

April 2011 is Homeopathy Awareness Month
Homeopathy for Musculoskeletal Health; Freedom from Mobility Restrictions



Pulling the Plug on Pain

Stephen Malthouse, MD

Pain has a purpose. It's part of the body's inflammatory response - telling us that something needs fixing. Its message cannot be ignored or masked with painkillers. The underlying cause needs to be addressed. Homeopathy may offer an alternative when conventional medicines fail to relieve.

For homeopathic medicine to be effective, we need to understand that the perception of pain is very individualized - it can be burning, cutting, stitching, stabbing, electric, drawing, bursting, or pounding. It can be sharp like a knife, sharp like a needle, or sharp like a nail. The distinctive qualities of pain, when combined with knowledge of the general characteristics of the person who has the pain, will allow us to select the curative homeopathic remedy.

Acute pain gets better on its own as inflammation improves under the body's recuperative powers. Homeopathic remedies can speed recovery and the following: *Arnica* for bruising, *Hypericum* for nerve injury, *Apis* for insect stings, and *Ledum* for puncture wounds are useful for everyday acute situations and can be purchased over the counter. They make things better faster.

Chronic pain (or recurrent pain such as migraine) is different. This type of pain is a reflection of the body's ineffectual attempt to get better. The pain symptom is filtered through our unique genetic makeup, which explains why pain can be experienced in so many different ways, despite the same medical diagnosis. Some migraines are throbbing, others pressure-like, and yet others have piercing pain. Some are on the right side, while others are on the left; some are triggered by light and others are triggered by menstruation or pregnancy. How do you deal with the fact that one size does not fit all?

Here's an illustration from my own medical practice. A middle-aged male patient presented burning pain with numbness in both feet and lower legs for three years. Medical testing was normal and a diagnosis of "peripheral neuropathy" was made. Painkillers did not relieve the pain; maximum doses of nerve drugs (Tegretol, Neurontin) only lessened the pain by 50 per cent. The symptoms were slowly worsening as other parts of the body began to have numbness and swelling, and drug side-effects were beginning to appear. Conventionally, nothing more could be done.

An interview of this patient about his burning leg pain determined that it worsened in a hot bath. The patient had blonde hair and blue eyes, a friendly personality, felt slightly chilly, had difficulty perspiring, and had an aversion to collars. He had many fillings in his teeth and a history of boils and tooth abscesses. He desired milk products, sweets, and eggs (but not the yolks, which he found disgusting). He also had an aversion to oysters.

A homeopathic analysis of all this data pointed to the homeopathic pain remedy *Calcarea sulphuricum*. Prescribed in weekly doses, it brought about almost immediate improvement. The patient was able to reduce and eventually stop all pain medication.

Careful observation of all the symptoms the person exhibits - mental, emotional, and physical - allows homeopathy to treat not only the pain with all its distinct characteristics, but the person in whom it occurs.

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