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Types of symptoms, their interpretation and utility

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Abstract

In homoeopathic practice, precise symptom evaluation forms the foundation of accurate remedy selection. Dr. Hahnemann emphasized the complete (qualified) symptom, comprising location, sensation, and modalities, as vital to understanding each individual symptom meaningfully. Classical classification distinguishes between objective symptoms—those observed by the practitioner—and subjective symptoms, experienced and narrated by the patient. Moreover, symptoms are categorized as common versus uncommon (peculiar/characteristic); the latter are invaluable for individualizing treatment, whereas common symptoms serve limited utility in remedy selection. Another key framework differentiates general (mental, emotional, physical) from particular (localized) symptoms. Hierarchically, mental and emotional generalities often outweigh physical partial manifestations due to their deeper representation of the patient's personhood. Symptom hierarchies prioritize mental symptoms most highly, followed by causation, modalities, desires/aversions, and characteristic particulars. As Garth Boericke asserted, "If well marked, mental symptoms are of the highest grade and importance in Homoeopathic prescribing," even taking precedence over pathologic symptoms when choosing between remedies. Recognizing and weighting these symptoms categories enable homeopaths to transcend generic disease labels and toward an individualized, holistic prescription aligned with the law of similia.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, symptoms, symptom classification, subjective symptoms, objective symptoms, characteristic symptoms, totality of symptoms

Introduction

Homoeopathy primarily deals with observable facts & phenomena in a case of a disease. This treatise has been undertaken and arranged in chronological order of the genesis of the concepts of different types of signs and symptoms and their classification to develop better prescribing concepts.

Symptom

Any change in the body or its functions as perceived by the patient. The patient describes his or her symptoms in his or her complaint or history of the present illness. A sign, however, is an objective finding observed or discovered during the examination ^[1].

Sign or symptom

Synonym - clinical finding: Objective evidence of disease perceptible to the examining practitioner (sign) and subjective evidence of disease perceived by the patient (symptom) ^[2].

Symptom: From the homoeopathic parlance

Sign: Any diagnostic objective symptom is sign; evidence of disease usually objective ^[3].

Symptom: Proof of the presence of disease, usually subjective; Disease manifests itself not merely by objective signs of sensory impression, but also by subjective symptoms of motor expression - James Krauss ^[3]

Pathogenetic symptom: A symptom produced by a medicine. (aph 105-106) ^[3]

General symptoms: Hahnemann's general symptoms are such symptoms, which are found in almost every disease condition and in proving of any drug. Such as - malaise, lethargy; aversion to physical and mental work, headache, anorexia etc. These are generally found in every disease condition hence so named, and therefore least important symptoms. But these symptoms have been named by J.T. Kent as common symptoms, since these are common to almost all disease conditions and provings ^[3].

Pathognomonic symptom: A symptom characteristic of and observed in disease ^[3].

Dr. Hahnemann's Views: Organon of medicine, 1810-1842

Aph. 6: The unprejudiced observer notes the changes in the health of the body and of the mind (morbid phenomena, accidents, symptoms) because deviations from the state of health is only perceived by outwardly manifested signs ^[4].

aph 7: It must be the symptoms alone by which the disease demands and points to the remedy suited to relieve it_ and moreover, the totality of these its symptoms, of this outwardly reflected picture of the internal essence of the disease”^[4].

aph 9: In health, the spiritual vital force animates the material body and retains all parts in harmonious, vital operations, as regards both sensations and functions ^[4].

aph 10: Material organism without vital force is capable of no sensation, no function, no self-preservation; it derives all sensation and performs all functions of life solely by means of the immaterial being ^[4].

aph 11: During illness, the deranged vital force furnishes the organism with disagreeable sensations, and incline it to the irregular processes which we call disease. This morbid derangement only makes itself known by the manifestations of disease in the sensations and functions of those parts of the organism exposed to the senses of the observer and physician, that is, by morbid symptoms ^[4].

aph 17: Cure is effected by the removal of the whole of the perceptible signs and symptoms ^[4].

aph 148 (6th edition): “The natural disease is never to be considered as a noxious material situated somewhere within the interior or exterior of man (aph 11-13) but as one produced by an inimical spirit-like (conceptual) agency which, like a kind of infection (note to aph 11) disturbs in its instinctive existence of the spirit-like (conceptual) principle of life within the organism torturing it as an evil spirit and compelling it to produce certain ailments and disorders in the regular course of its life. These are known as symptoms (disease)” ^[4].

