Homeopathy

Safe, effective medicine

Welcome to the

NCH

National Center for Homeopathy

A Growing Health Care Movement!

AMY L. LANSKY, PhD

I learned about the power of homeopathy in the most dramatic possible way—my son Max was cured of autism thanks to homeopathic treatment. Soon after he began showing remarkable signs of improvement in 1995, I bought my first homeopathy books and began reading. I was hooked! Less than two years later, Max was testing normally. Soon, I began to study homeopathy formally, disengaged from my work as a computer scientist, and decided to write a book about my family's experience and about homeopathy in general. I also joined the National Center for Homeopathy. Almost sixteen years later, homeopathy and the NCH have become a large part of my life.

This informational newsletter introduces you to homeopathy and answers some basic questions that you might have about it. It will let you know about what homeopathy is and how it differs from conventional medical treatment. You will also learn how homeopathic medicines are manufactured and prescribed, and how scientific evidence shows that they work well. You will read about patients who have experienced success with homeopathic treatment, and about homeopaths and conventional doctors who use homeopathic medicines for their patients.

Finally, you will learn about the very important work of the National Center for Homeopathy. The NCH is devoted to promoting and protecting your access to a remarkable system of medicine—*homeopathy.* It educates the public, produces an amazing quarterly magazine and informative E-newsletters, provides hundreds of articles on its website (NationalCenterForHomeopathy.org), and sponsors the annual national homeopathy conference, which provides education to practitioners and the public alike. Thanks to the ongoing efforts of the NCH staff and its working board of directors, the NCH also makes sure that homeopathy gets a fair and accurate representation in the media. The organization is also working hard to secure homeopathy a place at the national health care table.

The more you learn about the NCH, the more you will realize that it is truly the "mother ship" that helps to hold homeopathy together in North America. I hope you will join and lend the National Center for Homeopathy your support!

NCH Online Chats

Since 2003, NCH members have been able to participate in monthly NCH Online Chats. This real-time interactive format allows NCH members to ask questions of eminent homeopaths, including pediatricians, general practitioners, chiropractors, veterinarians, researchers, historians, and pharmacists. The Chat Transcripts are another valuable resource for members, archived in the NCH website under "Articles" and "Chat."

To submit ideas for future NCH Online Chats or to volunteer as a Guest Speaker, send an e-mail to chat@nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org.

Affiliated Study Groups Teach Homeopathic Self-Care

KRISTY LAMPE

In 1987, the National Center for Homeopathy (NCH) developed a study group program to make homeopathic education more widely available. There are now NCH-Affiliated Study Groups (ASGs) all over the USA, and even some in Canada and overseas.

Study group experiences have improved many people's lives. ASG members have found that by working together within and among the various groups, they can learn how to use homeopathy at home, network with a wide variety of people, and gain access to a great deal of information in the field. Study groups are also a wonderful way to spread the word about homeopathy.

Study groups typically meet once a month for a couple of hours. Discussion topics vary according to the needs of each group. Some follow a prepared curriculum; others read and discuss books, or invite local homeopathic professionals to lecture. Members also discuss their own "cases" from home care, or share other homeopathic experiences. Many groups schedule a variety of activities throughout the year, and some sponsor social events or special seminars for their communities.

The NCH offers tremendous support for ASGs. Start-up packets, videos, and Study Guides are available to help you start a study group, even if you have little or no homeopathic training. Our Study Group Coordinator, who has decades of experience in leading study groups, is available for consultation. When ASG members join the NCH, they receive all the benefits of membership, including a subscription to *Homeopathy Today* magazine, the NCH *e-Newsletter*, access to *Homeopathy Today Online*, the monthly NCH *Online Chats* with eminent professionals, the searchable online *Remedy & Symptom Database*, online directories of homeopathic practitioners and resources, and other benefits.

Contact us for further information and get started today!

