

Homoeopathic Posology: The Doctrine of Doses

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ABSTRACT- The difficulty in making correct prescription doesn't end with the selection of similar remedy only, we do need to find the similar dose also corresponding to the plane in which the patient is affected. Even if we can choose the correct similimum the wrong dose will only bring us failure. **KEY WORDS-** posology, law of dosage, potency, quantity, repetition of dose, selection of potency.

I. INTRODUCTION

"If the supposed seeker after truth is not willing to seek truth where it is to be found, namely in experience, then he may leave it undiscovered; he cannot find it in the multiplication tables."

- S. Hahnemann¹

- Even before the foundation of homoeopathy, Hahnemann left his practice for fear of injuring anybody by his method of treatment as in those days medicine were given in strong doses as to easily change life into death, producing new maladies, chronic disease even more dangerous than the original disease.¹

- The three essential elements of the system are the **PRINCIPLE, THE REMEDY AND THE DOSE**; and the three are of equal importance.²

- The management of the remedy in regard to potency and dosage is almost as important as the selection of the remedy itself.²

- § 26

*"A weaker dynamic affection is permanently extinguished in the living organism by a stronger one, if the latter (whilst differing in kind) is very similar to the former in its manifestations."*³ By a more powerful and intense means having qualities more internal more higher, the more internal the more intense and higher, higher in the sense of subtleness and fineness.⁴

- § 275

"The suitability of a medicine for any given case of disease does not depend on its accurate homoeopathic selection alone, but likewise on the proper size, or rather smallness, of the dose. If we

give too strong a dose of a medicine which may have been even quite homoeopathically chosen for the morbid state before us, it must, notwithstanding the inherent beneficial character of its nature, prove injurious by its mere magnitude, and by the unnecessary, too strong impression which, by virtue of its homoeopathic similarity of action, it makes upon the vital force which it attacks and, through the vital force, upon those parts of the organism which are the most sensitive, and are already most affected by the natural disease."³

The concept of potency was so confusing and controversial in early days of homoeopathy and even now that the profession was divided into two groups. It came to be regarded as a kind of "**Gordian Knot**". Hahnemann himself at one time, almost in despair of ever being able to bring his followers to an agreement on the subject, **cut the knot by proposing to treat all cases with the thirtieth potency.** The selection of the dose is often quite as important as the selection of the remedy.²

A well selected remedy may fail if the dose is not proper.²

POSOLOGY²

The science or doctrine of dosage.

Derived from the Greek word "**posos**" which means **how much**

TYPE OF DOSE²

1. **PHYSIOLOGICAL DOSE-** A physiological dose means a dose of a drug, empirically selected, of sufficient quantity and strength to produce a definite, predetermined effect or group of symptoms.

2. **PATHOGENETIC DOSE-**The "suffering" of the organism produced by the drug is expressed in symptoms, which are the language of disease. Pathogenetic doses may be given to a healthy person for drug provings.

3. **THERAPEUTIC DOSE-**By means of the similar remedy in the minimum dose it is possible to **TREAT** in a direct manner without producing symptoms. The homoeopathic cure is obtained

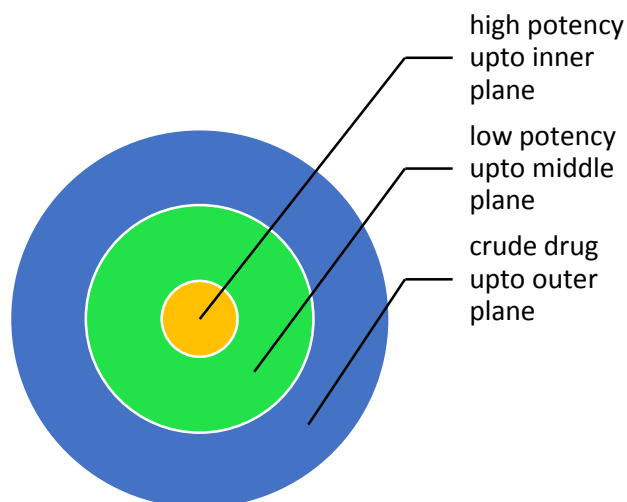
without suffering, without the production of any drug symptoms, in a positive and direct manner, in other words, by the minimum dose, which is a dose so small that it is not capable of producing symptoms when used therapeutically. The homoeopathic dose, therefore, is always a sub-physiological or sub-pathogenetic dose.

