ; or whether it is caused by kidney trouble ; or whether it is caused by referred pain from any of a number of possible conditions, such as kidney stones, gallstones, stomach cancer of the posterior wall, colon cancer, or tumor, or terrific mucous colitis, because colon pain refers definitely up higher, which is very bewildering sometimes ; or by heart pain, which often goes through the back and they have no pain in the front, and they come to you with a heck of a pain in the back, and if you are not smart, you will think it is something else ; or—and you will laugh now—backache from a leftover shingles several years ago, which they don't know it is.

And, of course, there is pleurisy, and pneumonic backaches, which usually are of a different type. They are usually so sharp that they can't be classed as backaches. They are violent pain, and you can probably think up many other possible differential diagnoses.

Of the actual types of backache, lumbago is possibly the commonest one, whatever that means. It may come from a wetting, or a strain, or a chilling, or over-exercise, but it is the thing that gets them here (indicating), and they go like this (illustrating). It makes old men of young ones !

Then there are the various sacroiliac backaches. There are backaches according to location, some of the most troublesome ones, of the nape of the neck with extension into the shoulders, which may or may not be due to displacement of the cervical vertebrae, or to sheer nerve tension at the back of the neck.

Then there are the dorsal backaches ; the intrascapular distresses ; the tight, burning intraneuro-subscapular.

Then we have the big muscle, the big latissimus dorsi and so on, the lumbar ones, the sacral ones, and, last but not least, the coccygeal pains.

Now, the lead remedies—if anybody asked me to make up a little kit, as this doctor probably will do, of the most frequently needed backache remedies, I should put in the

following, *ab sine qua non* : *Bryonia*, *Kali carb.*, *Natrum mur.*, *Nux Vomica*, *Rhus Tox.*, *Sepia*, and *Sulphur*. These seven will cover such a wide proportion of backaches, that it isn't funny.

In my secondary list I would put *Aesculus hippocastanum*—you remember in the old days they put coral around the baby's neck to keep it from coughing at night, and a bit of amber around to keep it from crouping, and you carried a horse chestnut in your pocket to prevent the piles. The farmers will tell you also that the horse chestnut is very good for what ails you in the back when you have been "spadin' too hard," and *Aesculus* is a wonderful remedy for sacro-iliac strain—which you may think is *Rhus* or *Sepia*, and it isn't—right-sided, or sacroiliac backache which is relieved by standing.

*Aesculus*, of course, also has a concomitant of piles. If you can find that, that points you to it.

Another remedy that would go in the subsidiary list is *Antimonium tartaricum*. You all know the story of the smallpoxes. What do they have? A backache with a capital B, and some of the worst backaches, particularly in acute diseases, are *Antimonium tartaricum*.

Then in your second degree you have to have *Calcarea phosphorica*. I have missed, in my haste, more back troubles, more sacroiliacs, more neuralgic and sciatics that should have been *Calcarea phosphorica*, and I didn't see it until the second prescription. So never forget *Calcarea phosphorica* in the nape of the neck and cervical regions, and the sacroiliac regions.

Also in acute things, the queen of backaches, *Eupatorium*. When grippe cases do not complain of muscular aches, do not complain primarily of headaches, but of backaches and eye aches, and you later find that they also have terrific thirst while chilling, and pains in the bones rather than the muscles, there is *Eupatorium* on a silver platter.

Here is one that will surprise you, in my supernumerary list, *Magnesia carb.* for some of these back things. That

is one of my pet remedies. You know the *Magnesia carb.* patient, the typical orphanage kid that nobody loves, who is really pitiful, weak, emaciated, restless, no place to hang its spiritual hat, and they have all sorts of back troubles relieved by motion. When you see back troubles relieved by motion, don't go leaping for the *Rhus* bottle. Look and see whether it may not be *Magnesia carb.*

Also, curiously enough, in the intrascapular backaches, *Phosphorous*. Sometimes when it is more a weakness, and the pains of weakness, if the other symptoms agree, particularly if there are leukorrhoeas or neuralgias, *Stannum*, where you can't hold yourself up. And never forget the backache of *Variolinum*, which comes under the same category as the backache of *Antimonium tartaricum*.

Now just a few things about our main big seven. You all know a *Bryonia lumbago* when you see one. They take to their bed. They can't move. They want pressure, something hard under the back, and preferably cold, and they are thirsty and grumpy, and worse at nine or at three by the clock.

The *Kali carb.* backaches are lower. They are sacral, and they often go with menstrual difficulties. They are the kind where the patient says, "My back is broken in two," and the pain goes down the back of the legs, with the typical *Kali carb.* symptoms, the whimsical, difficult, fussy, fat, chilly, rather ticklish patient in both sexes, ticklish both in the soles of the feet and in the disposition.

*Natrum mur.* is, of course, a great standby for backache. There they want pressure. They want to put a book behind them in the chair, a hard thing under them in the bed. They go around sitting in chairs with their hands back here (illustrating), and you all know the *Natrum mur.* characteristics that may well go with that.

