

Disease Prevention and Homeopathy  
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We live, here in North America, in rather somber times. We seem to be under the threat of attack from all sides; if not from Nature with new allopathically-named diseases such as Ebola and West Nile Virus, or from the resurgence of dreaded diseases once thought conquered, such as tuberculosis and malaria, then from bio-terrorists, whether state-sanctioned or private, using nature against us, as in the case of the recent anthrax and smallpox scares in the United States.

The initial reaction to a threat is to protect yourself. It is no different in the case of medicine and disease.

Disease prevention, or prophylaxis, has always been the preferred route for medicine. Folk wisdom tells us that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure (although for those in Canada, that now needs to read something like “a gram of prevention is worth a kilogram of cure,” but the metric version doesn’t quite have the same ring to it).

My task this morning is to examine the case for the use of the law of similars prophylactically, or what has been termed “homeoprophylaxis.”

A teacher once told me that when you speak in public you first state what you are going to say, then you say it, and finally, you summarize what you have just said. Three times lucky, I guess. So, I’ll try to keep to this wise advice this morning. It is a little intimidating to be speaking to a room full of homeopathic practitioners and students of homeopathy, all the more when I say what I have to say.

### **Homeopathy Can’t Prevent Disease**

Essentially, I am led to the logical conclusion from the evidence that *homeopathy cannot prevent disease*. That’s perhaps the bad news. The good news is that Hahnemann’s complete medical system, called Heilkunst, of which homeopathy is one part, *can prevent disease* though a form of immunization.

Now that that has been clearly stated, allow me to elaborate on how I arrived at this conclusion.

To start, we need to look at what Dr. Hahnemann actually said on the subject of prevention of disease using medicine. We must leave aside the whole issue of proper regimen and the myriad of ways we can strengthen the immune system against disease. What we are talking about here is the use of a specific medicine to provide a form of immunity against a specific disease, and not just in individual cases, but on a mass scale.

### **What Hahnemann Said**

Samuel Hahnemann first mentioned the use of the law of similars for prevention of disease

in, “*Cure and Prevention of Scarlet Fever*” (1801), an article that he explicitly referenced in the *Organon*.

Who can deny that the perfect prevention of the infection from this devastating scourge, and the discovery of a means whereby this divine aim may be surely attained, would offer infinite advantages over any other mode of treatment, be it of the most incomparable kind so ever?

*The remedy capable of maintaining the healthy uninfected by the miasm of scarlatina, I was so fortunate as to discover. (original italics) (Lesser Writings, p. 377)*

He likens this elsewhere to the practice of vaccination (that is, the use of cowpox to prevent smallpox).

Hahnemann reinforces this claim in his article on the prevention and treatment of rabies (hydrophobia):

In like manner there cannot be any prophylactic of hydrophobia that does not prove itself to be at the same time a really efficacious remedy for the fully developed hydrophobia.

Let us begin at this starting point. Let a remedy be discovered that has already cured at least ten persons, really affected with hydrophobia, without exception and permanently; this will, this must be, likewise the best prophylactic; but any substance that cannot stand this test, can never, in the eyes of reason and experience, be considered as a trustworthy prophylactic. (*Lesser Writings*, pp. 390-91)

What we have given to us here is another very important principle bequeathed by Dr. Hahnemann and that can be stated as follows:

What will cure a disease according to the law of similars will also prevent that same disease. This conclusion is consistent with the title he gave his paper, “*The Cure and Prevention of Scarlet Fever*.”

This principle, so stated, also means that prevention extends beyond acute infectious diseases. We can look to folk medicine to learn that settlers used a tea made from the young leaves of the poison ivy plant to prevent a reaction to poison ivy later on when clearing the land. We learn in history of an emperor who took minute doses of arsenic in order to protect himself against the threat of arsenic poisoning from rivals. Coca leaves have been chewed for centuries by natives in the Andes Mountains to prevent high altitude sickness.

It seems to me that the writings of Dr. Hahnemann on the prevention of disease in otherwise healthy persons are quite clear. The history of its use is also quite clear in terms of its effectiveness. We all are familiar with the success of homeopathic remedies to both cure and prevent Asiatic cholera, even in Hahnemann’s time. The official statistics show a mortality rate of less than 3%. Other homeopaths have used the principle of prevention in the case of smallpox and flu epidemics with similar success.

