

Homeopathic Healthcare
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The Laws of Healing

I thought I would digress from my usual format to explain a very important aspect of homeopathic health care — the laws of cure. Unfortunately, space restrictions necessitate brevity; nonetheless, I hope the basics of these concepts will be adequately conveyed. These “laws” represent years of observation of cured clinical cases by one of America’s foremost homeopaths, Dr. Constantine Herring, about one hundred years ago. While not infallible, these criteria of cure do generally apply and have withstood the test of time. When a patient’s clinical course after treatment is viewed with these laws (or, more accurately, rules of cure) in mind, one can readily determine not only if the treatment has been effective, but if it has been truly curative. Too often therapeutic results are gauged solely by the immediate symptom relief obtained, the overall well-being of the individual being lost in the process. In homeopathy we recognize that some treatments (of any system of healing) can be suppressive (or palliative) as opposed to curative. Such results are typically characterized by fairly prompt relief of the presenting complaint with a subsequent (the time interval is variable) or simultaneous diminution in one’s general sense of well-being and the later development of more serious pathology. I will illustrate below. If Herring’s rules of cure were employed universally for all therapies, we could quickly ascertain the appropriateness of a treatment and move rapidly to correct suppressive effects. As it stands to date, though, homeopathy is the only therapeutic system, as far as I am aware, that utilizes this invaluable tool.

Rules of Cure

1. *Cure proceeds from the center of the organism to the periphery, from greater organs to lesser.*
This is the most important rule, superseding all others. It means that, after treatment, more serious health problems (including psychological illness) should be the first to improve or should improve at the same time as more minor problems improve. For example, in a patient with heart disease and arthritis (both, for the sake of argument, of equal intensity), the heart disease should improve before or simultaneously with the arthritis. Were the arthritis to improve and the heart condition to worsen or remain unchanged, we would suspect that our treatment was incorrect and should be changed. The same would apply to a patient with significant depression and, say, psoriasis, or any other clinical situation (with but few exceptions). Truly curative effects should proceed from more vital structures or aspects of the organism to less vital. The reverse is suppression and detrimental.

2. *Cure proceeds in the reverse order of the appearance of symptoms.*
This observation means simply that a patient’s most recent symptoms will be the first to disappear after correct treatment; subsequently, older symptoms will also disappear in reverse chronological order. While this rule very often applies, it may be superseded by the first rule, as in the hypothetical case of someone with ulcerative colitis who subsequently develops a skin rash. While the rash might disappear prior to improvement of the colitis, the reverse might also be seen as healing ensues on the deeper level.

3. *Cure proceeds from above downward (or toward the periphery).*
This observation applies primarily to skin rashes and arthritis. Typically after correct homeopathic treatment, one sees rashes improve from the head downward toward the hands and feet. Similarly, arthritic inflammations flare and subside progressively toward the periphery, as in the case of a hip arthritis improving, followed by latter involvement of the ankle and eventual relief of that joint as well.

Other Signposts of Cure

Enhancement of General Well-being

While difficult to monitor in an objective sense, another very important subjective indication of a curative response to treatment, and one employed constantly in homeopathic medicine, is an improvement in a patient’s feeling of well-being. Frequently, before any improvement in a specific

health complaint is seen, and sometimes even in the midst of a healing crisis (termed aggravation in homeopathic medicine), a definite sense of feeling better, healthier overall – both mentally and physically – is observed. Whenever the opposite is encountered, the homeopathic physician views any patient's professed improvement on a local level (such as a diminution of pain in an arthritic joint or less itching of a skin rash, etc.) with considerable circumspection. Almost always, improved well-being accompanies or precedes true cure. If it doesn't, simple palliation or symptom suppression is suspected, often leading to a worse outcome in the long term.

Return of Old Symptoms

This observation is a corollary of rule 2 above – symptoms improving in the reverse order of their appearance. Very often, in homeopathy and any other deeply curative healing modality, patients in the course of their treatment response experience a return of old, sometimes long forgotten, symptoms. For instance, a childhood eczema that preceded the later development of asthma will re-appear some time (and the timing can vary widely) after the asthma has subsided in response to treatment. Not infrequently, the eczema, or other condition, will then improve on its own without further treatment, leaving the patient feeling very well indeed. Other times the eczema, etc. will require a repetition of the earlier treatment or even a different homeopathic medication altogether. The worst response to such an old symptom revisitation would be the administration of suppressive treatments – steroid ointments, for example, in the case of eczema; such a course almost invariably results in a full relapse the deeper, originally treated health condition.

The above represent the essential criteria of a deeply curative response to homeopathic and other holistic treatments. An awareness of these laws of healing can help patients and health professionals alike choose the best treatment modalities.

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