THE STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT-

"The dose must be reduced to the smallest point capable of causing an aggravation of the symptoms, however slight."³

SPHERE OF ACTION OF POTENCY

Medicines affects in 3 different planes –outer plane, middle plane and inner plane.



1. Medicines can only affect the high and interior planes of the physical economy if they are raised to the plane of similarity in quality.⁴

2. The medicines will act curatively, when potentized to correspond to the degrees in which the man is sick.

Such as are sick in a middle plane are sick from that plane to the outermost.

Such as are sick in the interior planes are sick throughout to the very outermost.²

3. If the grade of the disease is low, and the power of reaction low, the remedy must be given low.

SELECTION OF POTENCY-

Age, sex, temperament and constitution; occupation, habits, climate, season, weather; the nature, type, extent and stage of the disease-everything, in fact, which modifies the psychological, physiological, or

LAW OF DOSAGE-

The curative dose, like the remedy, must be similar in quantity and quality to the dose of the morbid agent which caused the disease.²

According to C. Hering –

Law of dose- "Having chosen the remedy according to the symptoms of a case from the complete correspondence of the characteristics in disease and drug, we have only to consider whether the symptoms of the case generally have more resemblance to the earlier (primary) symptoms of the drug, and then we give the lower potencies; or more resemblance to the later (secondary) effects, that is, to the symptoms produced by the higher-potency, and then we give the higher."⁷

In terminal conditions, therefore, when the patient does not react to well selected remedies, nor to intercurrent reaction remedies, given in potentiated form and small doses, resort to the crude drug and increase the dose to the point of reaction.²

4. We sometimes see the outermost effects of disease, disease located in the outer planes, temporarily removed by the lower potencies and crude drugs, but it is only as to the exteriors and ultimates that the cure is affected, and as it does not reach the innermost degree it is not permanent.

pathological status of the individual patient modifies, at the same time, the susceptibility to medicine, increasing or decreasing it, in health and disease. All these modifying factors must be observed,

considered, weighed, and their influence estimated in conducting a proving, or treating a case.²

Success in homoeopathic treatment largely depends, therefore, upon the ability to correctly measure the individual patient's degree of susceptibility to medication and select the most appropriate potency².

Criteria for selection of the potency^{-2,6}

1. Patient- Susceptibility of patient.
2. Disease- Seat, Character, Intensity of disease.
3. Medicine- Nature and Character of medicine.

1. **Susceptibility of the Patient.**-This is generally and rightly regarded as the most important guide in the selection of the dose. The more similar the remedy, the more clearly and positively the symptoms of the patient take on the peculiar and characteristic form of the remedy, **the greater the susceptibility to that remedy, and the higher the potency required.**

Susceptibility is modified by Age-

- **High potency** -Children and young, vigorous persons.
- **Low potency**- Increase in age-decreases the potency.

Susceptibility is modified by Constitution and Temperament-

- **High potency** -Sensitive persons of the nervous, sanguine or choleric temperament; to intelligent, intellectual persons, quick to act and react; to zealous and impulsive persons.
- **Low potency** -Torpid and phlegmatic individuals, dull of comprehension and slow to act; to coarse fibred, sluggish individuals of gross habits; to those who possess great muscular power but who require a powerful stimulus to excite them.

Susceptibility is modified by Habit and Environment.-

- **High potency**- intellectual occupation, by excitement of the imagination and emotions, by sedentary occupations, by long sleep, by an effeminate life.
- **Low potency**-long and severe labours, sleeps less, exposed continuously to some drugs, tobacco, perfume etc.

Susceptibility is modified by Pathological Conditions.-

In terminal conditions the power of the organism to react, even to the indicated homoeopathic remedy, may become so low that only material doses can arouse it.

2. The seat, character, and intensity of the disease-

- Certain malignant and rapidly fatal diseases-material doses or low potencies Diseases characterized by diminished vital action require the lower potencies; while diseases characterized by increased vital action respond better to high potencies.