Discussion

The vital force has an important role to play both in maintenance of health of the individual as well as in the production of diseases. Health is maintained by the vital force on account of its autocratic quality and therefore maintains all the vital functions of the body expressed as normal functions and sensations. Now when a person falls ill, it is only this self-acting(automatic) vital force that is present throughout the organism that is deranged by a dynamic influence. The deranged vital force cannot therefore maintain the ongoing functions in the normal state and therefore deviations of the state of health are produced due to abnormal functions which are expressed outwardly to the accurately observing physician by way of signs and symptoms.

Types of symptoms found in the organon

aph 67 FN: It does not follow that a homoeopathic medicine has been ill selected for a case of disease because some of the medicinal symptoms are only antipathic to some of the less important and minor symptoms of the disease; if only the others, the stronger, well-marked (characteristic) and peculiar symptom of the disease are covered and matched by the same medicine with similarity of symptoms- that is to say, overpowered, destroyed and extinguished; the few opposite symptoms also disappear of themselves after

the expiry of the term of action of the medicament, without retarding the cure in the least ^[4].

Accidental symptoms: If one or more unimportant symptoms be seen not conforming to the rest of the totality of symptoms, indicating a remedy, these may be overlooked ^[3].

aph 95: Lesser accessory symptoms ^[4]. These symptoms actually are a sign of the miasm at work, slowly creating inroads into the human economy. So, they hold importance as to the prescribing of the remedy.

Obscure symptoms: Some symptoms due to chronicity and insidious nature become part of life and are almost forgotten by the patient. These are, therefore, not reported to the physician. These obscure symptoms are known as the accessory symptoms of the disease (ex. one has to hurry to the lavatory, as soon as he wakes up etc.). Such symptoms being characteristic of the individual, should be found out, if any. Since, these help the physician choose a better remedy. And these become much more helpful in treating the one-sided diseases, which show by nature only very few symptoms ^[3].

aph 150: Trivial symptoms; indisposition ^[4] very shortly occurring symptoms of lesser consequence which indicate an indisposition which does not require medicinal treatment except for a management in diet and regimen.

aph 153: Striking, singular, uncommon and peculiar (characteristic) signs and symptoms; general and undefined symptoms ^[4]. Striking, singular, uncommon, peculiar characteristic signs and symptoms are the leading indications of the disease to which the drugs are to be matched and prescribed. The general, undefined symptoms like headache, malaise, fever, nausea are commonly found in a large number of disease. They don't serve to individualize the remedy and only serve to arrive at a large group of drugs.

aph 155: Homoeopathic symptoms ^[4]. Symptoms of the drug that bear a homoeopathic relation to the symptoms of the disease

aph 157: Unhomoeopathic symptoms ^[4]. Symptoms of the drug and the disease that are not related to each other based upon the law of similars.

aph 163: Accessory symptoms of the not perfectly appropriate remedy ^[4] development of symptoms from the array of the proven symptoms of the partially chosen homeopathic remedy due to the moderate number of remedies that are known yet.

aph 173: One or two principal symptoms ^[4] the most important presenting symptoms due to the symptoms of disease being too few. (One Sided Diseases)

aph 176: Violent symptoms ^[4] the chief presenting symptoms on the skin as in one sided diseases

aph 180: Accessory symptoms ^[4] “accessory symptoms of medicine; the new symptoms which appear after a wrong medicine; medicinal aggravation. If medicine is wrong, new symptoms (which are never experienced before) appear in the patient” ^[4].

