Health & Homeopathy

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Treating your pet's skin conditions

Relieving aches and pains the homeopathic way

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Muscle and joint problems

Treating severe aches and pains conventionally may bring unwanted side effects. Homeopathy has much to offer, says *Janet Gray*

Some of the most common presentations in general practice are problems of pain in joints and muscles. Sometimes these problems are acute, as in sports injuries, sometimes they are chronic, as in osteo-arthritis, and sometimes they are intermittent, as in back pain. Whatever the problem, they provide the GP with a challenge for management.

The GP must take a careful history, examine the affected part, and make a diagnosis, possibly with the help of blood tests and x-rays. Having confirmed the diagnosis, the treatment option must then be decided, which may be the prescription of an anti-inflammatory drug, such as ibuprofen, a local steroid injection, a referral for physiotherapy or a referral to a rheumatologist.

As a GP myself, I use all these options, and we are lucky enough in our practice to have a physiotherapist trained also in acupuncture. However, I also have another therapeutic option up my sleeve - the use of homeopathy. This method of treatment really comes into its own when side-effects are experienced with the use of conventional medication, some of which can be very serious.

Homeopathy can offer help in many situations which otherwise might cause prolonged incapacity. For instance, the use of Arnica in acute injury is well known, but often forgotten in the heat of the moment. The sooner it can be given, the more effective it is, but it is not too late to start it even several days after an injury. I will quite often see a patient with a sprained ankle, done two to three days previously, and I will then start not only Arnica, but also Rhus tox given concurrently. This combination is very useful in other situations, such as a bad back, caused by gardening, or a knee injury done at football.

Back problems

Of course, we must always remember our homeopathic basics, so Rhus tox would only be appropriate if the modalities of stiffness after rest, pain better for heat, and relief by gradual movement were present. So when Clive, aged 41, came to see me with a 10-year history of backache, caused by jarring his spine in a diving accident, I needed to know the modalities of his pain. In his case, the pain was a lot worse on moving, and pain-free at rest and was relieved by ice-packs, so I prescribed Bryonia 6c, twice daily for one month. When I next saw him, he had achieved a 90 per cent improvement, and was delighted.

Knee problems

Similarly Bob, aged 53, had a four-year history of pain in his knees, which had started after a strenuous game of golf. His pain was also worse for movement, and he had no early morning stiffness. As a person he was extremely thirsty, so despite the lack of a marked reaction to heat or cold, I prescribed Bryonia 6c, twice daily, for him too. Again, after one month, he had improved enough to stop his painkillers.

Moving pains

It is always very satisfying to treat a patient successfully using homeopathy, who has puzzled the rheumatology specialists. Margaret, aged 65, was one such case, who came to see me privately with an acute arthritis of unknown origin. When she came to me, she had severe pain in her right elbow, such that she could not even feed herself, and her left ankle and forefoot were very inflamed, making



Photo: The Lawn Tennis Association

walking very painful. The joints were elbow, such that she could not even feed herself, and her left ankle and forefoot were very inflamed, making walking very painful. The joints were swollen, but not red, very stiff in the mornings, and improved by both heat and ice-packs. The site of the affected joint flitted around, such that a week previously it had been her left shoulder and left elbow.

She was on maximum doses of ibuprofen, and also some powerful second-line anti-arthritic drugs, to no avail. In her character, she was a changeable person, describing herself as being either up or down. She was very weepy and loved consolation and cuddles. She admitted to liking to be the centre of attention and, indeed, had been an actress. She craved fresh air, was not particularly thirsty, and was averse to fatty food.

The local joint modalities were difficult to prescribe on, but her constitutional type was plainly Pulsatilla. To the amazement of her rheumatologist, within a month of taking Pulsatilla, her joint pains all subsided and the swelling resolved in all but her right ankle, which had completely resolved by the second follow-up consultation.

Prevention better than cure

Equally successful was the case of Emma, aged 28, who had developed flitting joint pains at the age of 15. Both her mother and grandmother suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, and she was obviously worried that she was developing the same. So far, her blood tests for rheumatoid had been negative.

When I saw her, the pains were worse for pressure and better for motion, with a lot of stiffness, and more comfortable in the warm weather.

As a person, she was chilly, and loved the sunshine. She described herself as an optimist, with a positive attitude to life. She was very emotional and empathetic to others; very affectionate, with a need for physical touch.

On these symptoms, I prescribed Phosphorus on a constitutional level, and this settled her symptoms very quickly. Over the years that I have been treating her, she has needed one or two doses of Phosphorus per year to keep her joint problems under control.

Although it cannot be proved, I have a strong feeling that had she not been treated homeopathically, she might well have gone on to develop rheumatoid arthritis.

Severe rheumatoid arthritis

Obviously, prevention is better than cure, and the treatment of patients with established rheumatoid arthritis is often less dramatic. However, some help can be given with symptom control, as was the case with Miss S.G., aged 67, who came to see me with very long-standing rheumatoid arthritis, which had caused severe deformities of her hands and feet. She had had a knee replacement, and had had operations to both feet.

She had had gold treatment 20 years ago, which had caused some kidney damage. By the time she came to me, her disease had more or less burnt out, but she was suffering from extreme fatigue and some residual joint pains. I treated her constitutionally with Natrum muriaticum, and gave her Bryonia as a local prescription for her joint pains. On this regime she managed very well over the several years that I looked after her.



John Greaves in action. Photo: Professional Golfers' Association

Golfer's elbow can be incapacitating but often responds well to Ruta grav

Tennis and golfer's elbow

Tennis elbow is an incapacitating condition. It is pain on the outer side of the elbow, caused not only by tennis, but also any other repetitive action that involves flexion of the forearm muscles, like cleaning windows. Golfer's elbow is identical, but on the inner side of the elbow. It often responds extremely well to Ruta graveolens, which is a remedy that affects the insertion of tendons into the periosteum of the bones. Ruta has exactly the same modalities as Rhus tox, ie better for heat, stiffness after rest, better on gradual movement, but has different tissue affinities - tendons and periosteum rather than

muscle.

Gout

Conditions such as gout can also be managed successfully using homeopathic remedies. Colchicum, the autumn crocus, has in its materia medica an exact description of the symptoms of gout - "Inflammation of the great toe, cannot bear to have it touched or moved" (Boericke). Ledum (marsh tea) has the clinical picture of swollen, hot, pale joints, with the ball of the great toe swollen. Formica rufa (crushed live ants) is excellent for chronic gout and stiffness in the joints. The skin on the gouty joint is red, itching and burning.

Conditions of muscles

Conditions of the muscles such as fibrositis, fibromyalgia and polymyalgia rheumatica are difficult to treat conventionally. Diagnosis is often delayed and can be very difficult.

