

Elements Of Homoeopathic Pharmacy



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Dr. P. SANKARAN, L. I. M., D. F. Hom. (Lond.)
Hon. Physician, Govt. Homoeopathic Hospital, Bombay.

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ELEMENTS OF HOMOEOPATHIC PHARMACY

Pharmacy is defined as that department of the medical art which consists in the collecting of drugs and the preparing, preserving, and dispensing of medicines.

Drugs are substances which have the power of altering the state of health of the living organism.

Since the homoeopathic prescriber depends almost entirely on the infinitesimal dose of the single drug, it is essential that the homoeopathic medicinal preparation must be absolutely accurate and dependable. So the pharmacist must be learned, skilled, honorable and trustworthy and must be fully aware of his responsibilities. The most painstaking care and accuracy must be exercised in every step of preparation, handling and dispensing.

COLLECTION

Sources : The sources of the medicines in homoeopathy are mainly the following :—

1. THE MINERAL KINGDOM: consisting of the various chemical elements and their compounds. (organic & inorganic) e. g. Arsenic, Sulphur, Calcium Carbonate, Petroleum.
2. THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM: consisting of the various plants, herbs and trees, their parts and their extracts. e.g. Pulsatilla, Thuja, Asafoetida. Lycopodium.
3. THE ANIMAL KINGDOM: comprising of the healthy secretions and tissues of various animals. e.g. Aranea Diadema, Moschus, Lachesis.
4. THE NOSODES: the products of disease of human beings, animals and plants. e.g. Psorinum, Lyssin, Secale Cornutum.
5. IMPONDERABILIA: Immaterial elements. e.g. X-Ray, Sun's rays (Sola), Moonlight (Luna), the magnet.

Hahnemann's discovery of the method of potentiation has revealed that every substance or element in the world,

whether falling into one of the above groups or not, has inherent medicinal virtues which can be released and developed by proper methods.*

The drugs collected should confirm absolutely to the descriptions and standards laid down in the standard homoeopathic pharmacopoeas.

Plants are collected as far as possible from their natural habitat just before or during full bloom. Generally, the whole plant is used for the medicine. Where fresh plants cannot be procured, the dried plants can be used.

PREPARATION

The actual art of preparing the medicines is termed Pharmacopraxy

The drugs are combined with some neutral substance in such a way that their medicinal energies are extracted and preserved in the neutral medium. These preparations are called Potencies. They are also called Attenuations. The method of preparing such potencies is called potentiation or dynamization.

For the purpose of preparing potencies, one of the following media is selected.

A. LIQUID MEDIA

1. Aqua Distillata or distilled water

2. Alcohol: used for preserving green plant extracts, making mother tinctures from dry herbs and for making higher dilutions (liquid potencies).

Strong alcohol (containing 14.9 % by volume of Ethyl alcohol) is mainly used for preparing tinctures.

Dispensing alcohol (obtained by adding 1 part of strong alcohol to 12.25 parts by volume or 10 parts by weight of aqua distillata) is used for making most of the dilutions because this is readily absorbed by cane sugar and milk sugar and is therefore suitable for medicating the sugar globules or powders.

*A similar view is held by traditional Indian medicine

“न किञ्चित् विद्यते द्रव्यं जगत्त्रयेवं अनौषधं । अ. ह. ” ।

Rectified spirit is practically the same as dispensing alcohol.

3. Glycerine is used as a preservative for certain animal products.

e.g. *Crotalus Horridus*, *Elaps*.

B. SOLID MEDIA

1. Sugar of milk (Lactose, *Sachcharum Lactis*): The hard and sharp crystals of this substance are said to make it an ideal medium for triturating drugs.

2. Cane sugar globules are found very convenient to medicate and use. These are available in various sizes from 5 to 100 the number representing the diameter of ten globules put together and measured in millimeters.

POTENCIES

The purpose of attenuation is to divide and sub-divide the medicinal substance progressively in order thereby to liberate and develop its latent power by degrees and to retain it in a suitable form. This is generally done by dilution (with alcohol) and succussion (shaking) in the case of soluble substances; and dilution (with sugar of milk) and trituration (rubbing) in the case of insoluble substances

Since the products of such attenuation seem to acquire more and more power they are called "Potencies".

In case of vegetable products and other soluble substances, this is done by expressing the juice of the plant and mixing it with alcohol. This mother tincture, designated, ϕ , the basis from which potencies are run up, represents one tenth of the drug strength. Further subdivision is done by diluting with alcohol and succussing (shaking it up). Such liquid potencies are called "Tinctures."