aph 196: Local symptom ^[4] the chief presenting symptoms on the skin as in one sided disease

aph 198: Chief symptom (the local affection) ^[4] the chief presenting symptoms on the skin as in one sided disease

aph 199: External principal symptom ^[4] the chief presenting symptoms on the skin as in one sided disease

aph 205: Primary and secondary symptoms of chronic miasms ^[4].

aph 216: Psychological symptoms, corporeal symptoms ^[4] symptoms of a so-called mental disease; symptoms of the diseased mental faculty as well as the symptoms of the physical sphere that coexist in a balance.

aph 248 (6th edition): Apparent symptoms (Schein-Symptome) ^[4] temporary, short-lived aggravation of the disease due to excess of the well selected dose. It is an indication of the completion of cure and will leave behind a permanent restoration of health.

Discussion

1. Sometimes some minor symptoms (accidental symptoms) seem opposed to the totality. These can be safely excluded from the totality without hampering prescription efficiency.
2. Lesser accessory symptoms also known as obscure symptoms are seemingly trivial but bear important prescribing indications.
3. Very shortly occurring symptoms of very lesser importance (trivial symptoms) sometimes don't need treatment except diet and regimen changes (because they usually have a maintaining cause). Carefully distinguish these from lesser accessory symptoms.
4. General symptoms are found in many diseases and may help in diagnosis but not in homoeopathic prescribing.
5. Singular, striking, uncommon, peculiar symptoms that are not usually found in diseases are the quest of the prescriber for a homoeopathic prescription as these symptoms are identity of the patient and not the disease.
6. The symptoms of the drug which can be found in a disease are the homoeopathic symptoms which are to be considered when prescribing.
7. The symptoms of the drug that are not related to the disease by law of similia are the non-homoeopathic symptoms. These symptoms are useful when a partially selected medicine or a one-sided disease is being dealt with.
8. Accessory symptoms of a medicine developing is an indication of wrong or partial selection of a remedy
9. Local, principal, chief external symptom are the only sole expression of the disease through a specific organ and are important to the homoeopathic practitioners as to being the only indicator of the remedy required and the completion of cure as well.
10. Psychological (Mental) symptoms are a chief component of a totality of symptoms that Hahnemann has stressed upon. Each and every case should be prescribed for after taking into consideration the mental symptoms to which the prescribed remedy must bear similar relation.
11. The Schein Symptome (homoeopathic aggravation) is an important prognostic tool for the homoeopathic prescriber that provides an idea of the completion of the cure in the individual.
12. The pathogenetic action of the drugs that are found during proving of the drugs are the list of symptoms under each remedy to which a disease symptom complex must be matched maximally before the drug is to be prescribed based upon the laws of similia.

Dr. Caroll Dunham's views - Homoeopathy the science of therapeutics, 1863

1. By some writers the leading and most obvious and most frequently recurring symptoms are called characteristic. By others the pathognomonic symptoms of a class of

diseases are called characteristic, - by others the pathologico-anatomical... but the only sense in which homoeopaths can use the term is when it gives characters as an individual - chap 1 ^[5].

2. Characteristic symptoms are necessarily subjective and seemingly trivial phenomena. But the characteristic is not always a definite symptom. Sometimes a characteristic is a definite symptom whereas sometimes it is a condition of aggravation, amelioration according to time & circumstances or even it may be a concomitant in many cases - chap 1 ^[5].
3. The most important of all the considerations in which resides the individuality of a drug are the conditions and concomitants of the symptom. The concomitants are those phenomena, whether we call them Sympathetic or Secondary, which always accompany any symptom or group of symptoms - chap 1 ^[5].
4. Subjective symptoms are those symptoms of which the physician becomes cognizant through the sensibilities of the patient. ex- varieties of pain, abnormal sensations which accompany disease. They are the only evidence of "dynamic changes" until the disease has progressed far enough to furnish him with some material results of these dynamic changes [Objective symptoms] - chap 2 ^[5].
5. The first evidences of nearly all diseases consist of subjective symptoms. The subjective symptoms are abnormal changes of function that enable us to take cognizance of the material or organic changes in the tissues may have resulted from any one of a number of pathological processes and hence the value of these symptoms - chap 2 ^[5].
6. Symptoms may be called primary as being
 - a) first in order of occurrence
 - b) the exciting cause of other and opposing symptoms
 - c) of greater importance or significance.