Fibrositis is thought to be caused by small adhesions between individual muscle fibres, causing stiffness and pain in isolated spots, "trigger points", mainly in the back, shoulders and buttocks. The remedy Kali bichromicum fits this description well, having "pain in small spots".

Fibromyalgia is very similar but involves more diffuse tenderness and pains in the muscles. Remedies such as Rhus tox, if the modalities fit, can be very useful.

Polymyalgia rheumatica is a specific inflammation of the proximal muscles of the upper arms and thighs, which are very tender and weak. Climbing stairs is particularly difficult, as is raising the arms above the head to open cupboards, etc. This condition responds very well to steroids, but as the disease usually takes a couple of years to run its natural course, the steroids may have to be maintained for this length of time. To avoid the side-effects of steroids, homeopathic treatment can be tried.

Mrs E.C., age 45, developed pains in her upper arms and thighs, and a blood test showed she was suffering from polymyalgia rheumatica. She asked me to treat her homeopathically rather than go on steroids, so I gave her Rhus tox, which fitted her modalities well. However, after some weeks



of treatment, there was very little improvement, so I gave her Sycotic co, which is a bowel nosode, useful if the well-indicated remedy fails to work. The improvement with this was dramatic, causing a rapid decrease in pain and increase in strength.

Homeopathy on a constitutional basis is the most successful way of treating all these conditions, but local prescribing can be very useful.

Frozen shoulder

Frozen shoulder is another condition that runs a very prolonged course. It often seems to be provoked by minimal trauma, or by painful conditions of the chest wall causing lack of use of the shoulder, which then seizes up. The natural course is severe pain in the shoulder for a year, and then complete "freezing" of the joint for another year. After that the whole thing resolves spontaneously. Of course most people do not want to wait for natural resolution, and various homeopathic shoulder remedies can be useful. Kalmia latifolia (mountain laurel) is indicated for right-sided shoulder pain and Ferrum metallicum for left-sided shoulder pain.

Repetitive strain injury

Repetitive strain injury should be treated by immobilisation of the painful part for two weeks, accompanied by an appropriate remedy, such as Ruta grav. Obviously it is important to modify the behaviour that caused the problem in the first place, by paying attention to posture and hand positioning at a keyboard, for example.

This article by no means comprehensively covers the whole field of joint and muscle problems but hopefully gives a flavour of what homeopathy can do in this area. I do not want to give the impression that homeopathy is a miracle cure in all such cases, and indeed some patients fail to respond to apparently well-indicated remedies. A lot of improvement can be achieved by homeopathic self-help, but more complicated problems will need to be managed by a homeopathic practitioner.



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Keeping a check on your pet's coat

Skin on mammals has many functions and when things go wrong homeopathic treatment is very useful, says *John Hoare*



Photo courtesy of The Kennel Club

Skin is a complex organ that has a multiplicity of functions. For a start it covers the animal, and it is at the surface of the skin that the animal comes in contact with the outside world. It also has a role to play in the maintenance of a steady internal temperature, by sweating in hot conditions and by constricting the surface blood vessels in cold weather.

It is also an organ of excretion; the sebaceous glands associated with the hair follicles excreting minerals that are surplus to requirement in the sweat. Changes in the contents of the sweat can alter the "micro-climate" of the skin, which can lead to the colonisation of the skin by abnormal bacteria, or make the skin more attractive to insect and fungal parasites. It follows then that the internal and external causes of skin disease are actually more important than the identity of the colonising organism. If the primary cause is corrected, then the body will throw off the infection without the need for pharmaceuticals. There may however be occasions when the problem is so severe that a little help is needed.

Because the skin is on the outside it is readily observable. Thus very early signs of skin disease are easily seen by the owner. Is it any wonder then that skin problems are some of the commonest ones seen by veterinary surgeons and also some of the most difficult to treat successfully?

When a conventionally trained veterinary surgeon has difficulty in curing a skin condition, he usually starts to look at the skin in greater and greater detail, making tests for abnormal bacteria, fungi, parasitic insects, and for allergies. The homeopathically trained vet will stand back and look at the patient as a whole being as well as at the skin. He knows that the outer trouble may be the first manifestation of a chronic disease that can go on to affect the whole of the animal. He also knows that the mental/emotional state can be the true cause of the visible skin trouble and will attempt to build that into the prescription, treating the patient as a totality. The totality is often the same as the patient's constitutional medicine but this is not always so.

The owner too when treating his pet must take the same approach as a homeopathic vet and treat like with like, addressing the whole symptom picture if possible. There is of course the proviso that if the pet's condition is painful or if it is in great distress it should be taken to the vet sooner rather than later. When eczemas and allergies are suspected, the homeopathic medicine given should be chosen to match the visible lesions (spots pimples, ulcers etc) as closely as possible and a simple attempt made to cover any mental symptoms that are present. When there are injuries it is sufficient to concentrate on the type of injury because the trauma itself is the most important part of the totality.

Do remember though that skin problems can be very difficult to sort out. If your pet's skin is not responding, don't persist for too long before seeking the help of a homeopathically trained vet.



Photo: Francis Hunter, BHA



Some useful medicines

Sulphur

Probably the greatest skin medicine that we know, Sulphur is useful when the skin is dry, red and very itchy. Humans describe the itch as "voluptuous" because it feels so good to scratch the lesions. If there are pustules or ulcers present, the pus is yellow; think of sulphurous emissions from volcanoes or hot mud pools. With the redness of the skin there may be redness of the eyes, mouth and lips, ears and anus.

The itch is made worse by heat. This is shown by the animal avoiding the heat of the sun if possible, scratching more in warm rooms than cold, and if covered by a blanket at night. Animals needing Sulphur tend to look untidy and may have a greasy, smelly coat.

Sulphur can cause severe aggravations. Do not use any potency above 6c without the advice of a homeopathic vet. Sulphur 6c can be given up to four times a day but should be reduced as an improvement begins. If there is any sign of an aggravation, then stop at once.

Psorinum

Made from the fluid taken from a scabies vesicle, Psorinum is similar to Sulphur in its action on the skin. The patients are again dirty, smelly animals, but they are very chilly. They seek heat as much as Sulphur patients avoid it.

Psorinum is one of the remedies that are best used in the 30c potency. It can take a little while before the effects of one dose are seen. Therefore you should give a maximum of three tablets in one day and wait at least 10 days before repeating it. Even then if there are signs that changes are occurring wait even longer before giving another dose.

Arsenicum album

This is derived from white arsenic (arsenic trioxide) and is associated with dry itchy skins where there is a lot of dandruff which may be fine white scurf or large "bran flakes". The skin itches so badly that the animal may scratch itself until the skin bleeds. Unlike Sulphur and Psorinum, these animals are fastidious about keeping themselves clean when they are well, and Arsenicum cats will often be seen grooming themselves. They tend to be nervous, anxious animals. All their symptoms tend to be worse at around midnight. They are very chilly animals and will hog the fire or radiator.

