

The use of isopathy and homeopathy in infectious disease

The involvement of isopathic preparations in managing infectious diseases was raised during the 2002 foot and mouth and anthrax outbreaks and has come to the fore once again with the issues raised by the current COVID-19 pandemic.



Immunisation issues

Some remedies are considered to be isopathic, but are included in one or more *Materia Medica*s; for example, *Medorrhinum*, *Psorinum* and the *Bowel nosodes*. They are often used by practitioners to treat patients according to homeopathic principles. *Allergodes* (grass pollens, cat, and dog dander etc) are isopathic remedies that have been used successfully at the Glasgow Centre for Integrative Care to treat allergic responses, both alone and with the appropriate constitutional remedy. However, the use of nosodes, prepared from pathological source material, *sarcodes*, produced from bacterial cultures, or *tautodes*, prepared from allopathic vaccines and drugs – in the prophylaxis and treatment of infectious and vector borne diseases, continues to be controversial.

According to the Office of National Statistics, the target for vaccination against COVID-19 is 94% of the adult population, but with an estimated one in six adults refusing the jab due to misinformation or personal beliefs, it would seem that the NHS faces a difficult task. A number of people who are not taking up the offer of immunisation for personal reasons, ongoing medical conditions, or in pregnancy, are placing their faith in homeopathy, perceiving it to be a safer option. Guidance offered by the Faculty, SoH and WHO on this action is very clear:

- The Faculty of Homeopathy recommends that when there is no medical contraindication, immunisation should be carried out according to the current protocol using approved vaccines.
- The Society of Homeopaths (SoH) has issued a position statement saying homeopaths should not give advice

on vaccination and must direct clients to a GP.

- The World Health Organisation has said that homeopathy should not be used to manage serious diseases such as HIV and malaria.

The issue of collective responsibility has fuelled discussion about mass immunisation and caring for the community as well as for individuals.

Symptomatic treatment and COVID-19

According to a report in the *Sunday Times* on 21st March, Middlesex University is cutting its ties with the UK's biggest provider of homeopathy training after it 'peddled' vaccine misinformation and encouraged the use of potions made with phlegm to protect against and treat COVID-19. The Bloomsbury-based Centre for Homeopathic Education (CHE) has been criticised for its 'actively anti-scientific teaching'. NHS England has repeatedly warned that homeopathic remedies for COVID-19 are ineffective and that taking them leaves patients at risk.

Despite these concerns, there is some circumstantial evidence that several homeopathic remedies have keynotes that might be expected to fit well with the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide relief. These include individual remedies or even combination remedies such as *Aconite*, *Gelsemium* and *Eupatorium* (AGE). My good friend, Francis Treuherz, a SoH Director, became infected with the virus a year ago. He was prescribed higher potencies of *Aconite*, *Camphor*, *Phosphorus* and finally *Carbo veg* by a colleague and thankfully FT made a good recovery in about two weeks. *Camphor* was recommended by Hahnemann together with hygiene and isolation measures, during the European cholera epidemic in 1831. John Saxton in his

book *Hahnemann's Legacy in Modern Homeopathic Practice*¹ describes the historical use of homeopathic remedies in other epidemics.

In an interview with Gill Graham, Dr Robbert van Haselen (See page 8-10) highlights the need for high quality case reports to support the use of homeopathy in treating COVID-19 symptoms. However, there is, as yet no firm evidence that any resolution of local symptoms will be associated with a significant reduction in the ability to transmit existing or variant strains of an infectious disease, and a robust testing regime should be implemented following treatment. It is to be hoped that the twice weekly COVID-19 testing programme for England and Scotland announced recently will be adopted by the other countries of the UK, although there has been opposition expressed in the media to the scheme. There has been some evidence of a 'reverse zoonotic' transfer of COVID-19 from humans to domestic and zoo animals,² so our veterinary colleagues need to be vigilant too.

Given the increasing frequency of pandemics, a majority of which are of zoonotic origin, this must be the time for some serious integrated research to facilitate informed debate as to whether isopathy and homeopathy can have a wider role in the management of infectious disease.

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References

1. Saxton J. *Hahnemann's Legacy in Modern Homeopathic Practice*. Glasgow: Saltire Books, 2018.
2. Williams E, Carier A, Rendle J, Ward S. Impacts of COVID-19 on Animals in Zoos: A Longitudinal Multi-Species Analysis. *J Zool Bot Gard* 2021;2(2): 130-145. Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/jzbg2020010>