When the green plants are used, the amount of moisture in each plant is calculated and deducted. Only the quantity of the dry crude drug is taken as the starting point from whence to calculate its strength.

Mineral and other insoluble substances are similarly subdivided by mixing with sugar of milk and triturating (rubbing in a mortar). Such potencies are called "Triturations."

Homoeopathic potencies are thus prepared in the form of 1. Tinctures and 2. Triturations.

POTENTIATION

Potentialion is usually done in two scales.

- (1) The Centesimal; evolved by Dr. Hahnemann and
- (2) The Decimal: evolved by Dr. Hering.

In the last edition of the Organon however, Hahnemann has envisaged a new scale of potentiation, which is named the 50 millisimal scale.

TINCTURES (OR DILUTIONS)

CENTISIMAL SCALE

For the purpose of carrying out the preparation of potencies in liquid form, pour into a small phial two minims (i. e. two drops) of the mother tincture and add ninety eight minims of dilute alcohol. Cork the phial tightly, hold it in the right hand with a finger on the cork, raise the hand above the shoulder and shake the contents so that each shake terminates in a jerk against the palm of the left hand ; repeat this process ten times. This results in the first centesimal potency of the drug.

If you take one minim of the 1st potency and add ninety nine minims of dilute alcohol and shake as before ten times, the second potency is prepared. The further potencies are prepared in this same manner by repeating this procedure.

DECIMAL SCALE.

Preparation under decimal scale is made by taking 2 minims of mother tincture and eight minims of dilute alcohol and shaking the bottle ten times as described above, the 1x potency being thus obtained. The 2x potency is then prepared in the same manner by taking one minim of the 1x potency, adding nine minims of dilute alcohol and shaking as usual ten times.

TRITURATION.

CENTISIMAL SCALE.

To one grain of the substance is added thirty three grains of milk sugar and this mixture is rubbed vigorously in a

mortar for 6-7 minutes, then it is scraped for 3-4 minutes again triturated for 6-7 minutes and scraped for 3-4 minutes.

This process is repeated thrice so that the first centesimal potency results in an hour by the addition of ninety nine grains milk sugar, in three instalments of thirty three grains each time, to one grain of the drug.

DECIMAL SCALE:

During Hahnemann's life time, another scale of drug attenuation was introduced by his staunch follower Dr. Constantine Hering. According to this scale the first potency should contain 1/10th part of the drug substance, the second potency 1/10th part of the first potency and so on.

For preparing triturations under the decimal scale the same method as in the centesimal will be applied except that here ten grains by weight of the crude substance is triturated with thirty grains of sugar of milk each time and the process repeated thrice as described above, so that in all ninety grains of milk sugar is added to the ten grains of the drug and triturated.

Even minerals and other insoluble drugs when triturated up to the 6x potency become soluble in a liquid medium so that further potentiation can be continued in an alcohol medium.

Attenuations prepared under the centesimal scale are marked by using simple numericals or by the numerical followed by the letter C, e.g. Sulph: 200 or Sulph: 200C. Potencies under the decimal scale are marked by affixing an x after the numerical. e.g. Sulph: 200x.

Thus in the Decimal Scale we have potencies such as 1x, 2x, 3x etc. made up as follows:—

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1x — 1 part of dry substance and 9 parts of diluent:
representing | Drug strength — 1/10 |
| 2x — 1 part of the 1x and 9 parts of diluent:
representing | Drug strength—1/100 |
| 3x — 1 part of the 2x and 9 parts of diluent:
representing | Drug strength—1/1000
and so on |

In the centesimal scale, we have

1 or 1C: one part of the drug substance to 99 of diluent:
representing Drug strength—1/100

2 or 2C: one part of 1C to 99 of diluent:
representing Drug strength—1/10000
and so on.

It can be seen that the 1C corresponds to the 2x, the 2C to the 4x and so on.

THE 50 MILLISIMAL POTENCIES

Hahnemann has envisaged another scale of potencies in which the drug is diluted with 500,00 parts of diluent and potentised. The potencies thus made are designated as 50 millisimal potencies and the strength of the potency is marked by roman numbers as for eg. Aconite: I, Aconite: II, Aconite: VI and so on. These potencies have not been used extensively so far.*

MEDICINES FOR EXTERNAL USE

OINTMENTS:—

Ointments are usually prepared by mixing the mother-tincture of the required drug with any simple base such as prepared lard, vaseline etc. The proportion of drug content may vary from 1 in 10 to 1 in 40.