*Nux vomica* has the backache of the big muscles, all up and down the back, the latissimus dorsi, and so on, usually from chilling; often, though, from overexertion followed by chilling, with the crankiness, the aggravation in the

morning, until they get limbered up, although motion does not help, but getting going in the morning helps. The relief from heat, the constipation, the impatience, the irritability, all come in here.

I had a beautiful case recently of a terrible lumbago in an insurance agent who just showed me such a picture of *Nux vomica* that it was unbelievable, and *Nux 10M* helped him handsomely and quickly over the lumbago he had had undoctored for about two months.

*Rhus tox.*, of course, you know, and don't forget that although *Rhus tox.* is left-sided, a right-sided sacroiliac will respond like mad to *Rhus tox.*

Also I once had a backache from falling off a horse. I went to an osteopath. No soap. I went to a chiropractor. No soap. I got a belt. No soap—and an awful lot of expense. Finally, I went to my beloved Dr. Stanton in New York, and he gave me *Rhus tox. 20M*. No soap. I was getting a little fed up, so at the summer school I said to Roberts, "What do you do when *Rhus tox.* is indicated and it doesn't help you?"

Old Dr. Roberts looked at me in his slow way and he said, "You change the potency."

So I said, "All right, Stanton gave me 20M. What do you give me?"

So he gave me the 200., and, having had a sacroiliac for ten weeks, after two hours I didn't have one again for about five years. That is very interesting. Your lovely high potency 20M, no, no, and a 200. of the same thing—quick! I have to tell stories against myself once in a while.

*Sepia* you all know—the dreadful backaches from visceroptosis with the bearing down, the washerwoman's backache, the ironer's backache, worse from using the arms, with symptoms of *Sepia*.

And our prize friend, *Sulphur*, who can't get out of a chair without pushing and standing and waiting. I think more backaches in my practice have been helped by *Sulphur* than by any other remedy, but those are perhaps the back-

aches which are pre-arthritis, where an x-ray of the back would show you a certain amount of osteo-arthritis of the spine. Of course, we all have it as we get older, but *Rhus* is not only for the creaky rusty thing, the creaky rusty hinge. When they can't get up out of the chair, and when they try to sit down and get within four inches and fall into the chair, think about *Sulphur*.

So much for back to back, for our poor, bemused non-homœopathic specialist.

#### DISCUSSION

DR. DONALD G. GLADISH (Glenview, Ill.): This is a very interesting subject. Backaches are with us frequently, whether we are bone specialists or not. I remember after I had been in practice about three years, I happened to check back to see what was the most common complaint, and it was backaches.

DR. HUBBARD: In your region, not in my region.

DR. GLADISH: General practice, men, women, and children. I missed what you recommended for slipped discs.

DR. HUBBARD: I didn't mention it. I am smart. I didn't mention it.

DR. SUTHERLAND: That is actually one of the causes of backache. You were listing causes.

DR. HUBBARD: There is no such thing as "slipped disc," or anything for curing it.

DR. BELLOKOSSY: There is an accident.

DR. VIRGINIA M. JOHNSON: The Palmers, of Davenport, say it is a slipping of the vertebrae, not the disc.

DR. ALLAN D. SUTHERLAND (Brattleboro, Vt.): May I speak to that? With all due respect to the Palmers, of Davenport, how would they explain an undeniable x-ray demonstration of slipped disc, complete with injection of an opaque substance? There is no question about there being a slipped disc, and I certainly would be unwilling to accept the Palmers' dictum on that.

DR. BENNO LIPTON (New Haven, Conn.): Isn't a "slipped disc" rather a broken disc?

DR. HARVEY FARRINGTON (Glenview, Ill.): It is not necessarily broken.

DR. SUTHERLAND: That is a sort of slang phrase that we have used. The technical name is not slipped disc. It is something entirely different.

DR. GLADISH: Herniated disc.

DR. SUTHERLAND: Herniation of the nucleus pulposus. It is a real entity, no question about it. We have to be careful how we make arbitrary remarks here, I think.

DR. GLADISH: I might say that it is interesting that in recent years the bone specialists and others who built up this matter of "slipped discs" as being a common cause of backache, are getting more conservative in the treatment. They don't recommend operations as they used to, unless it is a very bad condition. For a while, on the least pretext, they would go in and remove a disc without obtaining much benefit, but now they do it only if they are satisfied something else is there.

DR. SUTHERLAND: May I speak again? This is a very timely subject, and I am delighted that Dr. Hubbard could stay long enough to present it, because backaches are *bête noirs* to so many of us—and especially to me.

There is one symptom of *Nux vomica* which Dr. Hubbard did not mention. Perhaps it is not so important, but I have seen it confirmed many times, and that is the *Nux vomica* patient cannot turn over in bed without sitting up. His back hurts. He has to sit up and get twisted over and lie down again in the position he wants to be in. I have seen that so many times, it is almost pathognomonic, I would think.

DR. VIRGINIA M. JOHNSON (Chicago, Ill.): I should like to add three remedies for pain at the base of the neck: *Lachnantes*, *Indigo*, and *Usnea*.