However, despite this, anyone who takes the trouble to research the literature relating to the prevention of disease through the use of medicine on the basis of the law of similars cannot help but be struck by two things:

The lack of agreement on the validity of so-called “homeoprophylaxis.”

The lack of agreement on the use of nosodes or isodes to both cure *and* prevent disease.

### **Lack of Consensus**

Let’s take up the first point first – the lack of consensus on the validity of what is often called “homeoprophylaxis.” Actually, to be precise, the term should be “homoprophylaxis,” but that will only become clear later on.

To return to the main point, why should there be any doubt on disease prevention through medicine given Hahnemann’s clear statements and experience, and the experience recorded in the literature after his death? Boenninghausen, Kent, Burnett, Tyler, Blackie, Boger and others felt no compunction in using remedies, and particularly nosodes, preventively, mainly in epidemic diseases. Let’s look at Kent, for example.

Kent also recognized the value of prevention and the use of remedies that are not based on the individual symptom picture of the patient (which he saw as producing the highest simillimum), but effective nonetheless:

“Now you will find that for prophylaxis there is required a less degree of similitude than is necessary for curing [that is, less tailored to the particular variable, individual disease in a patient]. A remedy will not have to be so similar to prevent disease as to cure it, and these remedies in daily use will enable you to prevent a large number of people from becoming sick.” (Kent, in *Zizia* homeopathic software)

Arguments over the last three decades, however, since the revival of homeopathy in North America, have tripped over the issue of symptoms.

One view has been that no remedy can be given except on the basis of disease symptoms. “No symptoms, no remedy,” seems to be the motto of this group.

Another roadblock is the belief that homeopathy is about the giving of the constitutional remedy, which is focused on the patient, not disease. Any prevention is only through the general strengthening of the patient’s immune system. The motto of this group could be said to be “Treat the patient, not the disease.”

### **Recent Statements by Homeopathic “Principals”**

Let’s look at two recent statements by recognized authorities in the homeopathic field. Both of these statements were triggered by the threats of bio-terrorism following the destruction of the World Trade Center in September 2001.

The first statement was made in a series of newsletters on prevention available only by subscription that was then offered for sale to the broader public. The newsletters were offered as an attempt to set the record straight on the issue given the wide confusion.

Let’s examine the basic conclusions:

"While it would be nice to believe that homeopathy can definitely protect you from epidemic diseases, I can absolutely say that it does not. I can state that people can be doing very well on their constitutional remedy, feeling very well, and yet when an epidemic comes along, they become ill. As such, I can absolutely say that homeopathic remedies do not confer specific immunity for specific illnesses, at least at the same high percentage as vaccines do.

Therefore, if the goal is specific immunity to a specific epidemic, then the best mechanism to attain that, at this time, is through a[n allopathic] vaccine.

It remains the job of a homeopath to help the overall health of the patient." (Newsletter #37-38)

"When homeopathy began, [allopathic] medicine was in its infancy."

"...medical treatments were both ineffective and in fact many times damaging."

"In contrast to that, homeopathy treated people during epidemics and had good success."

"[Allopathic] Medicine changed, evolved. [Allopathic] Medical treatment improved and became more precise."

"What I am trying to say here is that there is no longer a great discrepancy in results between drugs and homeopathy during an epidemic, and in fact where there is a drug for a severe epidemic it should be taken. But when no drug is available, or is ineffective, homeopathy should be employed." (Newsletter #37-38)

A similar, more recent variant of this "rely-on-allopathic-vaccination" position is that of the Faculty of Homœopathy in London, England, which declared in a letter to the British Medical Journal of 27 September, 2002 that Hahnemann supported vaccinations and, therefore, homeopaths should encourage their patients to undergo the usual allopathic vaccinations. The Faculty of Homœopathy states, so I am told here, that Dr. Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, supported allopathic vaccinations and that patients are directed to follow the normal (i.e., allopathic) vaccination schedule.

This statement does not stand up to the facts of the matter. The Faculty position is justified on the basis of Dr. Hahnemann's alleged support for smallpox vaccinations, citing Aphorism 46 of the *Organon*. Aphorism 46 only explains the principle behind the cure, by nature, of an existing disease by a similar disease, such as cowpox and smallpox.