"Last summer, Delbert K. was trimming his hedges in his yard when a wasp stung his left ring finger two or three times in rapid succession. He immediately removed his ring when the finger started to swell, and he took three doses of *Apis* 30, five minutes apart. Within 15 minutes, he was able to put his ring back on his now normal-sized finger, and return to cutting the hedge, almost completely free of pain."
—F.L.K. DeSoto, TX

Hypericum proved very helpful after an industrial accident resulted in my losing two fingers. I wasn't able to get the remedy until three days after the accident. I can only say that I never have had pain relieved so quickly as after that first dose of *Hypericum*."
—B.B. Milwaukee, WI

NCH e-Newsletter for Timely News

KRISTY LAMPE

The NCH e-Newsletter supplements the information brought to you in *Homeopathy Today* magazine. It began as a bi-monthly six-page newsletter to inform NCH members, via the Internet, of events and happenings at the NCH and in the homeopathic world on a timely basis. As interest in homeopathy grew, the NCH *e-Newsletter* went to monthly distribution in 2009. The same e-mail distribution system that is used for the *e-Newsletter* also brings you NCH Action Alerts when there is important information requiring your immediate attention or action.

Today, the NCH *e-Newsletter* provides NCH members with information on a variety of activities and programs created on behalf of NCH members, and describes current events that affect the homeopathic world. Each issue also highlights what other North American homeopathic organizations are doing (Partner Organizations) and concludes with NCH Member Stories. To submit your own "Member Story," send an e-mail to e-newsletter@nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org.

What is Homeopathy?

ANN JEROME, PhD, CCH, RSHom(NA)

Homeopathy is a complete therapeutic system that has been in use around the world ever since German physician Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843) developed it in the early 1800s. Hahnemann rediscovered and tested an ancient principle, called the Law of Similars, and employed his findings as the foundation for a healing modality that he named *homeopathy*. The Law of Similars states that if a substance can cause particular symptoms in a healthy person, it will cure those same symptoms in people who are ill. In homeopathy, medicines are selected for the individual person according to the Law of Similars, in addition to a holistic view of their needs.

"Less is more" is one of the principles that homeopathy truly brings to life. Homeopathic medicines are highly diluted and are created using a method called *potentization* that involves alternately diluting and vigorously shaking the medicinal preparation. In the United States, homeopathic medicines are FDA regulated and are sold over the counter in health food stores, pharmacies, and by mail order. However, they act quite differently from regular medicines. Rather than forcing chemical changes upon the body, homeopathic medicines catalyze the body's self-healing abilities—without side effects and without danger of overdose, toxicity, or drug interactions. Homeopathy can be used for ailments of all kinds, in both people and animals. It is safe for everyone to use, including babies, pregnant women, the elderly, and the very sensitive.

Unfortunately, the word "homeopathy" is sometimes misused to mean *any* natural or holistic therapy. While homeopathy *is* a natural and holistic therapy, it is a distinct system of medicine in its own right. Indeed, homeopathy is one of many natural complementary and alternative therapies, including, for example, herbal medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, water therapies, vitamin and mineral supplements, and so on. Homeopathy is distinct and different from all of these other modalities, however, because it is the only one that employs the Law of Similars and potentized medicines. Homeopathy is often called an "energy" medicine because potentized remedies address the vital force (the energy that animates the living organism), and when the vital force is healthy, it produces healthy functioning throughout the organism.

Homeopathy can be used for home care as well as in professional settings. Most people find it easy to learn homeopathic self-care for acute and first aid purposes. With a little bit of training, a book or two, and a home remedy kit, you can effectively address colds and the flu, sprains and strains, minor injuries, and other ailments that don't necessarily need a doctor's care. However, it takes more knowledge to address chronic ailments. In the hands of a trained professional, homeopathy can ease the symptoms of a wide variety of conditions that we might otherwise feel we "just have to live with." In fact, there are studies that have established homeopathy's effectiveness in a wide variety of ailments, settings, and populations.

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Research About the Use of Homeopathic Medicines

TINA QUIRK

Is there research to support homeopathy? Is it "evidence based"?

Yes! There are over 600 published research studies of homeopathy and more are being conducted every day. This research has shown the effectiveness of homeopathy for a wide range of acute, chronic, and epidemic conditions in both humans and animals, including: eczema, asthma, upper respiratory illnesses, ear infections, fibromyalgia, menopause, diarrhea, ADHD, irritable bowel and depression. There is even laboratory research showing the action of homeopathic remedies on individual cells, including cancer cells. For more information, see **www.nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org/articles-research.htm**

What are some recent homeopathic studies?