With Arsenicum it is best to give one 6c up to four times a day for no more than five days, and then wait to see what happens, or a 30c twice daily for three days and then wait a while.

Natrum mur

A valuable medicine for many conditions, the origin of Natrum mur is sea salt. When Nat mur is required the skin has a greasy feel to it, the fur tends to form small clumps, and dandruff starts to form. The clumping tends to start at the tip of the tail and move forward along the back like an arrowhead, then crusts develop on the head, and itchy ulcers form on the face and lips. At the same time there can be an "egg-white" like discharge from the eyes and/or nose. The lesions are worse for heat and for consolation (they want to be alone in their sadness) and better for open air or the application of a cold flannel.

Natrum mur has a strong mental attachment to "Ailments from Grief". If this is put together with the nature of the lesions described above, one can see that it is useful in flea allergies that develop in cats and dogs that are kennelled, or in cats in households from where children have left home or where someone has



Photo: Francis Hunter, BHA

recently died.

If there is obvious grief in the history, give one 30c twice daily for up to three days: if not, use 6c up to four times daily for five days.

Staphisagria
This medicine, made from the seeds of the plant delphinium staphisagria, the wild raisin, is associated with dry itchy eczemas that may result in thick crusts and scabs. The lesions tend to start in the groin and work forward along the abdomen, and then jump to the neck and head. They are better for warmth.

The mentals of Staphisagria are (suppressed) grief, indignation and resentment. It therefore has a great part to play in the treatment of allergies that develop after neutering and kennelling. It should be used as is Nat mur.

Graphites
Traditionally made from the black lead of the finest English drawing-pencils, this remedy is associated with rough hard dry areas of the skin, that go on to develop a sticky exudates. The discharges are described as being corrosive, glutinous and yellow. They often develop a crust and the discharge oozes from under it. These lesions can be very itchy, and are usually found on the inside of the joints such as in the armpit, groin, the inside bend of the elbow, and also behind the ears. Graphites is also associated with thick deformed nails, cracks in the pads of the toes, cracks in the nipples and in the mouth, and with some forms of cysts. Warmth, particularly that of the bed can make the itching worse, and cold damp air also makes things worse.

Try using one 6c, twice daily for up to one week.



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Traumatic skin injuries

Shock
Aconitum napellus (monkshood) is the main medicine for shock and it is usually the first medicine to give after any accident. It can be given in any potency, and as frequently as it is needed. If the effects seem to be wearing off, repeat dose.



Photo courtesy of The Kennel Club

Bruises
Arnica montana (leopard's bane) is the main medicine for bruising. It also has a mild anti-shock and an antiseptic action. The main point of Arnica is that the patient does not want to be approached, let alone touched. The pain makes them feel restless and they have trouble getting settled. Again use a 6c or 30c as frequently as is needed to make the patient comfortable.

Bryonia alba (white bryony - wild hops) is sometimes needed. In this instance the injury hurts whenever the patient moves, but is better for steady pressure on the injured part. The patient then lies perfectly still, with the most painful part underneath it. This helps to keep it still and also prevents it from being touched by anyone else. Again use whatever potency is available as often as it seems needed.

Cuts, grazes, open wounds
Calendula (marigold) stimulates wound healing. Open wounds can be cleaned with a 10 per cent solution of Calendula tincture, dressed with Calendula cream, and Calendula 30c can be given twice daily. This will speed healing greatly.

Hypercal is a combination of Calendula and Hypericum. It is available both as a tincture and a cream. It is more appropriate than Calendula alone when there is a lot of nerve damage such as occurs when feet and tails are shut in doors.

Staphisagria has a great reputation for knife and sword wounds. It is very useful for assisting operation wounds to heal, especially if there is poor/slow healing particularly after neutering.

Burns
Cantharis is good when blisters form or are about to form. Use 30c four-hourly as needed.

Insect bites
Apis mellitus should be used if a cold, wet flannel soothes the bites.

Urtica urens should be used if the animal resents the cold bathing. In both cases use a 30c tablet every 15 minutes, or as needed.

Abscesses
Hepar sulph is used for abscesses that are hot, painful and extremely sensitive to the slightest touch. If pus has just started to form, then a 200c, three times a day should prevent the abscess from developing. If the abscess is well formed, 6c, four times a day will stimulate pus to form and the abscess to burst, whilst relieving the pain.

Silicia can be used in the same way for "cold" abscesses that are painless and slow to develop.

In a highly personal article, *Jonathan Hardy* advises against self-prescription and recommends that we should

Leave homeopathy to the professionals



Detail of a stained glass window in the Hahnemann Museum in Köthen, Germany

Photo: BHA Library

The prevalence of self-prescribing is worrying because while it persists homeopathy is unlikely to take its rightful place as the primary therapeutic modality. Correct homeopathic treatment can cure the majority of illness. In chronic cases this usually requires a careful course of homeopathic treatment over several years. Most patients will need only one or two remedies to achieve this cured state, but these need to be given at the right time, in a range of potencies, and prescribed with diligence and skill. This should take them from their original state of ill health to a state of complete health physically and psychologically where they are symptom free and requiring no treatment of any kind - conventional or homeopathic. This is what homeopathy is for - it is not for a bit of tinkering here and there as can be seen in the following case.

A 70 year-old lady was referred to me by her GP. Her main complaint was osteoporosis. She informed me she was a great convert to homeopathy: "For the last 15 years or so I have relied on Silicea for my colds which I get about eight times a year. I use Rhus tox, which I take every day for my joint pains and there are several other remedies I take on a regular basis. I could not do without my homeopathy." When I took her case properly she was a clear case of Calc carb - this single remedy finally put a stop to her recurrent colds, and dramatically reduced her joint pains.

Self-prescribing will usually fail because the fact is homeopathic prescribing is difficult. Few ailments are unrelated to the overall state of the patient, meaning their total state now and everything else that has happened to them in the past physically, psychologically and socially. In most so-called local illnesses, the only remedy that will significantly help a patient is the remedy that addresses this total picture. Medicines prescribed on superficial and short-term indications only will therefore do little good and give no lasting benefit. It is important to remember that the temporary removal of certain symptoms by no means indicates the medicine has acted curatively and to the long-term benefit of the patient.

The culture of self-prescribing has not been a considered or planned development. It has happened because of misconceptions and wrong ideas.

Homeopathy is harmless, therefore it is all right to try a remedy and see what it does

In fact every time somebody takes a homeopathic medicine they are taking an energy into their system which alters their own vital energy. As Hahnemann tells us, a homeopathic medicine sets up an artificial disease within a person to which they then react. Repeated wrong remedies put a stress into the constitution, which is far from harmless and should certainly be avoided.

Another unfortunate result of this "homeopathy is harmless" idea is that it creates the impression that homeopathy is only a weak system of medicine, and therefore only of limited efficacy. The truth however is there is no more powerful medicine than the homeopathic simillimum.

