

## **Trauma and Homeopathy:**

### **Analogies Between the Development and Cure of Chronic Diseases and Post Traumatic Disorders**

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#### **Summary**

The effect of psychological trauma on man follows similar principles as are known for the development of a chronic disease caused by a miasmatic burden. Accordingly, physical or psychological symptoms point to miasmatic or traumatic causes as well in homeopathy as in trauma therapy. Both trauma therapy and homeopathy aim to perceive these causes and to initiate a healing process according to Hering's principle: from inside to outside.

#### **Keywords**

Trauma, psycho-dynamics, miasm, chronic disease, Hering's principle

#### **Introduction**

Physicians and therapists who work homeopathically, are, like many of their colleagues, increasingly confronted with the theme of "trauma" :

- Patients come into the practices talking openly about their sexual trauma
- Violent, traumatic assaults in childhood are kept secret due to shame
- People from crisis regions take refuge in safe countries from religious, sexual or political violence which they have experienced in their country of origin.

The consequences of psychic traumatization are manifold: Only a small number of traumatized patients suffer from a "pure" post traumatic stress disorder. Most traumatized patients suffer from general symptoms such as headache, ailments of the heart, gastrointestinal symptoms, depressive mood or feelings of anxiety – the so-called after effects of trauma that are not necessarily assigned to a trauma in the first instance due to their unspecific appearance.

Frequently a trauma is only recognized during the extensive homeopathic first anamnesis or in the course of psychotherapy. In homeopathic as well as psychotherapeutic treatment one attempts to recognize and cure the underlying "causa" of the outwardly appearing symptoms. This demonstrates a general analogy between homeopathy and psychotherapy: Both methods proceed in a similar way when a person suffers from symptoms. Practitioners of both methods are not satisfied with the mere treatment of symptoms but want to understand and cure the meaning and invisible, "unconscious" connections of the disease.

Strictly speaking, this just holds true for the homeopathy of Chronic Diseases (CK), that is, for Hahnemann's late work, in which the phenomenological approach is complemented by the causal, miasmatic approach, as well as psychoanalysis and the psychodynamic schools of psychotherapy.

When comparing the miasmatic approach in homeopathy with the psychodynamic approach of psychotherapy, analogies can be found between the homeopathic theory of the development of chronic diseases and the psychodynamic of traumatization.

## **Objective**

There are Similar approaches in Hahnemann's late work and in psychoanalysis:

### Homeopathy:

The homeopathic theory of diseases assumes that outwardly showing symptoms are caused by a deeper lying chronic disease, or that this can be obscured or compensated by the outward symptoms: Neurodermatitis can point to a chronic disease disposition and correspondingly, the "suppression" of the skin disease can cause an asthma attack. This development of disease is in accordance with Hahnemann's principle of chronic diseases. Conversely, a skin disease can appear after the homeopathic treatment of asthma – a development that is "welcomed" in the sense of a cure proceeding from inside to outside as described by Hering's rule which C. Hering developed based on Hahnemann's theory of diseases.

### Trauma therapy:

The dynamics are quite similar with symptoms caused by traumata. At first there often appears a physical or psychic symptom but behind this lies the deeper problem of the trauma. If such an "outer" symptom is treated, there might appear a severe psychic symptom as a result of displacing psychic injuries into the unconscious. For example, gynaecological or abdominal ailments often point to sexual traumata and the patients react with attacks of anxiety when their physical symptom is "removed" by means of a successful somatic treatment. Here also the principle of "suppression" operates. If the symbolic meaning of a physical symptom is not understood by the therapist in the context of the trauma and is merely treated somatically the "deeper" psychic pathology aggravates.

### Suppression of primary symptoms:

In the same way that chronic disease develops according to the homeopathic theory of disease, we find the development of symptoms after traumatization. If it isn't possible for the organism to assimilate the acute happening the pathology is driven to a deeper, chronic level. For example, if the fever of an acute cold is suppressed allopathically there might appear pneumonia or a chronic disease of bronchia if the vital force is constricted.

Accordingly, after effects of trauma develop if a person doesn't process his traumatization because he can't or isn't allowed to express his emotions and has to suppress them. The following holds true for the homeopathic understanding of chronic diseases as well as the posttraumatic development of diseases:

If the natural expression of the vital force is suppressed in a severe physical or emotional reaction to an acute disease or trauma, or if this severe reaction isn't possible for various reasons, then the pathology will be driven to a deeper, chronic level. Thus the development of chronic diseases and post traumatic ailments follows a similar principle.

## Patients and Methods

### Case example 1

A 45 year old man comes into the emergency ward of the hospital due to continuing heartaches. Cardiac infarction is diagnosed. He is treated cardiologically and a stent is placed. After the successful internal treatment the patient suffers from nightmares and panic attacks wherefore he is treated psychotherapeutically. In the course of therapy it becomes obvious that the patient is severely traumatized: He has had terrible experiences during the Iran-Iraq War and was, for political reasons, arrested in his homeland! The homeopathic principle of disease development is also recognizable in the psychodynamics of traumatization and the patient has to be treated accordingly: the deeper lying “cause” of the outwardly appearing disease has to be recognized – in this case the suppressed psychic trauma.

A combination of homeopathy and psychotherapy is reasonable in cases of severe trauma. When treating the patient homeopathically the remedy choice has to be based on the connection of both the appearing symptoms and the inner psychic happenings.

### Aconitum napellus

In case of the aforementioned patient, the physical symptoms as well as the psychic experience of shock pointed to Aconitum napellus, which was given in the 1000C potency (Gudjons). This remedy indeed helped the patient with his anxiety as well as heart symptoms. The heart ailments hadn't disappeared after placing the stent and reappeared when he was emotionally strained. Aconitum is one of the most important remedies for acute trauma.