Symptoms may be secondary as being

- a) second in order of appearance.
 - b) opposing symptoms contingent upon primary symptoms.
 - c) of secondary importance or significance than primary symptoms - chap 4 ^[5].
7. The symptoms which drugs produce upon the healthy organism vary according to the dose

Chemical - depending on chemical affinity which exists between the drug and the tissues of the body, and independent of vitality.

Mechanical - consisting chiefly in violent efforts on the part of the organism to eject from its cavities the offending substance.

Dynamic - contingent upon vitality and resulting from the relations of the peculiar properties of the drug to the susceptibilities of the living, healthy organism, whose effects may be

 - a) Generic - common to all the members of a certain class of drugs which serve to distinguish the class from others but does not help in distinguishing between individuals.
 - b) Specific - results from dynamic action of drugs and are peculiar to it, which may be again classified as -
 - Central - appear speedily after drug is taken, result of comparatively larger doses and mainly confined to the

alimentary canal and to the organs immediately connected to it.

- Peripheral - appear slowly, result of comparatively small doses, taken repeatedly or allowed to act without interruption for a long period. Affects bones, skin, glands etc. and in the coordinated phenomena of life. They are often manifestations of dyscrasia or cachexy - chap 5 [5].

Discussion

1. Subjective symptoms of apparently low intensity or trivial origin, conditions of aggravation, amelioration according to time and circumstances and concomitants are usually characteristic symptoms of the case. This is in direct harmony with the concept of lesser accessory symptoms of Hahnemann or Boenninghausen's location, sensation, modality, concomitants being important pointers to the remedy.
2. Subjective symptoms are produced when the dynamic disease process is ongoing and are directly measurable by its effect on the person (pain, nausea, vertigo or other sensations). When these are graded by special modalities or concomitants become characteristics. Subjective symptoms always develop before objective symptoms.
3. Disease processes having existed for a long period of time can result in disease ultimates or materialistic results (objective symptoms). Ungraded objective symptoms are not as useful as symptoms graded by sensations, modalities, concomitants.
4. Chemical or Mechanical symptoms are what Modern medicine deals with after administration of a medicine. Dynamic Symptoms are under the jurisdiction of homoeopathy. This can be related to aphorism 67 of organon where medicines are primarily used for their chemical or mechanical effects to stimulate the depressed vital force to make it reactive to the dynamic effects of medicines.
5. Knowledge of generic symptoms helps to differentiate between classes of drugs.
6. Knowledge of specific central and peripheral symptoms helps to understand that with varying dosage and repetition of drugs one can control the sphere of action of drugs according to his will.

Dr. William Boericke's view - A compend of the principles of homoeopathy as taught by Hahnemann, and verified by a century of clinical application, 1896

1. The three essential features of every complete symptom are therefore -
 - Location
 - Sensation
 - Condition of aggravation or amelioration(modality), which is the most important, ought to be the aim of all provers to observe symptoms with these features well in mind - chap 4 [6].
2. General symptoms are common to all drugs and appear in every proving, ex. malaise, loss of appetite, weakness, headache etc. Such general symptoms, unless amplified by accompanying conditions or modalities are of comparatively little value for the prescriber. We must make use of such symptoms to individualize and give characteristic to a drug, and hence these are called as characteristic symptoms [6].