DR. WILBUR K. BOND (Greens Fork, Ind.): Speaking of the potency question has brought to my mind a very interesting occurrence in my practice. I had a man who had a cancer at the back of his ear; it was a cauliflower-like excrescence continually cracking and bleeding. That was about two years ago, and I was sure the remedy was *Thuja*, but I had run that potency up to about 50m and started, I think, with 1m and ran it up to 50m, and it seemed to hold him for a time, and then it didn't do any more good. I couldn't get any more results out of the 50m.

So I saw the case in consultation with Dr. Holcombe, of Kokomo, Indiana, and he said to drop back to the 30th, and I did, and the case started getting much better then.

He said oftentimes we overshoot the mark. We get too high a potency, and then overshoot the case, and if we drop back to the lower ones, we will have better results. Dr. Hubbard's case certainly verified that point, too.

DR. FARRINGTON (Glenview, Ill.): We are right in saying this is a big subject; in fact, the back is rather an important part of the anatomy, and it holds us upright, and also it is very greatly abused, but my experience personally is that I have more pains in the neck than I do in the back. (Laughter) When I listen to a long paper at these meetings, for instance—(Laughter).

Now, *Aesculus* is worse from walking, from motion. *Rhus tox.* usually is relieved by motion, yet, don't get fooled. If the irritation, or whatever name we may give it, is in the soft part, the big muscles of the back, every little motion causes excruciating pain; however, when the patient is once on his feet, and he walks carefully, he is better.

There is *Kali carb.* for backache relieved by eating, and *Sepia* for backache which comes when the seamstress is at her work, when she is sewing.

And there is *Natrum carb.* for backache from playing the piano.

Here is one more thought, not exactly in connection with backache, but it is similar to carrying the buckeye in the pocket. I think it makes a difference where you carry it, which pocket, and there are some other home remedies. A man came to me once and he was complaining of backache and some other symptoms, and also, one thing which he did not mention, piles.

I prescribed for him, and whether my remedy helped him later, I don't remember, but when he took his wallet out to pay me, I saw a little white package. It slipped forward, and I said, "What is that? That doesn't look like money."

He said, "That is ordinary common alum, and I carry it in my hip pocket because it is curing them: piles." (*Laughter*).

DR. HUBBARD (*closing*): As usual, in my sketchy way, I always forget some of the things I meant to say.

Add to the nape of the neck remedies *Cimicifuga*. It is terrific for pains in the nape of the neck going down into the shoulders and, curiously, *Natrum mur.* also has that distress in the back of the neck. A case that had it for months was brilliantly helped by *Natrum mur.*

I forgot to mention *Bellis perennis* for what they call "railroad spine." The patient has been in an accident, was jolted and grabbed for something, stopping quickly, as in a near collision, and has pain all up and down the back. *Bellis perennis* will do a lot for that, and sometimes it helps these discs, where a disc has been pressed upon, the compression fractures.

Personally I have seen disc operations help. I had one sciatica patient, I sweated blood over, from *Colocynthis* to *Plumbum*, and finally had to end up having a disc removed that had been crushed, and there has been no trouble since. There was the mechanical obstacle to cure, but I will agree that I have prevented, with the homœopathic remedy, many sacroiliacs and spines from being fused. The fusion operation is a bad business and puts a patient out of commission for a very long time.

I didn't talk about coccygeal pain except to mention that *Zincum* is a great pet down there, and *Hypericum* sometimes, and I think that is all I had on my mind except to thank all of you, and I will try to educate our pseudo-homœopath, and I think I will make a bargain with him. I think when I write him this, I will say, "I did what you asked me. Here is an application to the American Institute." Give me one to send him, Allan.

DR. SUTHERLAND: That is a good idea.



You might add to the backache remedies, especially for the railroad injuries, one that is sure fire, I understand, and that is a good big compensation from the railroad company!

—*The Homœopathic Recorder, February, 1955.*

### CLINICAL RECORDS

Dr. I. K. MADHAVAN, L.R.C.H.P., L.H.M.S. (Cal.), ALATUR.

#### 1. *Tuberculinum in otalgia.*

A female patient aged 35, mother of four children was suffering from pain in the left ear. She applied some external oils of Ayurvedic origin for 3 or 4 days. She was my neighbour. Every night I could hear her shouting due to the severity of pain. Then I enquired about the matter and saw the patient. There was no marked swelling nor any boil visible. According to indication I gave her *Bell, Chamon, Hepar Sulph.* etc. without any improvement. She was getting weaker and the pain was intolerable. She was in a very helpless mood. Then I enquired about her previous history, which I ought to have done earlier. She had an attack of T.B. some 6 years back. Bearing this in mind, I gave her *Tuberculinum* 200, 1 dose, at 6 p.m. On the next day she came to my house saying that the last night she had slept well. There was no pain. The pain never returned afterwards. It was in the year 1941.

#### 2. *Carbo Vegetabilis in high temperature.*

In 1942 a boy, relation of mine aged 10 years had an attack of small-pox of confluent variety. At that time I was practising nearly 40 miles away from them. So he was treated by a local homœopathic doctor. He bathed on the 28th day of small-pox. Afterward his parents gave him all kinds of food. He was given meat diet also. He took smoked mutton continuously for a week. Due to that fever started and the doctor who treated was again called for.