PRESERVATION

Homoeopathic medicines should be stored in rooms which are neither too hot nor too cold, away from sunlight, dust, smoke and strong odours. The phials should not be coloured. Phials and corks should be washed and boiled and then washed again in distilled water and dried before using.

Phials used for keeping one drug should never be used for any other drug nor for the same drug in any other potency. The same rule applies to corks also.

Never use glasses for measuring, keeping, dispensing or administering potentised drugs because they become contaminated with the potency energy which is very difficult to destroy.

*In India they are manufactured by the Hahnemann Publishing Co., Calcutta-12. This firm marks the potencies as 0/1, 0/2, 0/6 and so on.

Two phials containing different potencies or remedies should never be opened at the same time in close proximity. It is always safe to recork one phial and put it away before opening another for fear that the corks may be interchanged.

When opening a cork the part of it that goes inside the phial should never be allowed to come into contact with the hand or table or any other substance because these may become contaminated with the drug energy. When the cork is kept on the table, it should always rest on its broad base. Always mark the name of the drug and potency clearly on the cork, besides labelling the phial correctly, as soon as any medicine is prepared.

STERILISATION:

If by chance any material or container has come into contact with homoeopathic potentised medicine and has thus become contaminated with the drug energy, then such potency energy is never neutralised, unless the material is sterilised by exposure to dry heat at 160° C for one hour.

DISPENSING

The practitioner can usually obtain his potencies from the homoeopathic pharmacies both in liquid form (alcoholic dilution) and in solid form (globules, powder and tablets). They can be then dispensed in both forms. It need not be emphasised that the pharmacy must be a most reliable one particularly as it is very difficult to identify or analyse the drug and its potency.

The liquid potencies can be used to medicate globules by adding 5 to 6 drops to a dram of cane sugar globules in a phial and mixing it very well after corking. The excess of liquid, if any, is drained. Small globules, say size No. 20 or 30 are found very convenient.

Both the liquid and solid potencies keep well for several years if kept well protected as directed.

Dispensing in distilled water:-

Pour the requisite number of drops or pills into a clean new bottle, add necessary amount of distilled water and divide into doses. If distilled water is not available, use filtered, boiled and cooled water.

These bottles and corks should never be used again for another drug or another potency of the same drug.

Other ways of dispensing:-

- 1) Put one drop of the dilution on a little sugar of milk, say 5 grains. This forms one dose.
- 2) A few cane sugar pills medicated as directed above can be added to a little of sugar of milk say 5 grains and crushed so as to make a uniform powder. This forms one dose.

The number of drops or the number of pills of the medicine makes little difference. Given at a time, one drop or one pill will have the same effect as many drops or many pills.

The powders should be packed in clean new papers, preferably in cellophane or tissue paper.

Where two different sets of powders are given, they should be dispensed in separate envelopes.

Medicines, dispensed in whatever form, should always be neatly labelled, the name of the patient and the full directions for use being written on the label.

ADMINISTRATION

The subject dealing with the route of administration of medicines is termed Pharmaconomy

Hahnemann has laid down that homoeopathic medicines may be administered in any of the following ways.

i) By oral route. ii) By inhalation iii) By application to the skin. For many years he was administering medicines mainly by mouth. But in his last years, he favoured the inhalatory route.

Administration by mouth seems to be most convenient and effective. Homoeopathic potentised medicines seem to require no digestion but seem to be absorbed directly from the mouth and then act through the central nervous system. If the medicine is dropped below the tongue (sub-lingual), even the possibility of a coated tongue interfering with the absorption and action of the medicine will be avoided.

In the writer's experience, medicines appear to act as effectively when administered by inhalation, as for e.g. when a phial of medicine is opened and the patient is allowed to breathe in from it.

The medicines seem to be effective whether administered as pills or powders or in the form of watery solutions. Hahnemann, however, taught in his last years that the medicines should be invariably administered in water.

During recent years, homoeopathic potencies have been introduced in the form of injectables. Since the medicines given orally seem to act effectively and promptly, the merit of the injectables is not clear. Further no large scale studies have been published comparing the relative effects of the injectable and the oral potencies. So the value of these injectables is yet to be assessed.



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