

Donald Foubister

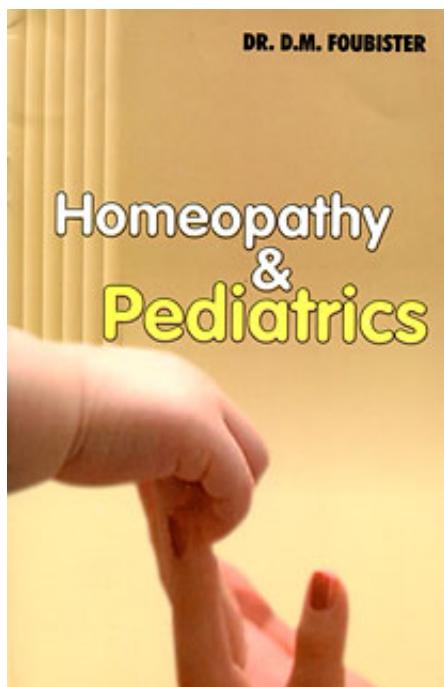
Homeopathy & Pediatrics

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von Donald Foubister

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HOMŒOPATHY AND PÆDIATRICS

*Paper read at the British Homœopathic Congress,
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by DR. D. M.
FOUBISTER

THERE are many ways in which homœopathy can be of service A in the treatment of children; the subject is a very large one and it is possible only to touch on some aspects of it. An understanding of the place of homœopathy in paediatrics as in other branches of medicine, can best be achieved by an appreciation of its meaning. The enquirer must free himself from preconceived ideas and detach himself from accustomed trends of thought. Otherwise, theoretical objections usually prevent the ultimate test of any method of therapy—to try it out and see if it works. The majority of doctors who practice homœopathy were led to it by some chance personal experience. Although it is not necessary to practice homœopathy using small doses of drugs, the use of drugs in potency is so integral a part of homœopathic practice, that it is advisable to review the steps which led Hahnemann to advocate the use of potentized remedies. Such ^remedies do not act by suggestion nor do they simply appear to achieve success by protecting the patient against treatment which, in Hahnemann's day, might have been worse than the disease.

The Discovery of Homeopathy

It has been believed for over two thousand years that like remedies could cure disease, that is to say, that *Belladonna* which produces poisoning symptoms closely similar to an attack of scarlet fever, could cure that illness. Century after century such treatment had its advocates, but it was not always successful. In 1790, Hahnemann tested out on himself the action of Cinchona bark (Crude Quinine) to ascertain its pure effects. He developed symptoms closely resembling a paroxysm of malaria. Here was a remedy which was capable of producing in health a clinical picture identical to the disease for which it was almost a specific remedy.

After many other experiments on himself and friends with Cinchona bark and other drugs, Hahnemann confirmed that there was a relationship between the therapeutic application of a drug and its effect in health and that by testing or proving drugs on healthy human beings, this could be used as a reliable guide to their effect in disease.⁽¹⁾ Hahnemann did more than merely give confirmation to an ancient belief which was only partly true, he discovered why like remedies sometimes worked and at other times failed. Perhaps the best way to explain this is to take primary pneumonia and consider the matching of a like remedy. There are always two groups of symptoms in pneumonia, firstly, those such as cough, pain in the chest, dyspnoea and cyanosis, which can be explained by the presence of an inflamed mass of lung tissue; secondly, there is a group of symptoms which are largely disregarded outside of homoeopathic practice, as they are of little or no importance when chemotherapy is used. The second group of symptoms varies from patient to patient, although there is a tendency to follow a limited number of patterns. One child for example is irritable, thirsty and likes to be left undisturbed, another likes the nurse to hold her hand, wants cold milk to drink and is afraid of the dark and of being left alone. These symptoms have appeared since the onset of the pneumonia and disappear when the patient is recovering, yet they are not the direct result of the pneumonic process. It is reasonable to suppose that these symptoms represent in some way, just as fever does, the patient's response, the attempt to get well. It is *these* symptoms which are matched in homoeopathic prescribing by a drug which could call forth a similar reaction in health. In other words the pattern of response is observed and an antigenic stimulus given, specific to the individual. *Bryonia* is the homoeopathic prescription for the first case and *Phosphorus* for the second. If the disease were measles or typhoid fever and these responses were observed, the same remedies would be given in homoeopathic practice. *Belladonna* is the correct homoeopathic treatment for scarlet fever when there is a close similarity between the individual clinical picture and *Belladonna* effects. It is not the remedy if the patient exhibits a different clinical picture. *Sulphur* is more frequently indicated today. The prescription, however, is based on the individual clinical picture and will only be successful when it covers the individual expression of the disease.