1. ***Atopic eczema in children.*** Conclusion: A one-year study showed improvements equal to or better than corticosteroid treatment. **Keil T, et al.** ***Complement Ther Med.*** **2008: Feb; 16 (1): 15–21.**
2. ***Depression.*** Conclusion: Individualized homeopathic prescribing is as effective as Prozac in patients suffering acute moderate to severe depression. **Adler UC, et al., Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine** (eCAM). See http://ecam.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/nep114.
3. ***Fibromyalgia.*** Conclusion: Significant improvement in pain, fatigue and tiredness on walking was demonstrated in patients treated with homeopathy. **Relton C, et al.,** ***Homeopathy 2009*****, 77–82.**
4. ***Breast Cancer.*** Conclusion: Four homeopathic remedies caused death of breast cancer cell lines in a laboratory setting. The effects were similar to those of chemotherapy, but unlike chemotherapy, the homeopathic remedies did not affect normal cells. **Frenkel M.,** ***International Journal of Oncology*****, February 2010.**
5. ***Cuba immunization study.*** Conclusion: After immunization with a homeopathic remedy, the epidemic infection rate for leptospirosis dropped dramatically to near zero. **Campa, et al., International Meeting on Homeoprophylaxis, Homeopathic Immunisation and Nosodes against Epidemics, 10–12 December 2008.**

What is the history of research in homeopathy?

Homeopaths have been doing research since 1792, when Samuel Hahnemann conducted the first homeopathic study of Cinchona bark. The development of every homeopathic remedy involves a research study called a *proving*, in which healthy test subjects are given doses of the remedy in order to elicit its associated symptoms—the symptoms that the remedy will also be able to cure. Another interesting fact: homeopaths were the earliest researchers to introduce the use of placebo controls into their studies.

For decades homeopaths have been researching multiple facets of homeopathy including: its role in treating infectious epidemics, acute illnesses and chronic diseases; the effect of homeopathic dilutions on human and bacterial cells; the mode of action of ultra-dilutions in the body; the success of treating acute diseases in livestock and farm animals; and the cost effectiveness of homeopathy compared to conventional drug therapy.

What is the status of homeopathy research today?

Within today's clinical research industry, homeopathy studies are considered an "emerging" area of research. Unfortunately, clinical medical trials are extremely expensive, and in the case of conventional drug research, are usually paid for by the pharmaceutical companies and the United States National Institutes of Health. Millions of dollars are awarded to professional medical researchers, with departments in universities and medical centers set up to organize and run clinical trials that include large numbers of patients.

Arnica montana

Homeopaths do not usually work in or have access to these settings and thus much of their research has been done with small groups of patients. In the last decade some professional homeopathic researchers have received funding and their work is showing great promise (Witt, C.M., 2005; Thompson, E., 1997).

Research knowledge comes from building on previous individual studies and learning from the challenges and strengths of those studies. As more funding and experience is gained, homeopathic research is becoming more and more prominent.

Why do some scientists question homeopathy research?

Some scientists will accept only one method of research, the Randomized Placebo Controlled Trial (RCT). The RCT is the most popular method used by pharmaceutical companies to test a new drug and the one that the media publicizes the most. However, it is not always the best scientific method for researching "whole systems" modalities such as homeopathy.

A "whole systems approach" to healing recognizes that the human body and mind are dynamic and complex, with each part influencing the other and acting together. Therefore, one part or system of the body cannot be studied in isolation without looking at its interactions with the whole person. Scientists have found that the RCT methodology is too restrictive when studying a whole system.

Indeed, many scientists and health officials question the usefulness of RCT studies even in standard drug testing. They prefer "real world" or "clinical outcome" studies that are more applicable to day-to-day practice, instead of strictly controlled drug trials. Health practitioners and the US Dept of Health and Human Services are calling for "comparative effectiveness" research. These are studies that compare the usefulness of various treatments and provide more practical information about their use for patients and practitioners. "Clinical outcome," "comparative effectiveness" and "systems-based" studies are types of research that are better suited for investigating the healing ability of the body and the effect of homeopathic treatment.