46.9. ...due to their great similarity, the ensuing outbreak of smallpox is at least greatly diminished (homeopathically) and made more benign a] by the cowpox which has already neared its maturity...

46.9. a] This appears to be the reason for the beneficent, remarkable event that, since the general dispersal of Jenner's cowpox inoculation, smallpox has never again appeared among us either so epidemically or so virulently as 40-50 years ago when a city seized therewith would lose at least half and often three quarters of its children by the most wretched plague death.

What is left out in the Faculty position is the whole issue of dose. Dr. Hahnemann pointed out clearly that the law of similars using nosodes or isodes is harmful because of the large

(material) dose. To be safe, the application of disease material as a preventative (immunization) has to be diluted and succussed (potentized).

50.1. Great nature itself has as homeopathic curative implements, as we see, only a few established miasmatic diseases as aids: scabies, measles, and smallpox,  
a] and the above mentioned skin-eruption-tinder which moreover is to be found in the cowpox lymph, disease Potences which,  
b] namely smallpox and measles are partly, as remedies, more life-threatening and atrocious than the maladies to be cured therewith, and partly (like scabies), after cure of similar diseases is accomplished, require cure themselves in order to be extirpated in turn -- both circumstances which make their employment as homeopathic means difficult, uncertain and dangerous.

50.3. Only a few maladies can therefore be cured in the course of nature with these dubious and precarious homeopathic means, and success shows forth only with danger and great ailment, surely for the reason that the doses of these disease Potences do not lend themselves to reduction according to circumstances, as can be done with medicinal doses; on the contrary, the one afflicted with an old similar malady is covered over with the entire dangerous and troublesome suffering, the entire smallpox-, measles- or scabies-disease, in order to recover from the old similar malady.

56.4. a] 3. But this intending to cure by means of an entirely identical disease Potence [that is, using a crude substance] contradicts all healthy common sense and therefore all experience also.

56.4. a]7. But meaning to cure a human disease with an identical human disease matter, that is going too far!

56.4. a] 8. Nothing results from it but calamity and aggravation of the disease!

The conclusion is clear. Dr. Hahnemann supported the principle of immunization, but not the “normal” (i.e., allopathic, crude dose) approach. Quite the contrary! He stated, presciently as it seems, based on official statistics, that such an approach to prevention would lead to death and destruction.

We will have to set aside the undoubtedly unconscious but telling implication here that medicine and homeopathy are two different things. What we face clearly is the view that homeopathic remedies treat people and not specific diseases, and that this so-called constitutional prescribing is not effective in conferring immunity against disease. Recourse, in this view, must be had to the allopathic vaccinations for protection against specific diseases.

Let us now look at a statement called “Communicating About Bioterrorism and Epidemic Disease” put out by the American Association of Homeopathic Pharmacists in conjunction with physician members of the American Institute of Homeopathy, the National Center for Homeopathy, and the Homoeopathic Pharmacopœia of the United States:

“1. When properly applied by trained medical professionals, homeopathy has been shown to be useful in epidemic disease. The approach taken has been to rapidly observe the symptoms manifested in the population and to match them to the homeopathic medicine(s) that have that symptom picture. The medicine(s) chosen are called the genus epidemicus. Historically, the genus epidemicus has been a broad acting drug (polychrest). For example, in the flu pandemic of

the early 20th century, the genus epidemicus was the homeopathic medicine *Gelsemium*. Consumers should be made aware that this approach (the normal homeopathic approach of case taking) has been shown to be successful.

“2. What about nosodes? ...Many consumers are requesting the nosodes *anthracinum* (made from the sterile lysate of liver of a rabbit infected with bacillus anthracis) and *variolinum* (source indeterminate). The nosode approach in epidemic disease is not well documented...  
c. Prophylaxis. The use of homeopathic medicine for the prevention of disease is controversial and not well supported in the literature.”

It is interesting that a statement from the US FDA quoted in the same communication confirms the view that homeopathy cannot be used for prophylaxis according to the official view of homeopathy!