Treating local ailments
There is no such thing as a local ailment, ie a condition that is only affecting one part of a person. Whenever any symptom - physical or psychological in nature - occurs in a human being it is always reflecting an imbalance in the whole constitution. Any symptom is a result of a derangement, however small, in the vital force.

Prescribing a local remedy
There is no such thing as a local homeopathic remedy. All homeopathic medicines act through and only through the medium of the patient's vital force. This is an energy that is universal to the whole of the organism, and therefore the moment you take a homeopathic medicine it alters the vital energy throughout your whole constitution.

Remedies for minor ailments
The general public are being encouraged to treat themselves for "minor ailments". This is bad advice. The only time a homeopathic medicine should be taken is when there is a significant imbalance in the vital force of that patient. In many minor ailments the symptom picture is mild and vague, which means there are no prescribing symptoms that will point to a specific homeopathic medicine as opposed to any number of others. There is a good reason for this. It is simply that the organism is not "asking" for a remedy, because it does not need one. A mild derangement in the vital force will quickly and without any external help restore itself. Any attempt to prescribe homeopathically in such a situation is futile. If someone is sufficiently ill to require treatment, it should be provided by an expert.

The unprejudiced observer Samuel Hahnemann stressed the need for unprejudiced observation in a homeopathic prescriber. We can provide objectivity neither for ourselves, nor for our families. We are just too close. Often those things which are really important for prescribing and obvious to others are completely overlooked by ourselves because to us they are normal!

There is a lot more to success with homeopathy than merely "finding the remedy". Choice of potency, repetition of the remedy and knowing what is a healing response to a medicine are all vital ingredients to success in homeopathic treatment.

One unfortunate reason for the growth of self-prescribing is that it is actually promoted by homeopathic practitioners. For example, some practitioners are encouraged to offer "First Aid Courses" in order to attract interest when they are setting up a practice.

It is also regrettable there has been such a proliferation of books aimed at the general public. It is impossible for a book to equip the reader with the skills, insights and knowledge necessary to have any reasonable hope of prescribing successfully. These books promise something that simply cannot be delivered. They mislead the reader into believing homeopathic prescribing is simple and easy when in fact it is complex, profound and difficult. They lead to disappointment and disillusionment. We do not issue introductory guides to surgery and say to people "There you are, now go and remove your son's appendix." The chances of a really effective result with self-prescribed homeopathic treatment are no better.

Prescription-only homeopathy
In the interests of homeopathy and the health of the general population, homeopathic medicines should be made available on prescription only. They should then be prescribed only by practitioners who are properly trained and qualified. This would protect the public and send a powerful message that homeopathy is serious medicine.

Homeopathy is a magnificent form of healing which, used properly, will relieve much of mankind's suffering. Homeopathic medicines prescribed according to the highest principles effect profound and lasting cures. The relief from physical suffering, the freedom from emotional pain, the growth of creativity and the expression of a person's higher nature are all the inevitable consequences of homeopathic medicines prescribed to address that which needs to be healed. This is what homeopathic medicine is meant for.

If you want any job done properly, you go to a professional. In homeopathy, even the professionals have a hard time, but they have a better chance than anyone else of treating you successfully - leave it to them!

Jonathan Hardy MA BM MFHom has been a homeopathic doctor in private practice in Hampshire for over 15 years. Last year he set up, in partnership with Dr Jane Winfield, one of the new NHS clinics funded by the BHA.

Do you agree/disagree with Dr Hardy? Please send your views to the editor, address page 3.

In the next issue Dr Andrew Lockie will argue that there will always be a place for self-prescribing in homeopathy.

masterclass

MAJOR ARCHETYPES OF THE MATERIA MEDICA

by David Lilley MBChB FFHom LLCO



Photo: Helios Homoeopathic Pharmacy

This pullout and keep series includes:

- Sulphur
- Calc carb
- Lycopodium
- **Pulsatilla**
- Silicea
- Nat mur
- Sepia
- Lachesis

Pulsatilla is so intimately connected with the archetypal patterns of our collective unconscious that its image has been invested with mythological and symbolic meaning. These are significant to our understanding of the remedy's dynamic influence.

The myth of Adonis the beautiful young man beloved of both Aphrodite (Venus), goddess of love, and Persephone, goddess of the underworld, who bitterly contended with each other for his company and love, provides a triangle of possessive and obsessive love, jealousy, seduction, selfishness, guile, vindictiveness - two amorous, insatiable women and a compliant, dependent, effeminate toy boy. The muse Calliope who was called upon to arbitrate in this sensitive matter decreed that Adonis should spend one third of the year with Aphrodite, one third with Persephone and, in order to recuperate, the rest by himself. Aphrodite however did not play fair and won the day (and night) by constantly wearing her irresistible magic girdle, causing Adonis to give not only his third of the year to her, but also Persephone's. The myth ends with Adonis being gored to death, whilst out hunting. His attacker was Aphrodite's enraged lover Ares (Mars), the god of war, in the guise of a wild boar. It was a scheming, green-eyed Persephone who had told Ares of Aphrodite's infidelity. From the earth soaked with Adonis' blood, anemones sprang to life. However there are those who say that they sprang from the tears of the goddess of love herself, when she witnessed his death.

This legend is replete with Pulsatilla emotions, behaviour and situations, So many young girls of the Pulsatilla type fall precociously under the power of the goddess of love, become sexually active at an early age, easily persuaded and lead by beautiful young men (Adonis) or by the macho, swaggering male (Ares), and are such easy victims for seduction, abuse and date rape. Remember that even in modern idiom Pulsatilla is from Venus, her lover is from Mars. The male Pulsatilla is often an Adonis, beautiful rather than handsome, of a gentle, timid, sweet disposition, easily lead and persuaded, with a rather immature, girlish, androgynous appearance.

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Pulsatilla

So much of Pulsatilla's nature and disposition can be predicted in the appearance and growth habits of this small plant which prefers growing on sunny hillsides, usually in great numbers or at least in small clusters, rarely solitary. Here it is exposed to the winds, and the rich carpet of gently hanging flowers yields to the slightest breath of air, which passes through it like a rippling wave, changing direction continuously with the vagaries of the wind. In this attractive scene we are made aware of a small, uncertain ego, uneasy when alone, needing the support of others and the confidence this can bring; an indecisive, fickle nature bending to the whims of circumstance, opinion and demand, but also a temperament both supple and guileful, able to compromise, yield and go with the flow.