Two examples of such research studies pertaining to homeopath treatment are the following:

Witt, C.M., Ludtke, R., et. al., ***BMC Public Health*****, 2005; 5: 115.** *Homeopathic treatment in chronic diseases.* Conclusion: Disease severity and quality of life improved in patients undergoing long-term treatment with homeopathy.

Thompson, E., ***Homeopathy 2008*****, Jul; 97(3):114–21.** *Bristol Homeopathic Hospital six-year study.* Conclusion: 70% of patients reported improved health; 50% had major improvement in inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, menopausal problems and migraines. Children had improvements in eczema and asthma.

For more research this database was compiled in collaboration with the British Homeopathic Association. It comprises randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of homeopathy that have been published in peer-reviewed journals up to 2009. http://homeoinst.org/database

The Difference Between Conventional and Homeopathic Treatment

AMALIA PUNZO, MD

People often ask me the difference between mainstream medicine and homeopathy. I usually say, "Well, that's a bit like asking about the difference between a steamroller and a butterfly!" Believe it or not, there is very little that the two medical disciplines have in common.

The foundation of homeopathy is the Law of Similars. In fact, that is the derivation of its name: "homeo" (similar) "pathy" (suffering or disease). Another way of thinking about this law is "likes treat likes." A homeopath treats people with a highly diluted substance from nature—a substance that is known to cause a similar symptom complex in healthy people when it is given in its crude or undiluted form. When a diluted homeopathically-prepared substance is administered, the entire complex of symptoms of the patient is addressed. In other words, homeopathy treats all of the patient's symptoms at once—physical as well as emotional and mental symptoms. Indeed, most of the time, we give just one homeopathic medicine to address all of these symptoms. This alone is a huge difference from conventional or mainstream medical treatment.

Another difference between homeopathy and conventional medicine is how the medicines affect the body. The natural substance administered in homeopathic treatment does not actually *kill* anything (viruses or bacteria, for example). Rather, a homeopathic medicine stimulates a reaction within the body, and it is this *reaction* to the homeopathic medicine that is healing. This is not very dissimilar from how vaccinations work, except that vaccinations deliver the very *same* substance that you are trying to provide immunity against. As a result, vaccinations have a very narrow therapeutic window of prevention and safety. Also, vaccines are often prepared using substances that may have toxic properties (mercury derivatives as a preservative, for example).

Homeopathy, in essence, stimulates the body to heal itself. That's it. This philosophy of healing is ancient and has stood the test of time—over 220 years and going strong. Homeopathic medicine is widely practiced throughout Europe, North and South America, India and Pakistan, and has an international consumer base. There is a great deal of contemporary research to demonstrate both the safety and effectiveness of homeopathic medicines for a wide variety of clinical conditions..

In contrast to homeopathy, conventional medicine administers large "pharmaceutical" doses of synthetic substances to kill foreign agents like bacteria and viruses, and to suppress symptoms (such as pain, fever, swelling, anxiety, depression, etc.). Indeed, most popular conventional medications are actually prescribed in accordance with the Law of Opposites. Conventionally-trained physicians use "anti-histamines" and "anti-depressants, "anti-biotics" and "anti-anxiety" drugs, "anti-inflammatory" agents, "anti-hypertensives," etc. And since these conventional medica-

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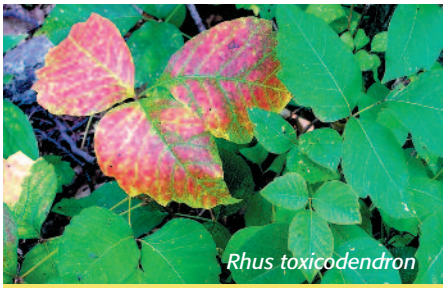

Rhus toxicodendron

"Homeopathy works on old problems. About 25 years ago I sustained a severe ankle sprain. Since that time, whenever I was on my feet too long, I had to wear an elastic bandage and limped for two or three days. Two doses of *Rhus tox* cleared the problem. The ankle is only slightly painful on rare occasions."

tions, which palliate, suppress or hide single symptoms with large doses of synthetic substances, often cause toxic side effects, it is frequently necessary to counteract these side-effects with yet other medications. Thus begins a vicious cycle of patients being prescribed medication after medication.