The following is an excerpt of an official FDA correspondence to HPCUS in May 1997:

“This letter is sent regarding our recent conversation concerning products claiming to be homeopathic nosodes that are intended to prevent various diseases through vaccination, including childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, diphtheria, polio, tetanus, etc. It appears to us that such products cannot be defined as homeopathic when intended to prevent disease through vaccination. This position is based on the fact that such substances, again when used for preventing disease through vaccination, are not being administered for healing the sick, as the definition of homeopathy requires. The individual being treated is not sick at the time the drug is administered. Further, they are not in keeping with the basic tenet of homeopathy, that is ‘similia similibus curentur,’ since they are not being offered to ‘cure a like’ but to prevent a disease.”

According to the supporters of the communication quoting the FDA, “This statement speaks for itself...”

The surprising thing is that the position of the FDA accurately reflects the generally accepted position of the “medical” homeopathic community in the West. The other surprising thing is that it is quite accurate regarding what *homeopathy* can and cannot do.

Homeopathy is about the law of similars being applied according to a matching of the symptoms of a substance caused in a healthy person with those being produced by a disease in a sick person. Thus, if a patient presents with all the symptoms of arsenic poisoning, we are entitled to give arsenic in properly attenuated dose even if the patient never ever swallowed any arsenic.

However, as the FDA bureaucrats so logically point out, there is no basis or sanction for giving so-called homeopathic remedies in cases where there is no disease in a patient (only threatened).

We have to admit we have a problem here. Either homeopathy is what it is or it is not. At the same time, we cannot ignore what Hahnemann wrote, nor the substantial evidence from the literature of the use of nosodes and isodes to both treat and prevent disease.

So, on what grounds then can we justify giving a remedy that is not chosen on the basis of any symptoms of disease in a patient, much less offer this one remedy to healthy people as a preventative? We must have a principle for any action according to natural law, as Hahnemann required in Aphorism 2 of the *Organon*.

I have not seen any coherent exposition of this in the literature and, given the general confusion prevailing over what Dr. Hahnemann wrote more generally about disease and its cure and prevention, I must confess that I cannot reasonably expect ever to read such an exposition. In the absence of any other coherent exposition, I offer my own from extensive research and reflection.

### **Demolishing Some Myths**

To fully understand it, we must first visit and demolish several myths about what Dr. Hahnemann wrote and taught:

Dr. Hahnemann's system of medicine is not just about the application of medicine on the basis of symptoms.

Hahnemann taught that there are two kinds of disease: those of constant nature, which he called diseases of a constant Wesen; and those of a variable nature or Wesen, which he called individual diseases.

The first is the primary disease, pure in form and always arising from the same cause. The second is a development of the first. It is secondary in nature and variable in expression, depending on circumstances, the passage of time and the constitution of the individual.

For the primary or constant diseases, which he also called "peculiar diseases," there is only one remedy for each person suffering from that specific disease. Hahnemann called this the "peculiar specific."

However, the primary disease operating in each person can give rise to a secondary disease that is individual in nature and can only be determined from the image of disease given in the symptoms expressed by the patient.

Allow me to quote from a few passages:

It is only the very great simplicity and constancy of ague and syphilis that permitted remedies to be found for them, which appeared to many physicians to have specific qualities; for the variations in these diseases occur much more seldom, and are usually much less important than in others, consequently bark and mercury must be much more serviceable than not so. But neither is bark specific in ague, in the most extended sense of the term, nor mercury in syphilis, in its most extended sense [that is, where there are complications]; they are, however, probably specific in both diseases, when they occur simple, pure and free from all complications. Our great and intelligent observers of disease have seen the truth of this too well, to require that I should dwell longer on this subject.

Now, when I entirely deny that there are any absolute specifics for individual diseases, in their full extent, as they are described in ordinary works on pathology, I am, on the other hand, convinced that there are as many specifics as there are different states of individual diseases, i.e., that there are peculiar specifics for the pure disease, and others for its varieties, and for other abnormal states of the system. (Hahnemann, *Lesser Writings*, p. 260-261).

We observe a few diseases that always arise from one and the same cause, e.g., the miasmatic maladies; hydrophobia, the venereal disease, the plague of the Levant, yellow fever, small-pox, cow-pox, the measles and some others, which bear upon them the distinctive mark of always remaining diseases of a peculiar character; and, because they arise from a contagious principle that always remains the same, they also always retain the same character and pursue the same course, excepting as regards some accidental concomitant circumstances, which however do not alter their essential character...

