

Homeopathy—Part 6

by John Ankerberg and John Weldon

Science and Homeopathy

Modern homeopaths often claim that homeopathy can be used effectively with scientific medicine. Dr. Desmichelle, M.D., honorary president of the Centre Homeopathique de France, answered the question, “Are allopathy and homeopathy irreconcilable?” by maintaining that “they are two complementary medicines that can be alternatively used” and that if allopathic physicians were better informed, “allopathy and homeopathy would each have their own place” in modern medicine.¹

Wyrth Baker, M.D., claims that homeopathy “is compatible with most areas of medicine (including obstetrics and surgery), immunotherapy, nutritional therapy (including vitamin supplementation), endocrine therapy (including hormones), psychotherapy, physical therapy, osteopathy, chiropractic, and naturopathy.”²

Homeopathy and medicine can indeed be combined by the scientifically oriented homeopath, but this is not the issue. Oil and water can also be combined, but to what end? Astrology and medicine can also be combined; this does not prove astrology is true or that it assists medicine. The real issue is whether homeopathy contributes anything legitimate to medical practice.

Homeopathic Premises and Scientific Response

What is ironic about the attempted synergism is that in the entire history of medicine, perhaps no other alternate therapy has ever been more distinct from or opposed to scientific medicine than homeopathy. In fact, the acceptance of medical science is directly related to the decline of homeopathy *and vice versa*. Consider the following ten comparisons and contrasts between homeopathy (classical and/or modern) and modern medicine:

Homeopathic Premise 1: Disease results from an energy imbalance or dysfunction at the deepest non-physical level of the human organism. Physical conditions themselves (cancer, heart disease, AIDS, etc.) are not the disease; they are *only* the symptoms or manifestation of the deeper energy imbalance, which is the real problem, the real disease. To heal effectively, medicine must operate on the principle of vital force, or energy, not matter.

Scientific Response: Disease is primarily physical; medicine must operate on the principle of physical science, not energy. To accept this homeopathic premise that disease is energy based and not physical would destroy modern medicine.

Homeopathic Premise 2: An effective medicine is that which produces a sick person’s symptoms in a healthy person, the principle of “like cures like.”

Scientific Response: An effective medicine is that which has been clinically proven to cure physical disease. In rare cases there is a resemblance between the effects of a remedy and the symptoms of diseases in which it is beneficial, but this is true of only a very small number of useful medicines. The vast majority of medicines operate in a manner contrary to homeopathic principles.

Homeopathic Premise 3: Homeopathic substances release their vital force, power, or cosmic energy and become increasingly powerful as they are diluted and shaken. They are most powerful when the original substance (the medicine) has completely disappeared. As noted previously, Hahnemann remarked, “Modern wiseacres have even sneered at the thirtieth potency... [but] we obtain, even in the fiftieth potency, medicines of the most penetrating efficacy.”³

How powerful are homeopathic medicines that do not have even a single molecule of the remedy in them? Incredibly, Hahnemann referred to the “infallibility” of homeopathy “laid before the eyes of the world through facts... [e.g.,] typhous contagious epidemics must now allow themselves to be speedily turned into health by a few small doses of rightly-selected homeopathic medicine.”⁴

Scientific Response: Unfortunately, typhous and other contagious epidemics are still with us. All diseases that have been eradicated were not defeated by homeopathy, but by scientific medicine. Hahnemann’s prediction failed to materialize because homeopathic substances are not medicines and they have no curing powers. Outside of homeopathic circles, no evidence exists that substances become more powerful by dilution and shaking. The sciences of chemistry and pharmacology teach the exact opposite—that the more diluted a substance, the weaker it becomes. This is why homeopathic medicines cannot be effective at any level of potency, low or high; homeopathic solutions are so diluted it is impossible they could have any physical impact. At potencies above 24D (12CH), homeopathic treatment is no different from drinking a glass of water and considerably more expensive. Homeopathy remains imprisoned by Avogadro.

Thus, homeopaths ask us to believe in magic: that the equivalent mixture of one drop of water in a million billion trillion oceans the size of our solar system has great medicinal powers: “It is like taking a grain of a substance and dissolving it in billions of spheres of water, each with the diameter of the solar system”⁵ and then claiming that the resulting mixture is powerful medicine. That is nonsense, not medicine.

Homeopathic Premise 4: Because illness has both mental and physical symptoms, treating disease requires an evaluation of emotional and mental conditions as well.

Scientific Response: Physical illness per se does *not* result in the *kinds* of mental symptoms homeopathy assigns to them. Using mental and emotional factors in the evaluation of physical disease *may* be relevant but it is not always relevant. Physical disease is primarily a physical problem. Even in those areas where the mental and physical realms may be considered related, emotional factors are not accorded the interpretation nor the importance homeopathy assigns to them.

Homeopathic Premise 5: Once administered, the homeopathic treatment will remove the entire disease, from its root cause—the vital force dysfunction in the “spiritual” body—to the physical symptoms in the outer or material body. Merely treating outer symptoms—physical disease—is futile and dangerous. This will only drive the disease deeper and cause additional, more severe mental and physical symptoms.