Another difference between homeopathy and conventional medicine is duration of treatment. Homeopathy's goal is complete cure—a goal that may be achieved, even in so-called chronic disease illnesses. In contrast, once a person is prescribed conventional medications for a chronic condition, they are often prescribed for life. Indeed, the administration of these multiple medications over time does not typically cure chronic disease. It just stems the tide or tsunami of symptoms. Conventional medicine is, however, very helpful during emergencies such as shock or heart attacks, in trauma, or in life-threatening illnesses or surgical emergencies when palliation and suppression of the immediate situation can be life-saving.

Unfortunately, there is frequently a price to pay for repeated and long-term suppression of disease symptoms with strong medications, and most people do not get healthier over time. Homeopathy, in contrast, does not suppress illness when properly prescribed. It has the ability to heal on very deep levels and people usually become healthier mentally, emotionally, and physically over time.

Another difference between homeopathy and conventional treatment is the patient's experience of the process of cure. One of the first things that people often notice when receiving good homeopathic treatment is that they have more energy, more resilience, a better mood, and improved immune function. They feel happier and more hopeful. These subtle but very real changes are signs that a homeopathic medicine or remedy is working on a very deep level. It may take time to address a long-standing physical illness, but if someone is improving mentally and emotionally and their energy is returning, it is usually a very good indicator that their physical symptoms will improve over time as well. In contrast, suppression of disease with synthetic drugs may provide dramatic results temporarily, but the effects are usually short-lived and may cause more harm than good over the long haul. With homeopathy, one has to be attentive to more subtle, "invisible" signs of improvement. Long-standing symptoms may not be cured overnight and healing may happen in stages and layers, but patients sense that their health overall is improving.

Please note that for treatment of a chronic illness, you must find a well-trained classical homeopath (see http://www.nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org/resources/practitioners). And the more you understand about homeopathic treatment, the easier it will be for you and your homeopath to find the most effective remedy.

Homeopathy has changed my life and the lives of those I have treated and loved in profound ways. I am grateful each and every day for having been exposed to homeopathy and for having the privilege to practice this healing art and science early in my medical career. I cannot imagine my life or my career without it.

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Dentists Practicing Homeopathy

RICHARD FISCHER, DDS

For more than 30 years, I have been using the principles of homeopathy with exciting and gratifying results for many of my dental patients. This is not to suggest that I never prescribe an antibiotic or painkiller. But as my working knowledge of homeopathy has grown, these other drugs are rarely required—and then, only for short periods of time.

I have found that a handful of first-aid remedies can handle a majority of the common dental emergencies, alleviating pain or discomfort, at least temporarily, until proper dental measures can be received. For example, here are some useful remedies for teething and toothaches:

- **Teething:** *Chamomilla* 30X every 30 to 60 minutes when the teething child is whiny, restless, and wants to be held or pampered. This is a great remedy for delayed and difficult teething.
- **Toothaches:** *Belladonna* 30X every 30 to 60 minutes when the toothache throbs and is worse from touch or motion (chewing); *Magnesia phosphoricum* 30X when the toothache is worse from cold and better from warmth; *Coffea cruda* 30X when the toothache is worse from heat and relieved by holding ice in the mouth; *Chamomilla* 30X when the toothache is worse from any warmth, but not better from cold and when the pain is intolerable, making the person peevish.
- **Dental Trauma:** *Arnica* 30X or 30C for pain and/or swelling after any blunt trauma to soft tissues, such as tooth extractions, hematomas, a blow to the face or jaw, or even after having orthodontic wires adjusted. *Hypericum* 30X or 30C for trauma to nerves, such as pain from a cracked tooth, after a deep filling, neuralgias, or after root canal treatment. *Ruta graveolens* 30X or 30C for trauma to the bone or periosteum such as after extraction of impacted "wisdom teeth," "dry sockets," or periodontal flap (gum) surgery. *Magnesium phosphorica* for muscle pain or spasm, such as after holding the mouth open widely for a long dental procedure.
- **Bleeding:** *Phosporus* 30X or 30C for bleeding of bright red (arterial) blood. *Lachesis* 30X or 30C for darker oozing venous blood.
- **Puncture wounds** (such as after a local anesthetic injection): *Apis mellifica* when accompanied by stinging or burning pains and edema, and better from cold applications. *Ledum* when the wound feels cool to the touch. *Hypericum* when the wound is accompanied by "nerve" pain that is worse from cold. *Hypericum* may also be helpful from paresthesia (prolonged numbness) of the lip or tongue after a local anesthetic injection.