To process the trauma, the patient's traumatic experience which he had suppressed in his time of need and moved to the physical level had to be made accessible to his consciousness and bodily experience, and he also had to work through the corresponding feelings by means of psychotherapeutic and homeopathic treatment.

The homeopathic remedy turned out to be of great help in this process. When the traumatic experiences emerged during psychotherapeutic sessions, overwhelming the patient with anxiety, then Aconitum calmed the psychic symptoms again and again so that the process of working through the trauma could be continued in ambulatory treatment without going into decompensation. He increasingly felt able to express his feelings instead of reacting somatically with his heart: The closed “inside” became accessible to the “outside”!

### Mercurius solubilis and Opium

During the course of trauma therapy new symptoms appeared repeatedly which constituted the physical recollection of his traumatic experiences. For example, the burning earache reminded him of the explosion of grenades which caused the trauma of hearing. The pain in his back and limbs he linked to the week of lying in the trenches in the desert. The physical symptoms were repertorized and pointed to Mercurius solubilis which was given in 12C. This ameliorated his physical symptoms without interrupting the psychic process of regeneration. The dissociative phenomena ameliorated very well with Opium 30C.

## Constitutional remedy

At the end of three years of treatment his constitutional remedy showed up: *Lycopodium clavatum*. It could only appear after the trauma was processed physically and mentally. In homeopathic treatment as well as trauma therapy, we work by removing layers until arriving at the “core” of the disease. Cure then proceeds in the reverse order.

## Case example 2

A depressive female patient is treated psychotherapeutically. Her condition remained unchanged despite allopathic treatment with several antidepressants for two years. She can't get up in the morning, doesn't have impetus, and suffers from sleep disturbances, concentration and working problems, and withdraws socially. It is hard for her to care for herself and she only eats milk pudding for days. Her mood is very depressed and hopeless, sometimes she doesn't want to live anymore. Only her job as a nurse gives her some sense of life and daily structure. She is a woman very engaged in her job! But due to her concentration difficulties she makes a lot of mistakes which can be dangerous to the life of her patients. However, for her, losing empathy is the worst. With increasing despair she notices her indifference towards her patients – she can't empathize with them anymore. It seems to her that she can't work in her beloved profession any longer. In psychotherapy she overcomes her shame and tells someone for the first time in her life that she has been abused sexually as a child, and that she had been raped by three men as a young woman.

Psychotherapy is accompanied by homeopathic treatment wherefore her psychic condition ameliorates rapidly: She is able to sleep again, her concentration and ability to work ameliorate, and her ability to empathize with her patients returns, enriching her emotional life as in earlier times!

## *Sepia succus*

The psychic leading symptom points to the indicated remedy:

The indifference towards her patients in particular was the key symptom for finding the homeopathic remedy: Her patients were in a way like a family for her. When someone feels indifferent to one's “family members”, *Sepia succus* is often of help! *Sepia* is also a very important remedy for cases of sexual trauma. Accordingly, the patient was prescribed the constitutional remedy *Sepia 200C* (Gudjons) at the beginning of treatment and again a half year later. The remedy opened her emotional life and could remove the dissociation of her traumatic experience which allowed an intensive grieving process.

## *Ignatia amara* and *Aurum metallicum*

The phase of sadness was treated with *Ignatia amara 1000C*: In this way she was able to bear and express upcoming emotions without getting depressive again. She became suicidal for a short time, for which *Aurum metallicum 1000C* helped.

## Continuation of constitutional treatment

After the intensive process of rehabilitation, which lasted for about two years, treatment could be continued constitutionally: *Sepia 1000C* was given once and repeated in crisis situations. She increasingly stabilized and developed self esteem and competency in handling conflicts.

During the four years of treatment she did not need antidepressants anymore. Meanwhile she lives together with her newly found partner and is fully able to work again.

## Results

The direction of the homeopathic cure reversed the process of traumatization: the Trauma worked from outside to inside and from the past to now, the healing process worked from inside to outside and from now to the past

Worth noting was the chronological course of the healing process in both case examples. Whereas the patient's psychic state ameliorated, several somatic symptoms appeared: migraine attacks at first, then ailments of stomach and bowel, and eventually a very painful suppuration at the root of a tooth. At the rate at which her psychic symptoms disappeared, physical symptoms appeared, and cure proceeded according to Hering's rule!

The patient traumatized by war developed physical symptoms along a timeline which lead to former traumata: heart symptoms at first, then earache, followed by pain of back and limbs. The more we immersed into the trauma during therapeutic work, the farther his memories and the associated physical symptoms reached back. Here too Hering's rule is recognizable, according to which a curative process once again rolls up the disease development "backwards"

## Conclusion

These cases demonstrate that in the homeopathic theory of disease as well as the psychodynamics of traumatization the development of disease proceeds from outside to inside, and cure proceeds from the inside to the outside. The patient suffers from emotional hurts from the outside which can't be processed psychically – similar to a severe infectious disease leading to a chronic-miasmatic disease because the vital force's ability to cure is limited. These unprocessed strains express through physical or psychic symptoms, which are but the outward expression of the inner dynamic. In psychotherapy as well as homeopathy it is necessary to bring the inside to the outside. Internal cure happens by means of homeopathic treatment when outer physical symptoms appear and the psychic symptoms ameliorate at the same time. The same for trauma therapy. The memories and emotions belonging to the trauma can be expressed once brought into consciousness, and thereby brought to the outside whereas the after effects of the trauma disappear simultaneously.

Thus the psychodynamic of traumatization follows a principle similar to the homeopathic theory of the development of chronic diseases. The curative process also proceeds accordingly and in similar ways during homeopathic treatment and the psychotherapy of trauma.

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