

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

### HOMOEOPATHY

#### History of Homoeopathy

Homeopathy uses the principle discovered and developed by Dr Samuel Hahnemann, in Saxony. In literal terms, the name means the treatment of disease using a substance which has the power to produce similar symptoms in a healthy body. The symptoms that a substance can cause are discovered by means of 'provings' - tests on healthy human beings. Hahnemann later developed the extreme dilutions which remain, to this day, a controversial area of homeopathic practice. In circa 1813, in Leipzig, Hahnemann lectured on the use of his medical system on animals. He stressed that the principles were the same.

Boenninghausen continued to develop veterinary homeopathy, on his extensive estate in Westphalia. Numerous authors have kept the practice alive until, in modern times in the UK, George Macleod (1912 - 1995) was a very well-known veterinary homeopath and author.

In 1982 the British Association of Homœopathic Veterinary Surgeons (BAHVS) was formed. In 1984, veterinary courses commenced at the Royal London Homœopathic Hospital. In April 1986, the International Association for Veterinary Homœopathy (IAVH) was founded in Luxembourg. Among other work, this organisation has produced a veterinary materia medica. The first veterinary qualification in the world (VetMFHom) was awarded by the Faculty of Homœopathy in 1987. That organisation created the post of Veterinary Dean in 1988, in order to oversee education and examinations in veterinary homœopathy and, in 1991, the first Veterinary Fellow of the Faculty (VetFFHom) was elected. In 2001, the first examination and qualification in basic (first-year) homeopathy was established. It was also the year of the emergence of the first veterinary repertory.

#### Practical application

Homeopathy has been used in animals for at least 190 years. All types of animals respond, from pets to farm animals, from horses to wild animals, from birds to fish. Organic farmers rely upon it as an effective, safe medicine which does not give rise to drug residues in meat, milk or eggs. Conventional farmers also make use of its benefits. Competition horses and dogs can be given homeopathy, without risk of falling foul of competition 'doping' rules.

Homeopathic medicines are selected according to their ability to stimulate natural healing processes. The body dictates the reaction. Sometimes, usually heralding a good response, there may be a temporary aggravation of local or superficial symptoms. The homeopathic consultation process is more complex than the usual veterinary consultation. It can take a long time, depending upon the complaint from which the patient suffers. It involves the vet in discovering a great deal of information, not just from clinical examination but also from the owner. Likely questions may include details of background, lifestyle, environment, demeanour, character, likes, dislikes, fears, diet, household and family details and responses to various external influences.

In individual animals, many chronic and refractory diseases can respond, where conventional medication may have failed. Injuries and acute illnesses also respond. In groups, herds or flocks of animals, in-water medication can treat large numbers of animals safely, easily, cheaply and effectively.

Homeopathy, far from being a 'folksy' and weird system of esoteric medicine, has 'gained its spurs' and its use is increasing rapidly, as people realise what it has to offer, whether as a 'first-line' or as a 'last resort' medicine. Skin disease, arthritis, auto-immune disorders, bowel disease, epilepsy, heart problems and behavioural conditions are frequent callers but many other diseases respond. Until modern times, no research had been conducted to establish its effectiveness. This has now been remedied. Research papers are appearing, showing the widespread benefits of this simple, safe and effective therapy.

Homeopathic medication can be damaged by frost, excessive heat, sunlight and aromatherapy. Its effects in the body can be damaged by intercurrent aromatherapy and anti-inflammatory drugs. It is capable of careful and informed integration with acupuncture, but these two therapies may interfere if not properly integrated.

## **The Remedies**

Homeopathy is able to treat infectious diseases, chronic diseases, acute diseases, injuries and behavioural disorders. While cancer is not easily mastered, there are encouraging numbers of recorded cases of complete recovery from some of the worst forms. It even enjoys widespread use in disease prevention, in place of vaccination. It is worth giving some examples of easy home treatments here, however, since their use does not demand the full rigours of homeopathic knowledge and understanding. Most of them are easily available in pharmacies and health shops all over the UK (usually in a 6c potency).

**Aconitum** - This remedy treats shock, both mental and physical and will also assist in the treatment of acute febrile conditions, such as virus or bacterial diseases.

**Apis** - Urticarial swellings, oedema and fluid in joints will often respond to this

remedy, apart from its benefits for insect bites and stings.

**Arnica** - Arnica is homeopathy's great injury remedy. Its use will minimise bruising and speed healing.

**Belladonna** - High fevers with head ear, throat or eye pain are especially helped by this remedy. Very painful abscesses may also respond.

**Bryonia** - Arthritis, rheumatism, pneumonia or mastitis, when the animal refuses to move, are the main areas of use of Bryonia.

**Calendula** - Used as a lotion, this remedy speeds healing of cuts, grazes or open wounds, in addition to helping the animal to fight septic infection of such injuries.

**Cantharis** - This medicine helps most cases of cystitis.

**Carbo veg.** - This is called the 'corpse reviver', on account of its ability to help patients in collapse.

**Caulophyllum** - The birth process, at all stages, is helped by Caulophyllum.

**Chamomilla** - Teething in young dogs and trouble from teething in any species will benefit from use of this remedy.

**Colocynthis** - Colic in horses would be the most common first-aid use of Colocynthis.

**Euphrasia** - Named 'eyebright', this remedy helps many eye conditions, including conjunctivitis from cold winds. It also helps in cases of sneezing and nasal allergy.

**Hamamelis** - Bleeding from wounds and orifices would indicate Hamamelis, in many cases.

**Hepar sulph.** - This is nick-named the 'homeopathic antibiotic', so effective it is in helping patients to fight septic, purulent infections.

**Hypericum** - Use this remedy whenever there is a painful graze or damage to tissues rich in nerve endings (e.g. toes and tail).

**Ledum** - Use this whenever puncture wounds occur, from whatever injury. There are reputed anti-tetanus properties in addition to its ability to help such wounds heal correctly, from the depths outwards.

**Nosodes** - These are remedies made from diseases or disease material (e.g. discharges, tissues, secretions, excretions). They are widely used to help treat infectious diseases, yet do have other therapeutic properties in their own right. They can be used in prevention of infectious diseases (nosodes for protection).

There are nosodes for most infectious diseases of animals. There are the so-called 'bowel nosodes', which are classified with nosodes but arguably are not actual nosodes, according to the strict definition. These are related to groups of homeopathic remedies and may be used in their own right or as a useful adjunct to one of the related remedies. Their use is not confined to bowel disorders, despite the name. The use of nosodes is a specialist area, so it is recommended that they should only be used on the advice of a properly qualified veterinary surgeon.

**Nux vomica** - If an animal has stolen too much rich food, or had access to poisons, Nux vomica should help recovery from the resultant intoxication.

**Rhus tox.** - This suits most cases of rheumatism and arthritis, that are worse for first movement but limber up.

**Ruta** - Ligaments, tendons and other fibrous tissues are the main areas of benefit of this remedy.

**Silica** - Helps the body to drive out foreign bodies, e.g. grass seeds. The power of this remedy, way beyond this simple capability, is evidence of the power of crystals.

**Symphytum** - Symphytum treats bone injuries of any type, speeding healing.

**Urtica** - This remedy treats nettle rash (urticaria) and helps the flow of milk from the mammary gland.

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