Please note: These remedies are not intended to replace good dental care. The above potencies are only suggestions; others may work just as well.

"Thanks so much for sending my daughter the homeopathic kit. The baby slept eight hours after giving her one dose of *Chamomilla* 6X. Before that there was nothing we could do to please her."
—C.K., Wilmington, DE

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How Are Homeopathic Medicines Prescribed?

EDWARD CONWAY and CATHERINE DOW, Rph

The selection of a homeopathic remedy for a patient can be a complicated process. It begins with an initial appointment, where the homeopathic practitioner obtains details about all the physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral signs and symptoms (the "totality") presented by the patient. This process can often take one or two hours, especially in a case of chronic disease, and is known as "taking the case."

"A friend's daughter had cut her eye with a knife, barely missing the cornea. She was taken to the doctor immediately, and he said there was nothing he could do, but he wanted to see her again the next day to see how it looked. Heather was not in much pain, but she was quite frightened at first—'hysterical' was how her mother put it. She felt as if something was in her eye when she closed it. Dr. Panos, author of *Homeopathic Medicine at Home*, refers to one remedy as 'the *Arnica* of the eye.' The fear, combined with the eye injury, along with the sensation of something in her eye, added up to the perfect picture of the remedy. Had the injury been from a blow, I would have considered *Arnica* or *Symphytum*, but in this case, *Aconite* filled the bill. When she saw the doctor less than 24 hours later, he was amazed to find the cut already healed.

—S.A. Westlake, OH

Aconitum napellus

At this meeting, the practitioner will ask the patient to describe their symptoms or conditions of concern as well their current and past medical history. The patient will also be encouraged to describe their preferences or dislikes regarding various environmental or lifestyle factors (such as foods, weather conditions, temperature, thirst, sleep, etc.) and how these factors impact the patient. In addition, the patient will be asked about how they experience themselves emotionally, mentally, socially and sexually.

After completing the case-taking phase, the remedy-selection phase begins. *Any* remedy may be selected for *any* condition if the symptoms generated by the remedy (in previously-conducted experimental trials called *provings*) match the symptoms being experienced by the patient.

During the remedy-selection phase, the practitioner will summarize the patient's case and develop a list of pertinent symptoms that will likely lead to a good remedy choice.

These symptoms will then be compared to the characteristics of available homeopathic medicines in order to identify the medicines that best match the patient's symptoms. This process, called *repertorization*, is accomplished by using various texts (such as the Materia Medica) and tools available to the practitioner, most of them available today on computer software. The list of homeopathic medicines identified as a result of this matching process are then scored and analyzed in order to determine the best remedy choice.

As an illustration of the complexity of this process, consider remedy choices for ailments as common as the flu or a cold. Whereas a conventional medical doctor will use the same treatment or medicine for every patient, a homeopath may choose one of dozens of different remedies, depending on the unique symptoms being experienced by a patient.

For example, the remedy *Aconite* or Wolf's Bane, is thought of in any case in which the symptoms come on suddenly—especially if exposure to cold wind or a fright might be a causative factor. There might also be a cough or sneezing, but the main guiding symptom is the suddenness of disease onset. Emotionally, the *Aconite* patient is fearful, and especially fearful that he will die. For example, a child who was out playing in the snow might awaken screaming at 2 a.m. (a common time of aggravation for this remedy) with a cough and high fever. Or a man who had been out shoveling snow, or perhaps after becoming frightened, might suddenly come down with a very high fever and become fearful that he will die. Both cases call for *Aconite*.