Photo: Freemans Homoeopathic Pharmacy, Glasgow

The common names of a plant are often valuable, revealing the impression it made upon the community, or giving us information about how it was used, medicinally or otherwise. The Greek name anemone is derived from *anemos*, the wind, and Pulsatilla comes from the Latin *pulsare* to pulsate, as indeed the carpet of flowers does, to the rhythm of the wind. The folk name "windflower" describes the same characteristic. Its love of windy hillsides emphasises the type's strong need for fresh open air and dislike of stuffy, close conditions that intensify both the emotional and physical symptoms. The preference for a sunny aspect reveals sensitivity to the cold, which is often forgotten in Pulsatilla. "Chilly but craves the open air." This chilliness is increased if they are unwell or in pain.

The bell-shaped flower has deep purple petals and a rich golden centre. Before it opens fully, it inclines its head gently and bashfully, as if in timid submissiveness and resignation. Another folk name for the plant is "shamefaced maiden". These are strong characteristics of the Pulsatilla child and young woman. The temperament is mild, gentle, shy and reserved. They are reluctant to speak up for themselves or express an opinion. Often they are very attractive and know all too well how to use their natural assets in subtle and seductive ways to captivate and influence others, and to fulfil their desires, through the solicitation of tears, coyness, flirtation and appealing helplessness. Invariably Pulsatilla gives that she may receive. The entire plant is seductive, its stem, branches, leaves and even the inflorescence being covered with fine hairs which give it a fluffy, cuddly appearance which invites contact and cherishing. In human terms Pulsatilla is soft, sensual, inviting and tactile - a true daughter of Aphrodite.

Habitat can also furnish us with clues and even reveal medicinal relationships. Pulsatilla generally grows best in sandy soil, which provides good drainage. This favours the plant because it requires very little water. Homeopathically Silicea, sand, is Pulsatilla's closest relation. They follow each other well and Silicea children often develop infections or conditions that respond to treatment with Pulsatilla. It is interesting to note that the Pulsatilla patient is rarely thirsty, even when suffering from fever. But as we have seen in its response to the wind, Pulsatilla is fickle and changeable by nature, and some species prefer a lime rich soil, showing the plant's close relationship to Calc carb.

This beautiful, purple and gold anemone bears a mysterious affinity for the immature, vulnerable and dependent state of the human psyche. As such it is one of the most fundamental remedies of the materia medica, frequently indicated in homeopathic paediatric practice. As a species homo sapiens are completely helpless and unable to fend for themselves at birth, our lives being characterised by a prolonged period of dependency, even extending into the third decade of life, a highly developed interdependent social structure, and frequently closing with a period of enforced dependency in old age. Dependency runs like a thread through the Pulsatilla mental picture revealing itself as a need for support, security, shelter, sympathy and love, motivating the behaviour and even influencing physical development and hormonal function.

Blood and tears are related to Pulsatilla. Sometimes it is the remedy for the blood and tears of life experience, so often in the role of victim; sometimes it is simply for those who are naturally weepy and possibly anaemic, with scanty, pale menstruations that are unnaturally delayed. Both copper and iron are essential for blood formation. Cuprum like Pulsatilla is a remedy for severe cramping pains at the menstrual period, and also for the ill effects of suppressed or delayed menstruation, which can occur due to swimming in cold water or getting the feet wet. Both remedies are indicated for the persisting anaemia and detrimental effects resulting from excess iron tonics - that is, for the abuse of iron, and by symbolic extension for the abuse of the chauvinist or misogynist Mars - for the abuse of the lover, father, brother, son, be the abuse emotional, physical or sexual.

asterclass...



Venus de Milo - in human terms Pulsatilla is soft, sensual, inviting and tactile, a true daughter of Aphrodite

the pulsatilla adult

The changeableness of the plant, and therefore also of the remedy and the patient, is made even more apparent when we consider the great number of naturally occurring subspecies there are, and the vast array of colours that are represented. There is no doubt that changeability and capriciousness are as important Pulsatilla traits as is dependency. Pulsatilla must always be thought of when symptoms are always changing and unpredictable. Likewise their emotions and moods are unstable and swing from one extreme to the other, even during the course of a day. They may appear mild and pleasant, and then after a while, seemingly without reason, become irritable, peevish and tearful. In matters of friendship and romance they may prove fickle, going where they think they will benefit most rather than being influenced by loyalty and commitment. They are also extremely indecisive, wavering and uncertain, quite dependent on the opinion, advice or support of others. The physical symptoms reveal the same variableness – when one set of symptoms comes on another vanishes, discharges are forever changing their colour, consistency and amount, no two headaches, no two periods, and in diarrhoea no two stools, are the same. Pains, especially joint pains, are not fixed, tending to wander from one part to another.

The inflorescence broadcasts a strong message through its vivid colours – purple and gold. The purple petals point to a powerful influence upon the venous system. The veins of the hands, forearms, feet and legs are full and prominent. It is a remedy for varicose veins, piles and inflammation of the veins – phlebitis. Venous drainage from the legs is sluggish. Symptoms are worse from permitting the limbs to hang down. In hot weather and when travelling, especially during flights, the legs tend to swell and deep venous thrombosis (DVT) can be a threat. Chilblains are common, but even without such definite lesions, the extremities may appear reddish-purple, inflamed and swollen in cold weather. Heat aggravates the chilblains causing them to itch and burn. Inflamed parts tend to take on a bluish or purple hue rather than appearing red.

The striking contrast between the colour of the petals and the gold of the reproductive organs indicates a marked affinity for the generative sphere and hormonal function of both male and female. Many problems develop at puberty, during pregnancy, after childbirth or at the menopause, and pre-menstrual aggravation of the emotional or physical condition is common. Yellow and yellow-gold show Pulsatilla's connection to the third or solar plexus chakra and therefore with the stomach, gall bladder, liver, pancreas, and spleen. These patients often complain of being liverish. They feel much worse after eating, and suffer all manner of indigestion, heartburn, flatulence, distension and heaviness, especially after rich foods, fatty food, ice cream, pastries, pork and eggs. The combination of purple and gold, and therefore of veins and liver, indicates a remedial action upon the portal circulation.

Pulsatilla sprang to life from blood and the central core element of haemoglobin, the respiratory pigment of blood, is iron. Small wonder that in her weakness, "anaemia", she longs for Adonis/Mars, "iron", that to attain him she is manipulative and seductive and that when she wins him her love is dependent, desperate, obsessive, smothering, possessive and jealous and that when she loses him she weeps inconsolably and declares that she cannot live without him. But she is also the windflower, able to sway and yield to life's gusts and buffeting without snapping. Soon she will shift her dependency to the arm of another. She is a survivor!

the pulsatilla child

The development of the Pulsatilla dependency state may be precipitated by various early life experiences. These may even be prenatal. Rejection or separation from parental love are potent causes and may give rise to life long feelings of being forsaken or abandoned. It may commence whilst still in the uterus due to the mother's conscious or unconscious rejection of the pregnancy. Much to the disappointment of the parents the baby may be the wrong sex. Many other reasons for lack of bonding and separation may play a role – incubation, failure to breast-feed, post-natal depression, infant or maternal ill health, adoption, working mother, divorce and parental death. Such a child is likely to develop recurrent Pulsatilla infections. They become high care children, constantly weeping, whining, whimpering and wailing, demanding attention and nurturing, wanting to be carried, cuddled and held close and intolerant of being left alone or losing contact. They suffer separation fear.

