

Homeopathy: It's All in the Details

By Forrest Beck, N.D.

When I'm asked to explain what homeopathy is, it can be both an exciting and difficult challenge. It is one of the more elusive systems of medicine and we do not yet know exactly how it works. This fact alone makes it impossible for some to accept as a valid therapy, until someone experiences acute pain resolved or sees a loved one achieve greater health after years of illness. Therefore, allow me to begin using an example from my practice that will serve to illustrate why exactly I do what I do.

My wife and I are curled up on the couch watching a movie on a Saturday night, when the phone rings. I answer and on the other end hear a very weak voice coming from one of my long-standing patients. *Molly suffers from a number of conditions and on occasion has extremely painful periods. This is the case tonight. She explains, "My period started yesterday. I woke up at 9 AM this morning with cramps which came on very quickly. The pain radiates from my lower abdomen down the front of both legs and stops at my knees. I feel like I am being stabbed in my pelvic region." Now Molly is a veteran at explaining her symptoms, which helps me immensely. This is a process that comes naturally to some, while others find it more difficult to explain. She knows that the more detail she can give me, the easier it is to select a medicine that will help her. Again, returning to Molly, "The cramping and stabbing pain are both worse any time I move, feel a draft of air, and are slightly relieved by lying on my abdomen. I am also chillier than normal, nauseous, and thirsty for cold drinks. I feel like I want to scream or cry. I also have cramping in the soles of my feet." At this point she gave me additional detail regarding the period itself, which I will spare the reader, but helped lead me to the correct medicine in her case.

Some female readers may be reading the case above and think, "This sounds sort of like the symptoms I get with my period." While others may not be able to relate to most of the

symptoms detailed previously. And this is the exact point I am trying to raise. Each person suffers differently even though he or she may fall into a diagnostic category of painful menses, psoriasis, etc. Therefore, the homeopathic medicine must be matched according to these individual symptoms.

We have hit upon the most important tenet of homeopathy, individualizing disease and therefore the selection of the medicine. Because irritability is common for women to experience when they get their periods, it is a less important symptom in determining the curative medicine. A more strange or 'characteristic' symptom would be the woman who absolutely must have someone with her in the same room holding her hand when the cramping pain comes on. This may be because she wants someone to rub her back, or she is fearful, or anxious, etc.

If someone comes into my office and says my head hurts but cannot convey the type of pain, what makes it better, worse, and other descriptive information, then chances are homeopathy will not be utilized. Many different homeopathic medicines can be used for a person with headaches, painful periods, multiple sclerosis, etc. A doctor's job is not so different from Sherlock Holmes. I need to uncover as many clues as possible into each person's illness or diagnosis. For Sherlock Holmes, just because it was another murder case, did not mean he wouldn't investigate it taking into account the individual clues given. Similarly, just because as physicians we can arrive at a diagnosis of cluster migraines or dysmenorrhea (painful periods), does not mean the work stops there. In order to use homeopathy I need to figure out what separates one migraine sufferer from the next. Often this task is simple, as in the above case, while in other cases it is more complex and difficult. There is never a dull moment, however!

Hopefully, this gives the reader a brief glimpse at what it is I do and why. The results are many times miraculous, sometimes more gradually achieved, and on occasion I am unable to help the person. Perhaps I failed to prescribe the correct medicine or maybe the patient simply could not accurately describe his symptoms.

Sometimes it is evident and sometimes it is not. On a final note, the above patient received a very small amount of medicine called *Calcarea phosphorica*, which she had in her home kit. She took 2 pellets as needed and after the second dose had absolutely no more pain anywhere in her body. She was still a little fatigued though. All this without any Tylenol, Motrin, or sedatives!

*The patient's name has been changed to protect the identity of the individual. Consent was also given by the same individual to use her case for teaching purposes.