Another remedy characterized by suddenness of onset is *Belladonna*, made from Deadly Nightshade. Its symptoms are characterized by redness and heat. The fever is high, the face is red, the pulse can be seen in the veins of the neck. The eyes are dilated. The *Belladonna* patient is also very sensitive to slight movement and noise. Many old-time doctors, when seeing a suspected case of *Belladonna*, would bump against the bed to see if the patient was sensitive to this slight movement. *Belladonna* patients are sometimes almost delirious and think they see monsters. Their throat is usually swollen, the glands are swollen, and their ears might also be involved. For many children's earaches, *Belladonna* would be a top remedy choice—especially if the ache is throbbing and on the right side.

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How Are Homeopathic Medicines Made?

EDWARD CONWAY and CATHERINE DOW, Rph

Homeopathic medicines are drug products made by homeopathic pharmacies in accordance with the standards and processes described in the *Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States (HPUS)*—the official homeopathic manufacturing manual for the United States. Homeopathic medicines are regulated by the FDA and homeopathic pharmacies must comply with the FDA's current Good Manufacturing Practices. The substances used to prepare homeopathic medicines include plants (such as Wolf's Bane, Deadly Nightshade, dandelion, or plantain), minerals (for example, iron phosphate, arsenic oxide, or sodium chloride), or animal products (e.g., the venom of a number of poisonous snakes, or the ink of the cuttlefish). There are even a few homeopathic medicines prepared from chemical drug substances such as penicillin or streptomycin.

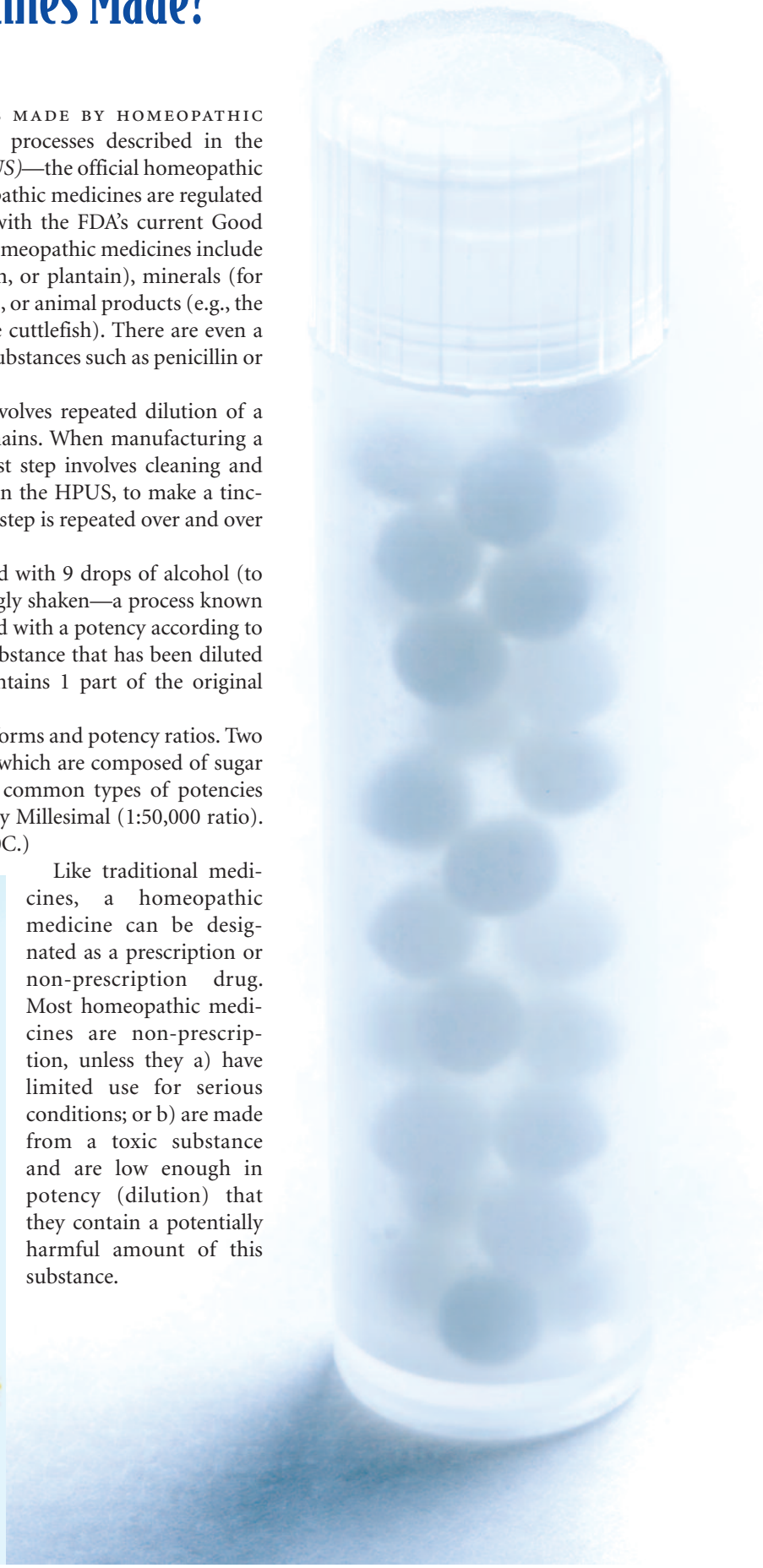
The technique for making a homeopathic medicine involves repeated dilution of a specific substance until little of the original substance remains. When manufacturing a homeopathic medicine from a plant, for example, the first step involves cleaning and preparing the plant with alcohol and water, as prescribed in the HPUS, to make a tincture. This tincture is then diluted and strongly shaken. This step is repeated over and over to create increasing potencies of the medicine.