Excessive parental care, love and protection may be a cause. The Pulsatilla child becomes addicted to the warmth and security of such intense parental love. Often the mother herself is a Pulsatilla, dependent on the emotional and sentimental satisfaction of lavishing love on her dependent infant. She may encourage and prolong the period of dependency by delaying weaning, persisting with inappropriate baby talk, dressing the child in clothes too young for its age. A state of infantilism is encouraged.

Paradoxically lack of love is an equally potent cause of eliciting the Pulsatilla state. A child growing up in an environment devoid of love and care, or when such attention is qualified and dependent on behaviour acceptable to strict parents, develops a deep sense of insecurity and the belief that love and care must be bought through certain behaviour. There is often the feeling that they are not worthy, loveable or valuable, with damage to their sense of identity. They develop a desperate need for love from whatever source possible and by whatever means possible and once achieved they will cling to it desperately. They will produce whatever behaviour is necessary to win the security and affection they crave. They may become model children, unnaturally well behaved, neat and tidy, always fearing that any misdemeanour may alienate them from parental love.

These behaviour patterns persisting into adolescence and adulthood expose the archetype to manipulation and victimisation. "I'll be whoever you want me to be – just love me!"

They are full of fears, especially of separation, rejection, betrayal, being forsaken, being alone, of the dark, dogs, ghosts, dentists and doctors, the opposite sex, people, particularly strangers, of what people will think of them, unfamiliar situations and surroundings. These fears are worse at twilight and may last a lifetime.

To the dependent child maturity and responsibility are not welcome; they are frightening. They resist taking responsibility for their lives and subconsciously resist maturation. This is more conspicuous in girls than in boys. These mild, weepy girls suffer delayed puberty, and when the periods finally begin they are often late or very irregular. Even when the menses are established they are easily suppressed.

In similar manner all the sequential functions of womanhood and motherhood may be repressed, producing celibacy, infertility, abortion, miscarriage, and, in pregnancy, malpresentation, protracted labour, uterine inertia, retained placenta, milk failure. Sometimes Aphrodite is not denied but welcomed. In response to dependent need, often lack of love at home, the Pulsatilla body buds early with sensual promise, like the flower, a siren call for love and identity. It does not matter whom they are dependent upon as long as there is just someone.

In response to the circumstances they experience, they will shift their dependency or obsession from parents, to a member of the opposite or same sex, from one relationship to another, to a marriage partner, from one marriage to another, to their own children, to some strange belief about food, anorexia, bulimia, promiscuity or celibacy, or to some cult or religion. Despite their indecisiveness and inconstant nature, once fixed upon some dependency or strange notion, they are rigid and immovable. Fanaticism is the most crystallised form of Pulsatilla dependency. It is their extreme defence against insecurity.

Next issue: David Lilley looks at Silicea

DAVID LILLEY is a Fellow of the Faculty of Homeopathy. He trained at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital and developed his practice in South Africa over the last 35 years. He is internationally renowned as a teacher of the materia medica.

Tarentula hispanica

A creature that inspires fear in many people becomes, homeopathically, a powerful remedy, writes *Marysia Kratimenos*



The person with a spider constitution is energised by music and rhythm is all-important. Drummer Richard Bailey photographed by James Chumpsty

There are few creatures that can reduce normally rational people into nervous wrecks within seconds. Even a humble house spider can have people screaming hysterically in no time - a totally irrational reaction to a harmless creature. Snakes rate equally highly on the phobia scale, but as many are deadly there is some logic to the fear.

Filmmakers use this mass phobia to its full potential. *Arachnophobia* made millions. Harrison Ford was covered in tarantulas for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, though apparently it was the snake pit scene that truly terrified him.

In England there are no indigenous venomous spiders. It is a very different story in other countries. Poisonous spiders are occasionally found in fruit imported from more tropical climes. In Northern Spain and Italy there lives a small venomous spider misleadingly named the tarantula. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to the monster South American variety. In fact it is smaller than most garden spiders. Legend has it that after being bitten by the spider, women develop a dancing mania. There is even a city named in honour of it, Tarentum.

The remedies

Tarentula hispanica was the first spider venom to be potentised and since then many other venomous spiders have been investigated and used as homeopathic remedies.

In the 19th century the search for new remedies was on and homeopaths travelled far and wide to collect new specimens. On a trip to Cuba, a specimen of the local venomous spider was collected and placed in a pot of formalin to be shipped back to England for further study. Unfortunately, due to a bad storm, the container shattered leaving the spider badly decomposed. In the adventurous spirit of the age, the homeopaths were not deterred and produced a wonderful remedy, Tarentula cubensis, which is fabulous for septic conditions!

Tarentula hispanica remains the most commonly known of the spider remedies, but thanks to the work of such brilliant homeopaths as Massimo Mangialavori the remedy pictures of the lesser known spiders are now coming to light.

Black widow, which has a heart shaped red mark on its front, is very useful in certain types of heart disease; Aranea diadema can be used in arthritis and Mygale for conditions where there is a lot of scarring and damage to nervous tissue. As the venoms of these spiders share common chemical constituents there are similarities in the drug pictures. There are also unique qualities to each remedy and these may be very subtle. I believe that it is important to regard Tarentula hispanica as the prototype of the spider remedies, just as Lachesis mutans is the mother of all snakes. Before prescribing

Tarentula, I always mentally check the other smaller spider remedies.

The remedy picture

In Greek mythology Arachne was a Lydian girl who was exceptionally skilled at weaving. In her arrogance, she challenged the goddess Athena to a competition and then proceeded to mock the gods in the design of her woven cloth. The gods sought vengeance by turning her into a spider so she could weave to her heart's content. The species of spiders has been termed arachnid in honour of this myth. It is interesting to note that the story itself gives clues to the remedy picture. People responding to spider remedies are notoriously industrious, workaholics. The women are often exceptionally good at knitting, weaving, tapestry and similar crafts. The men often pursue rock climbing. Some can be very boastful and often have a vengeful streak. Revenge comes easily to a spider!

Other cultures regard the spider as a sign of change. It is said to be the primal symbol of fear, which is interesting as those needing spider remedies are often fearful, not just of spiders. The North Americans use dream catchers to aid spiritual guidance from the dream world. Clairvoyance is common in these remedies, though usually in a "gut feeling" sense rather than the true visions of clairvoyance seen in the snake remedies.

As with most remedy descriptions the focus has always been on the shadow side, that part of the character of which we are least proud. It is time to redress the balance of all this bad press. Just imagine a world without spiders.... flies everywhere!