- Nervous fevers and nervous rheumatisms, on the contrary, demand the higher dilutions.

- Where there is great irritability of the cerebro-spinal system, there is often little susceptibility to medicinal influences, and, on the contrary, a high degree of susceptibility often co-exists with great torpor and even partial paralysis of the nervous system.

- Disturbance of mental state requires high potency.

- Diseases of the mucous membranes of the alimentary canal, of the uropoietic and sexual organs, and of the respiratory passages, may be treated at once with the medium dilutions, and the lower dilutions may be had recourse to where there is great atony and torpor, especially if this has lasted long.

- Neuralgias and spasmodic affections sometimes require high, sometimes low dilutions.

- Chlorosis requires iron in large and repeated doses, but other medicines in the highest dilutions.

3. By the peculiar nature and essential character of the medicines –

- **High potency**- The most energetic and intensively acting medicines, e.g. bell, bry. lach, ars etc.

- **Medium potency**-the less energetic and intensive medicines, e.g. cannabis, china, euphrasia, coffea, chelid, nux.v, ipec etc.

- **Lowest potency and crude substance** –In the least energetic and intensive medicines .e.g- ferrum, camphor, moschus, taraxacum, chelidonium, etc.

ADVANTAGES OF HIGH POTENCY⁻⁸

1. "The high potencies show themselves effective in a single dose."

2. "The high potencies present at times the phenomenon of a homoeopathic aggravation."

3. "High potencies which have been produced by strong strokes of the arm frequently cause no homoeopathic aggravation."

4. "The higher potencies seem to offer a means of making the medicine more assimilable, and, therefore, homoeopathically more effective."(that the higher dynamizations even with an imperfect similitude still bring us some very good results, while

the lower dilutions of the same medicine refuse to act.)

5. "In the use of high potencies we should, according to experience, follow the following rule: The more receptive the organism, the higher the potency and the smaller the dose."

REPETITION OF DOSE-

*One of the most difficult things is to learn to wait.*²

Three things are necessary; wisdom, courage and patience.²

§ 245 Hahnemann gives this general rule: "Perceptible and continued progress of improvement in an acute or chronic disease, is a condition which, as long as it lasts, invariably counter-indicates the repetition of any medicine whatever, because the beneficial effect which the medicine continues to exert is rapidly approaching its perfection. Under these circumstances every new dose of medicine would disturb the process of recovery."³

Even after knowing this general rule few questions always comes to our mind-²

1. The first question -**whether to give one dose or repeated doses?**

Answer -The ideal method is to begin the treatment of practically all cases by giving **a single dose** of the indicated remedy and await.

2. The second question-**we give one dose when shall we repeat it?**

Answer- Repeat the dose **only when improvement ceases**. To allow a dose, or a remedy, to act as long as the improvement produced by it is sustained.

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3. The third question -**how often shall we repeat the doses and when shall we stop dosing?**

Answer-^{2,3}

1. In chronic diseases resembling cases of acute disease- at intervals of fourteen, twelve, ten, eight, seven days, and, where rapidity is requisite.

2. In acute diseases- the time for repeating the fitly chosen medicine is regulated by the greater or less rapidity of the course of the disease we have to combat. It can be repeated after twenty-four, sixteen, twelve, eight, four and even fewer hours, if the medicine continue to prove beneficial without interruption - without producing new symptoms.

3. In more dangerous acute disease may be given every five minutes (example in cholera, the most speedily fatal disease we know, at the commencement of the disease, and one or two drops of a mild solution of camphor every 5 minutes).

REPETITION IN NEW METHOD-

4. §246 & 248 6th edition-To prevent the undesirable reactions of the vital energy, Hahnemann, after many experiment wholly solved the difficulties by giving "new altered but perfected method". In chronic disease- the same carefully selected medicine may now be given daily and for months, the lower degree of potency is used for one or two weeks, followed by higher degrees in the same way.

5. §248 6th edition-In acute diseases- every two to six hours.

6. §248 6th edition -In very urgent cases- every hour or oftener.

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