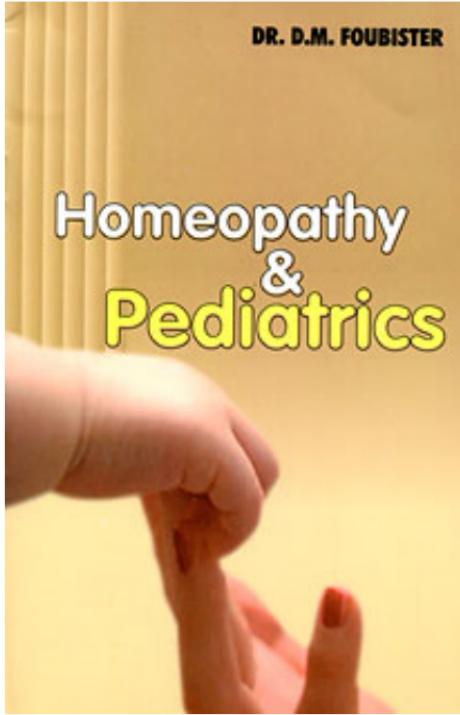
The "Homoeopathic Dose"

Hahnemann noted that sometimes, especially in chronic disease, the administration of the like remedy was followed by a sharp

aggravation of the illness before amelioration began. He made experiments to determine the optimal dose which would influence the patient beneficially without causing an aggravation.TM He prepared his remedies by succussion in order to ensure an even distribution of the drug in the diluting medium, and to his surprise found that the remedies had an enhanced effect when given in minute quantities prepared in that way. It must be clearly understood that this only applies to remedies chosen for the patient as a whole, in the way just described. This does not mean that drugs used for their chemical, physiological or physical effects, as used in the ordinary way, are given in inadequate doses. When a patient is treated by chemotherapy for instance, the usual doses must be given. It is difficult to understand the real meaning of the often ridiculed "homoeopathic dose" especially for the medically trained mind because the use of drugs to influence the patient as a whole is foreign to modern medical thought and the amazing effect of correctly chosen drugs for this purpose in suitable cases has to be seen or experienced to be believed. Homoeopathy does not imply the use of small or infinitesimal doses of drugs for purposes which require material doses, such as, for example, the maintenance of sufficient concentration of a drug in the tissues to kill bacteria. Homoeopathic remedies must act in some way as a stimulus to which the patient is sensitive only when the remedy is accurately chosen. The lower animals respond to drugs in potency even better than human beings. Thousands of puppies, for instance, have been protected against distemper by the oral administration of *Distemperinum* 200 (a potentized distemper vaccine). Many thousands of animals are treated annually by homoeopathy through the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals and in private veterinary practice. Recently, Dr. Boyd of Glasgow has demonstrated in the laboratory, biological effects of *Strophanthus* in what amounts to the 30th centesimal potency^{3*}

Homoeopathy and Chemotherapy

Homoeopathic treatment helps the patient to overcome infection by raising resistance; chemotherapy by damaging the pathogenic micro-organism. Both therapeutic measures can be given together, but it is better to avoid the disadvantages of chemotherapy immediate and remote if this can be done. By the raising of resistance, complications and sequelae are minimal. One of the advantages of homoeopathic treatment in dealing with infections is that, the nature of the infection is, generally speaking, of no importance, virus diseases yield as readily as bacterial diseases.



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