Charlotte's Web by E. M. White is an utterly delightful children's book, which paints a very different picture of the spider. Charlotte, a large grey spider, befriends Wilbur, a pig who is destined for slaughter. The character of Charlotte is a far cry from the cruel blood sucking creature that Wilbur expects and their friendship blossoms. Ultimately Charlotte saves Wilbur's life by ingeniously weaving words into her web above the sty that proclaim Wilbur's brilliance. Everyone thinks that Wilbur must be really special as a result and only one little girl realises the genius of Charlotte.

The remedy descriptions of the spiders claim they are highly manipulative. Charlotte certainly was, but she used her powers of persuasion for the benefit of her friend. There are two sides to every story.

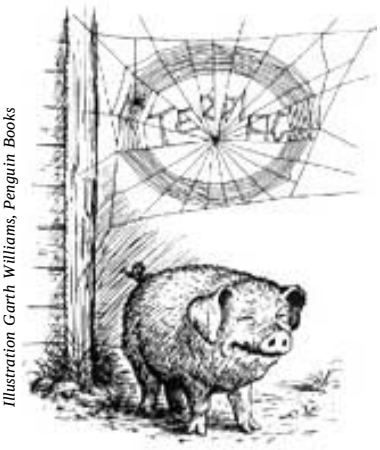


Illustration Garth Williams, Penguin Books

Reversing the trend, Charlotte's Webb *gives a positive view of spiders. In the book Wilbur's life is saved by his spider friend*

The Black widow is famed for eating her mate after sex and women responding to the remedy have a reputation as the femme fatale. In reality the female so much likes her own space that she only eats her mate if he hangs around too long and bugs her. It could be that she mistakes him for lunch, as spiders are notoriously short sighted!

Tarentula hispanica is the most dramatic of the spider remedies. All the spiders show restlessness and can be used for certain anxiety states and hyperactivity. In some cases there may be twitching of the muscles or even epilepsy. Keeping busy calms the person, hence the high-energy lifestyles. Often there are great fears, especially of death. Fear may underlie some of the aggression, which may be almost maniacal. There is a destructive quality to the anger. The women that slash their ex's clothes may well need spider remedies.

Unlike the snake remedies, which are notoriously jealous, the spiders are not particularly suspicious or jealous. Nor are they as chatty as the snakes. Both have the animal magnetism, but the spiders are less overtly sexual. Music elicits very different responses. The snakes are almost mesmerised by it, whereas the spiders are energised. Spot the Tarentula woman at the nightclub, dancing on the speakers! The rhythm is all-important.

Spiders drink the blood of their prey, and hence there is thirst and lack of appetite. In extreme cases this may develop into anorexia nervosa or bulimia.

Just as Charlotte felt bad about her victims, I have often found there is a reluctance to eat meat based on the suffering of animals. There is also often a sense of guilt about the victims of their anger outbursts.

Spider bites often lead to nasty skin infections and hence boils and acne are common symptoms.

Colour is important to Tarentula. There can be a love or aversion to black, red

and green.

Spiders are solitary creatures. The mothers lay the eggs and die before they hatch. Spiders are free spirits by nature.

The spider remedies are extremely useful in homeopathy. They are deep acting and so should only be taken as prescribed by a qualified professional. Our knowledge of this fascinating species is increasing as more remedies are proved.

Case study

Tim's story demonstrates the Tarentula picture perfectly. His main complaint was hay fever, which had come on a couple of years previously. Each summer he would have a perpetually dripping nose and streaming eyes. The anti-histamines would dry up the secretions but left him drowsy. He worked as a drummer in an up and coming rock band and had a day job as a computer designer. He desperately wanted to find something else that would help him, as the anti-histamines meant an alcohol ban, which hardly fitted with his lifestyle. He was a hard drinker and smoked a lot in the evenings. Sometimes he'd stop for a while, when he got worried about his health.

Tim was tall and very lean, dressed all in black, his preferred colour for clothes. He was very restless, his legs constantly moving. He had a real presence, something characteristic of the animal remedies in general. His health was good apart from the hay fever and occasional coughs. In the past he had suffered with acne, with large painful boils which had cleared with a course of antibiotics.

His father suffered with mild asthma, but apart from that the rest of the family was healthy. His parents had divorced when he was in his early teens and he was very resentful of his father for leaving the family. When talking of this he showed his temper, which by his own admission was volcanic. He could and would explode with anger with little provocation and would fantasise about getting his own back when he was "provoked".

He was a very energetic person, almost "manic" as he called it. He detested being bored, "a fate worse than death". He loved the rhythm of hard rock and music with a strong beat. He thrived on the hard work of combining a day job with his music career and found the music energised him. The physical activity of drumming made him very thirsty, and he didn't have much of an appetite anyway. He drank huge quantities of water on stage to combat the dehydration. He loved fruit especially those with a sharp taste. He disliked meat.

He had a partner, but didn't live with her, as he needed his own space. He had a high sex drive. He didn't need much sleep, enjoying the tranquillity of early morning as much as the late nights. He often dreamed of flying which he loved.

He was sensitive to the weather, disliking cold, damp conditions. He preferred hot weather. He also was sensitive to atmospheres between people and the politics of the band, which he played to his advantage. He admitted he could be moody at times and found doing something energetic could lift his mood. He had a very quick mind able to juggle many tasks at once.

Although hay fever is not a classical symptom of Tarentula hispanica, the overall picture of the remedy was so clear that I prescribed it on a constitutional level, 30c, 30c and 200c on the next three days. The effect was dramatic. His hay fever cleared within days and his craving for tobacco reduced. He felt calmer in himself and reduced his dependency on high-energy drinks, alcohol and coffee. His appetite increased and he began to eat more, still avoiding meat as it stuck in his throat. He also felt an abhorrence of eating dead animals. His energy remained high, but he lost the almost self-destructive urge to live hard (and die young!). He needed a repeat dose of the remedy a year or so later and has remained well since.

In 1995 Marysia Kratimenos MB BS FRCS(Ed) MFHom joined the staff of the RLHH, where she is involved in stress clinics, general medicine, paediatrics and neuro-linguistic programming.

The worker bee syndrome seemed to sum up the life of *Moira McGuigan's* patient, as she describes in

Apis mel a constitutional remedy



Illustration by Jim Opfer

Beth, a young woman of 27, came to see me suffering from urticaria and angiodeoma. Urticaria is hives raised on the skin and angiodeoma is swelling of the lips, face and tongue that can be very dangerous. She worked in the mortgage section of a bank and had suffered this problem since 1999, shortly after getting a puppy. She had thought the dog was to blame but when he died a few months later her condition did not improve. She had recurring rashes over the next seven months and then her face, lips, tongue and the glands in her throat began to swell regularly. Some days she was afraid to leave the house because of the extreme swelling. Shortly after, her grandmother died and her symptoms got worse.