Scientific Response: Where is the evidence that homeopathic medicine will cure the entire

disease from its “root” cause to its outer symptoms? Homeopaths who claim to be practicing scientific medicine and yet operate on the premises of vitalistic or occultic principles are engaging in deception. Further, the entire history of modern medicine proves that its treatment of disease and illness is effective and beneficial. No evidence anywhere suggests its methods cause the harmful consequences homeopathy claims for them.

Homeopathic Premise 6: Diagnosis and treatment must be totally individualized. The homeopath does not seek to ascertain the symptoms a patient has in common with other men, as a means to diagnosis—e.g., headache, fever, and stuffy nose usually indicate a cold. Rather, he seeks those symptoms that are unique and which the patient does not have in common with other men. Hence, the need for extremely detailed questioning of the patient’s personal history, emotional state, habits, etc.

Scientific Response: Homeopathic diagnosis and treatment is wasteful and ineffective to the extent that it fails to utilize diagnosis based on common symptoms revealing common illness or disease capable of common treatment.

Homeopathic Premise 7: The treatment methods of modern medical pharmacology, such as prescription drugs, should be opposed because homeopathic remedies are rendered ineffective when such drugs are used. If a person wants to be treated homeopathically, he should avoid the services of a physician, at least during his period of homeopathic treatment. Thus, homeopathy is “most effective in treating infants, children, and individuals who have received little or no physiological (allopathic) medication.”⁶

Scientific Response: Homeopathic medicines were ineffective in the first place. Perhaps the reason homeopathy is more effective with people who have had no medication (if that is true) is that these people are more healthy to begin with. Furthermore, the vastly superior effectiveness of modern drugs and treatments put homeopathy out of business in the early twentieth century. In fact, modern drugs and medicine became so effective that not a single homeopathic hospital, school, or pharmacy remained, and of fourteen thousand practitioners, only a few hundred survived. Finally the homeopath thinks his medicines are effective because over a long period of symptom classification and treatment he sees his patient improve. But the patient would have improved anyway. And if homeopathy has never established the effectiveness of its treatments, how can anyone know it was modern drugs that supposedly made them ineffective?

Homeopathic Premise 8: What is important is that homeopathy works. How or why it works is irrelevant.

Scientific Response: Establishing how and why something works is crucial; it is the essence of modern scientific medicine. This is the only possible means to determine if a treatment is truly effective. To willfully remain in the dark about whether or not a treatment works on the basis of its stated principles and is truly effective is irrational and dangerous.

Homeopathic Premise 9: Homeopathy itself is the absolute authority; it is a “perfect science” with almost infinite power to cure almost anything.⁷

Scientific Response: Scientific testing has proven that homeopathic principles and methods are false and ineffective; if and when homeopathy works, it is working on other principles besides those it holds true. The burden of proof rests with the homeopathic community to prove its claims. Merely asserting that homeopathic medicine somehow magically influences the immune system and that it will be scientifically proven to do so in the future is an inappropriate response to critics. Anyone could claim that anything magically influences the immune system and will be proven in the future, like, for example, watching butterflies. That is hardly a reason to believe

those who make such claims.

Homeopathic Premise 10: Only homeopathy is true medicine, because it alone treats the true inner cause of illness. Modern scientific medicine is ineffective. At best, it only has the power to treat symptoms, not root causes. At worst, modern scientific medicine is an unmitigated evil employed by deceived malpractitioners who are portrayers of death and destruction.⁸

Scientific Response: Modern scientific medicine has demonstrated its benefits; homeopathy remains unproven; therefore, the real danger lies in homeopathic practice.

These above ten comparisons between homeopathy and modern medicine reveal that the two methods are fundamentally incompatible. Doctors who mix the two practices are certainly free to do so; nevertheless, one can only wonder at the attempt.

(Footnotes)

¹ Letter from Annick Sullivan with a copy of personal testimony re: the benefits of homeopathy, p. 2.

² Leslie J. Kaslof, *Wholistic Dimensions in Healing: A Resource Guide* (Garden City, NY: Dolphin/Doubleday, 1978), p. 49.

³ Samuel Hahnemann, *The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homeopathic Cure—Theoretical Part*, trans., Louis H. Tafel (New Delhi, India: Jain Publishing Company, 1976), p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵ Martin Gardner, "Water with Memory? The Dilution Affair: A Special Report," *The Skeptical Inquirer*, Winter, 1989, p. 133; cf., Wallace I. Sampson, "When Not to Believe the Unbelievable," and Elie A. Shneour, "The Benveniste Case: A Reappraisal," in *The Skeptical Inquirer*, vol. 14, no. 1, Fall, 1989, pp. 90-95.

⁶ Kaslof, *Wholistic Dimensions in Healing*, p. 49.

⁷ Herbert Robert, M.D., *Art of Cure by Homeopathy: A Modern Textbook*, rpt (New Delhi, India: B. Jain Publishers, 1976), p. 18; James Tyler Kent, *Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy* (Richmond, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1979), pp. 28, 55, 242; Hahnemann, *The Chronic Diseases*, pp. 21, 26; Ann Hill, ed., *A Visual Encyclopedia of Unconventional Medicine* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1979), p. 26; Evelyn deSmedt, et al., *Life Arts: A Practical Guide to Total Being—New Medicine and Ancient Wisdom* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p. 142.

⁸ Richard Grossinger, *Planet Medicine: From Stone Age Shamanism to Post-Industrial Healing* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980), pp. 170-180.