For example, one drop of a plant tincture may be mixed with 9 drops of alcohol (to achieve a ratio of 1:10), and the mixture will then be strongly shaken—a process known as *succussion*. The resulting homeopathic medicine is labeled with a potency according to the number of times this has been done. For instance, a substance that has been diluted 1:10 and succussed six times will be labeled 6X, and contains 1 part of the original substance in 1 million parts of the diluent.

Homeopathic medicines are available in various dosage forms and potency ratios. Two of the most common dosage forms are pellets and tablets, which are composed of sugar and lactose saturated with the liquid dilution. The most common types of potencies available are X (1:10 ratio), C (1:100 ratio), and LM or Fifty Millesimal (1:50,000 ratio). (Note that a 1M potency is simply an abbreviation for 1000C.)

Calendula officinalis

Like traditional medicines, a homeopathic medicine can be designated as a prescription or non-prescription drug. Most homeopathic medicines are non-prescription, unless they a) have limited use for serious conditions; or b) are made from a toxic substance and are low enough in potency (dilution) that they contain a potentially harmful amount of this substance.



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Regulation of Homeopathic Drug Products

MARY BORNEMANN and JAY BORNEMANN, PhD

Homeopathic medicines have been classified as drugs by the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA) since 1938. They are among the best-selling over-the-counter drugs in the United States, yet the process by which they are regulated is not familiar to most people.

Official homeopathic drugs are those that have monographs—official listings of drug data—in the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the U.S. (HPUS). The HPUS is prepared by the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Convention of the U.S. (HPCUS), which oversees the regulatory approval of homeopathic drugs and the development and publication of general pharmacy practices and standards.

In order to be included in the HPUS, the HPCUS must determine that a homeopathic drug is safe and effective and is prepared according to the specifications of the HPUS general pharmacy section. The clinical benefits of a new homeopathic drug can be established in several ways. However, the only criterion currently in use is the "proving" of the drug (a trial in which healthy subjects are given the drug in order to determine its effects), and establishment of two adequate clinical studies.

Potential monographs go through an extensive review. If acceptable, the monograph is granted final approval for inclusion in HPUS, and the drug becomes an officially approved drug within the meaning of the FDCA.

Homeopathic drugs are subject to the FDCA and regulations issued by FDA, including those pertaining to manufacturing, labeling, marketing, and sales compliance rules. These rules, with three exceptions, are functionally identical to the rules for conventional medications. Good Manufacturing Practices standards for homeopathic and allopathic drugs are the same, as are advertising oversight.

In summary, homeopathic drugs in the U.S. are subject to well-defined regulatory processes that closely resemble those that apply to allopathic or conventional medications.

See: "Regulation of homeopathic drug products," originally published in 2006, by John P. Bornemann and Robert I. Field.

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