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EDITORIAL

ON CASE REPORTING

Experience is the seat of all Knowledge. Knowledge grows when experiences are shared. For an experience to be valid it should fulfil two essential criteria namely, it should portray a true representation of the totality of the facts observed and that it should find expression in a language where words are employed with care and accuracy for translating the thought into action.

Case-reporting implies transmitting an experience which a physician has of his patient in practice. To describe what he has experienced it is necessary for him in the first place, to record his observations of the facts in the case as accurately and in as complete a manner as possible. For it is upon this data base that he draws his interpretations and conclusions of the problem presented to him by the patient. It also provides information how the physician's thought proceeded while analysing and synthesizing those observations in making a totality and in what manner the portrait he perceived of the patient is reflected in the therapeutic methods employed by him. It explains the rationale of his action and permits verification of the hypothesis on which the action is based. By comparing it with the general standard it enables to arrive at a judgment in respect of the validity of that experience before it is regarded as of scientific value.

It is fairly common for a valid experience to be misinterpreted due to communication blocks established as a result of wrong usage of words. In scientific literature this difficulty has been obviated to a certain extent by the import of terminology. A term normally denotes a concept made out of a body of facts and unless it is chosen with sufficient care it can result in a serious distortion of the experience in the process of communication. Thus, language plays a significant role in the healthy growth of knowledge.

Large number of cases are reported by the homoeopathic physicians for publication in THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS. A common observation is that the data supplied by the authors is restricted to the description of a few clinical symptoms that diagnoses the disease or a few characteristic symptoms of a drug that justifies its selection as a homoeopathic remedy. Neither independently nor conjointly the above data truly represents the Hahne-

mannian Totality. The whole concept of treatment of the chronic diseases in Homoeopathy is based on the appreciation of the theory of chronic miasms which explains both the predispositions as well as the expressions of the disease in the patient. Unless the miasmatic interpretations are correlated with the clinical diagnosis and the symptomatic expressions the totality remains incomplete. A totality not recognized leads to a chain of doubts. Without erecting a totality the susceptibility of the patient cannot be determined. Consequently the right potency cannot be selected. Whenever the author of the case report claims success with a certain potency the reader is not in a position to justify its selection. Similarly it is also necessary to record the change in the symptom-picture after the administration of a remedy and on every occasion the patient reports in order to judge the remedy response. It is upon this judgement that the remedy repetition schedule depends. Failure to indicate the remedy response also makes it difficult to recognize the change in phases and the indications for an acute or intercurrent prescription. Precisely these are the reasons why a case report sent for publication should be accompanied by adequate data so that the reader is able to interact with it effectively and experience the totality.

The problem of language assumes a new dimension in the homoeopathic field since the physicians are required to handle both terminologies namely, that belonging to medicine in general and to Homoeopathy in particular. How the concept of totality, which serves as the kingpin of homoeopathic prescribing is defined differently by the different homoeopaths is only a solitary example that illustrates the general rule.

Scientific reporting demands precision at all levels of expression. Contributors of case reports in THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS shall bear in mind the foregoing guidelines while sending their contributions in order that they are able to communicate with the readers effectively.

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