These few diseases, at all events those first mentioned (the miasmatic), we may therefore term specific, and when necessary bestow on them distinctive appellations. If a remedy has been discovered for one of these, it will always be able to cure it, for such a disease always remains essentially identical, both in its manifestations (the representatives of its internal nature) and in its cause. (*Lesser Writings*, p. 440)

The constant specific remedies in these few diseases were capable of being discovered... only because the thing to be cured, the disease, was of a constant character; - they are diseases which always remain the same; some are produced by a miasm which constitutes the same through all generations, [that is, has the same infectious cause] such as the venereal disease; others have the same exciting causes, as the ague of marshy districts, the goitre of the inhabitants of deep valleys and their outlets, and the bruises caused by falls and blows... (*Lesser Writings*, p. 260-261)

At this point, Hahnemann gives us a clear and unmistakable principle:

Only for a want of a constant character can we suppose a supply of a constant character.

That is to say, where there is a constant Wesen disease, we can always give the same remedy, which is chosen on knowledge of the cause, but where there is no such constant disease cause, then recourse must be had to the use of symptoms to find the remedy.

In another passage, Hahnemann clearly distinguishes between the two types of disease.

Hence it happens that with the exception of those few diseases that are always the same, all others are dissimilar and innumerable and so different that each of them occurs scarcely more than once in the world and each case of disease that presents itself must be regarded (and treated) as an individual malady that never before occurred in the same manner...

The internal essential nature of every... individual case of disease, as far as it is necessary for us to know it, for the purpose of curing it, expresses itself by the symptoms, as they present themselves to the investigations of the true observer in their whole extent, connection and succession. (*Lesser Writings*, pp. 442-443)

In order to treat successfully the other cases of disease occurring in man [that is, the variable, individual diseases] ...if they cannot be referred to some primary disease which is constant in its character, they must each be regarded as peculiar diseases, and a medicine which in its pure effects on the healthy body shows symptoms similar to those of the case before us, must be administered. (*Lesser Writings*, p.

If we follow closely what Hahnemann is telling us here, based on his keen powers of reason and his extensive experience, we cannot fail but to come to the following conclusion:

There are diseases that are fixed in nature, coming from a fixed cause, whether infectious (miasmatic) or exciting, such as a trauma (bruises), and there are diseases that have no such fixed cause but express differently in each individual, to a greater or lesser degree.

The fixed or primary diseases are prescribed on the basis of the cause, what Hahnemann called true causal prescribing, or the “Royal Road of Medicine.”

The variable or secondary diseases must be prescribed according to the “features” (Merkmale) of the disease – the symptomological data.

Prescribing for the variable or secondary diseases is, properly speaking, homeopathic (similar suffering), as the symptoms represent historically, the pathology (before this term was reduced to material tissue or chemical change in the organism). Prescribing for the constant, or primary diseases based on knowledge of cause, is *not* homeopathic.

It may surprise many that Dr. Hahnemann’s medical system consists of more than homeopathy. It contains principles for the use of therapeutic regimen (which properly applies the law of opposites), antipathic medicines and, as we have seen, what might be called homogenic prescribing, from “homo” for same (but not identical, which is idem) and “genic” for genesis or cause. Actually, this is a term that Hahnemann himself used in the *Organon* when speaking of specific, constant medicines for diseases:

14.1. The reliably availing ones could not have been any others than the specific ones; that is, medicines which were homogenic in their action to the disease irritation, whose use, however, by the old school was forbidden and tabooed as highly damaging because observation had taught that, with the so highly intensified receptivity for homogenic irritations in diseases, such medicines in the conventional large doses had proven themselves life-endangering.

I am not able to go into all the richness of Hahnemann’s complete medical system, which he termed Heilkunst, as in the title of his book *Organon der Heilkunst*, but would refer the interested listener to my book, co-authored with Steven Decker, linguist, translator of the extended *Organon* and Hahnemannian scholar, called *The Dynamic Legacy: From Homeopathy to Heilkunst*, which is available in electronic format. It is all documented there in great detail from Hahnemann’s works.