Beth's GP had given her anti-histamines that she was presently taking three times a day but when she had had a really bad attack of facial swelling her GP was quite worried and had given her steroids to take. Beth had had referrals to an allergy specialist, a dermatologist, nutritionist and a rheumatologist with no result.

Beth finally came in to see me for help. Her rash was extremely itchy, appearing as raised sore, red lumps which were on her hands, arms legs, trunk and soles of the feet. It felt as it she was walking on pebbles even though there were no blisters on her skin. The condition appeared to be worsening with increased swelling and inflammation of her wrists, hands and knees. The itch was very intense even worse than the heat of the rash. The only relief was a warm bath with baking soda in the water.

Beth said, "Physically, I don't have a lot of other symptoms except that I pass a

lot of urine but I suppose that is because I drink a lot. I also get a lot of catarrh first thing in the morning but I haven't had a cold since 1999. When my skin flares up, I get depressed and want to hide away."

There wasn't anything in Beth's past history to alert me. She had had a happy childhood with two brothers and one younger sister. Her father was away a lot and her mother worked part-time. She liked primary school but was anxious to leave secondary school. When Beth left school, she got work in a bank, staying there for 11 years. I felt that this was unusual, people usually move around more these days.

Beth told me that she liked the people she worked with but the work was boring. There had been some trouble at work last year when she'd covered for the team leader. An older, male colleague resented her new position and was always criticising her. Recently, there had been rumours that the department was to be closed down. Everyone was hanging on for a redundancy cheque. Beth had her own plans if she got redundancy but would probably stay in the same kind of work.

Recent family events in Beth's life had been her grandmother and grandfather dying and her father suffering a heart attack. Both worried her greatly and the skin conditions worsened. She lives at home with her parents and is very close to her sister's child, Stephanie, who is a huge joy and large part of her life.

"I have a great social life at work," Beth explained. "We get on well. I go to the gym three times a week and I like dancing but I don't get the opportunity to go very often and I spend a lot of time with my niece and nephews."

Beth had no serious boyfriends since school and wanted to meet a man who was a hero just like her dad.

Next, I asked Beth about her likes and dislikes. She was a thirsty person drinking a lot of fizzy drinks and water. She likes spicy foods but not fish. She does not like insects or heights. She loves flying especially the take off and landing and looking over the



clouds. Then she said something strange: she didn't like having flowers around the house at all. I found this quite unusual. Beth said that she even hated the pattern of flowers on wallpapers.

The symptoms of Beth's case indicated many first aid remedies: Urtica urens, Apis mel and Rhus tox (if there is blistering) as well as Calc carb, Phosphorus and Natrum mur. However, I thought there were really strong strands running through this case. Work was extremely important to Beth. She has worked loyally for the same company all her adult life. Her team was a tightly knit group and she had worked together with them for many years. Her social life outside her family was always with her workmates. She liked harmony and stability at home and work. If things were unhappy, she was distressed.

She was very conscientious and she'd worked solidly over the years making way up the promotion ladder slowly and plodding on. Although she was young and heterosexual, she didn't seem interested in having a relationship with a man. She was waiting for her dream man or her hero who was probably unobtainable. She enjoyed her relationship with children. She loved flying and hated flowers around the house because she would have to look after them.



Photo courtesy of British Beekeepers Association

Her problems of urticaria and angiodeoma had started with disharmony within her working team. Therefore I concentrated on Apis and thought of the structure of a beehive.

The beehive is the epitome of a harmonious working relationship. Only the queen bee is sexual. The worker bees work for the good of the hive and protect and serve the queen by collecting nectar and pollen from plants and bringing it back to the queen. Some workers use it to make honey, others tend the larvae and feed the grubs. Male drones have only one purpose,

to chase and catch the queen and impregnate her. Only the strongest and fastest drone is successful. All the queen does is lay eggs. There are no males working in this environment at all: it is asexual.

All of this may seem irrelevant to Beth's case but just look at some of the things she has said. "I hate flowers and the need to look after them. I love flying. I like my



niece, she is the joy of my life and I like my nephews too." She likes her niece the best but they are all like brothers and sisters. In the hive, everyone is related and involved in looking after the queen bee and each other. I gave her Apis 30c (three tablets).

She returned three months later. The rash lessened for about three weeks then she then heard that the mortgage department was closing down and her skin flared up and was worse than ever. Beth was told that she couldn't get redundancy, only redeployment.

"I feel overwhelmed and that I have no control over my own life. They want me to move to another part of the bank. I've been in the mortgage department for a long time, have trained up and I feel that they should value my skills now and give me a job that matches my experience. If they can't do that, they should give me my redundancy. I'm thinking of taking this to a tribunal."

She told me that she'd had a strange dream. "There was some sort of war game. I was with a lot of people I knew. I dreamed about a beautiful, brand new house. We went into the house and hid in the attic. The next thing I knew, we were all sitting talking and laughing and getting on well together. It was a lovely



house and made of pale wood with a porch on the front just like one of those American clapboard houses. There were no other houses around it; it was just there, sitting alone by itself. I remember thinking what a lovely house this was."

I immediately thought of the beehive. Beth hadn't been aware of what remedy she was given so I told her. I gave her another three tablets of Apis. The rash disappeared. She returned later with the news that she had taken her employers to appeal and was now awaiting the result. She had been transferred to another bank in England for nine weeks.

"It was a big adventure for me. I had to live away from home and we had to drive back for weekends. All three of us workmates went down. I was surprised because I wasn't carsick at all and it had been acute before. My skin has been great, the rashes and hives have gone. I've stopped the anti-histamines. For the first time in two years I got a cold last week. I thought it was strange.

"If I win my appeal at the bank they will have to offer me a higher grade job. If I lose, they will have to make me redundant. I already have a job to go to as I put my name into a job agency and the next day I went for tests. I feel my working life is changing.

"I also met a guy in a town pub. He is from Newcastle. We just hit it off straight away and chatted all night. We just talk all the time and get on well."

I left it at that and suggested if she has a flare up then contact me. Just to make sure, I phoned her recently. She said that her skin had been clear and she was still off anti-histamines. She lost her appeal at work and decided to take the new job with an insurance company but is finding it a slow process to settle into a new place. This is to be expected as Beth likes static, she likes what she knows.

I asked her if she was still seeing the man from Newcastle She told me it was going quite well but he still has to prove himself! I just thought oh well, I hope he doesn't have to fly after her to prove himself!

The remedy Apis mel has so many indications for Beth and her character. Just with these six tablets Beth got better when conventional medicine had failed.



Moira McGuigan MBChB DRCOG MFHom was a full-time GP in an inner city practice in Glasgow for 18 years and during the last five years used homeopathy extensively. In December 2000 she left general practice to concentrate on further specialist training in homeopathy both in the NHS and private practice.