Suffice it to say here that one can prescribe using the law of similars on cause as well as on the symptoms. Thus, followers of Hahnemann’s principles, what he called practitioners of Heilkunst, or Heilkünstlers, are justified in using nosodes or isodes to treat all persons affected by the same causative agent, such as *Anthracinum* for anthrax, to name one example. This gets rid of the presumed problem of using nosodes in the face of disease.

### **Different Positions**

We next have to deal with the issue of using medicine to prevent disease instead of

removing or curing it once acquired. Allopathic medicine seems to have little problem with this and promotes the use of vaccinations. Hahnemann embraced it, supporting the idea of prevention using dynamised and potentised doses.

What then is the problem?

Part of it may lie in the fact that practitioners have long noticed the disease-causing effects of allopathic vaccinations. This is not a problem of principle, however, but of dose. Certainly, as Hahnemann pointed out in the quote earlier on homogenic diseases, the law of similars is dangerous in large doses, and more especially so in large material dosage due to chemical effects in addition to dynamic ones.

It is often said that homeopaths are against vaccinations. That may be true to the extent that homeopaths witness the disease effects of allopathic vaccinations, what Compton Burnett termed “vaccines.” However, what seems to be more the issue, at least at the official level, is that there is a very guarded, if not hostile, attitude to the use of the law of similars to prevent disease, what is often misleadingly termed homeopathic vaccinations or homeoprophylaxis.

The positions seems to divide along the following lines:

Those who are against any form of prevention, arguing that the law of similars can only be used where there are disease symptoms. This is the logical conclusion drawn by some and reflected in the FDA letter read earlier.

Those who accept the idea of the “genus epidemicus,” namely where a remedy has been found to match the symptoms of disease, it can be given to others likely exposed. This is not seen as vaccination as such. This group rejects the idea of nosodes being given as a prophylactic. This is essentially the position of the homeopathic pharmacists read earlier.

Those who use nosodes in disease epidemics because they work. Here we find many prominent past homeopaths such as Burnett, Kent, Hering, Tyler, Boenninghausen, Boger, Nash, etc.

Those who advocate the more systematic use of nosodes or isodes to prevent disease, much as allopathic vaccinations are prescribed. One such person is Isaac Golden of Australia.

The situation can only be described as a mess.

The actual logic of homeopathy drives one to the first position, as the FDA cunningly noted. However, the historical experience forces acceptance of what Hahnemann did with scarlet fever and cholera, which is generally the second position. The broader practical success with nosodes leads one to the third position. Extending this logically leads us to the fourth position.

### **What is the reality?**

The reality is that homeopathy is not about the prevention of disease, but the cure of disease. The reality is also that the use of medicine on the basis of the law of similars to prevent disease is an integral part of Hahnemann’s medical system, called Heilkunst. There is disease prevention using medicine, but it is not part of homeopathy.

Well, homeopaths may be constrained, *but Heilkünstlers are not*. They are free, indeed *obligated*, to follow *all* that Hahnemann taught. They fully accept that allopathic vaccinations kill and maim, as is also acknowledged in the official statistics, but also that this is a question of crude dose, not principle.

Let's be clear. Allopathic vaccinations work, not as well as claimed, but they also leave a trail of destruction in the form of iatrogenic disease that itself needs to be treated.

Why do vaccinations work at all? Because they are based on principle.

And what is this principle?

It is the one that Hahnemann gave us: What will cure a disease according to the law of similars will also prevent that same disease.

And how can this be?

Reflect a moment on the matter of provings. What are they but the generation of a temporary artificial disease in a person? And what did Hahnemann tell us about provings? That they strengthen the organism in health. Once bitten, twice shy as the saying goes.

Provings are by their very nature an immunization against the disease similar in nature (cause) to the substance being used.

To summarize, *homeopathy as such cannot prevent disease*. It can cure, but not prevent in the healthy. However, the broader system of medicine bequeathed by Hahnemann, called Heilkunst, *can* be used on the basis of the law of similars to prevent disease. It is just not homeopathy or "homeoprophylaxis," but "homotonicity" (e.g., homogenic) or "homoprophylaxis."

I have now come full circle to my initial statement. I have completed the task I set myself and I thank you for your patience in listening.