3. Each drug is an entity, and can express its disease producing properties, i.e., pathogenetic force in a way peculiar to itself. These are the drug's characteristic symptoms, which is possessed by no other than the individual drug of which it is predicated. These have also been designated as keynote symptoms by Dr. Guernsey, and as guiding symptom by Dr. Hering. They may appear trivial and unimportant, but for purposes of prescribing they are paramount in importance [6].
4. Subjective symptoms are a description by the patient of his feelings as they appear to him - his sensations. They must be interpreted by the physician to a large extent [6].
5. Objective symptoms are, as a rule, the most important. They are all such as the physician can ascertain by means of his senses, aided and unaided. In many phases of disease, and with children and old people, where organic changes can go to an alarming extent without marked subjective disturbance, objective symptoms are all we practically have on which to base a prescription. Objective symptoms are of special value when they occur during sleep, as the system is relaxed. Objective symptoms are not especially diagnostic of the disease, or the pathological state, and are important for the purpose of prescribing. But those that are diagnostic of certain pathological states, so called pathognomonic symptoms, are of great importance in guiding to a certain class of remedies superficially indicated. - chap 7 [6].
6. Characteristic or peculiar symptoms of themselves may be of no special value, but become valuable or characteristic by their conditions of aggravation or amelioration, their concomitants or locality. Transient odd and peculiar symptoms are however not so important as such as affect the patient's general condition, hence the modalities, conditions of aggravation and amelioration are most important - chap 7 [6].
7. Mental symptoms of drug are most important - chap 7 [6].
8. Late symptoms - The more recent symptoms are valuable as being the latest expression of the diseased condition, and must be covered by the remedy - chap 7 [6].
9. General or absolute symptoms - are common to all patients suffering from the same disease and they are essential for the purpose of diagnosis - chap 7 [6].
10. Contingent or peculiar symptoms - are those which vary with the individual and are not essentially pathognomonic of the disease, but always of the individual patient, Therefore the characteristic symptoms of the patient's totality of symptoms are most essential in selecting the remedy. Greater the value of symptom for the purpose of diagnosis, the less its value for the selection of the homoeopathic remedy and vice versa - chap 7 [6].

Discussion

1. Complete every symptom during case taking - location/ sensation/ modalities
2. Basic or Absolute symptoms of G. Boericke = Common symptoms of Kent = General symptoms of Hahnemann. = Pathologic Symptoms = General/ Absolute symptoms - important for diagnosis

3. But general symptoms + accompanying conditions or modalities = Characteristic /Keynote/ Guiding symptoms - features of individuals.
4. Objective symptoms that are indication of diseases = Pathognomonic Symptoms.
5. Objective symptoms that are not indication of diseases = diagnostic of individualistic drugs (especially in children and old people, and during sleep).
6. a single characteristic peculiar symptom has less value < (characteristic symptoms + aggravation/ amelioration or concomitant or locality).
7. mental symptoms and late symptoms are of highest grade- must be covered by remedy.
8. Determinative symptoms of G. Boericke = Characteristic general symptoms of Kent = Singular, striking, uncommon, peculiar symptoms of Hahnemann. = Contingent/ Peculiar Symptoms - low diagnostic value, high prescribing value.

Dr. J.T. Kent's views - Lectures on homoeopathic philosophy, 1900

1. Disorders in the vital economy is the primary state of affairs, and this disorder manifests itself by signs and symptoms. Every new patient has a few new symptoms; he has put his own stamp on that disease. Those symptoms that run through all are the pathognomonic symptoms; those that are rare are the peculiarities of the different people. This totality represents to the human mind, as nearly as possible, the nature of this sickness, and it is this nature that the therapist must have in mind - lecture 3 [7].
2. All curable diseases make themselves known to the physician by signs and symptoms. Conditions of the body that are incurable are such very often as have no external signs or symptoms - lecture 4 [7].
3. Common symptoms are those that appear in all cases of a disease, that you would expect to find in that disease. The absence of the striking feature of disease constitutes a peculiarity that relates to the patient. That which is pathognomonic is common, because it is common in that disease, but an absence of the pathognomonic characterizes that particular disease in that patient - lecture 32 [7].
4. All the things that predicated of the patient himself (his whole economy) are the things that are general; all the things that are predicated of any given organ are things in particular. The things that are general are the first in importance - lecture 32 [7].
5. The generals are sometimes made of particulars. Things that apply to all the organs may be predicated of the person himself. Things that modify all parts of the organism are those that relate to the general state. Anything that the individual predicates of himself is also general - lecture 33 [7].
6. The more the symptoms relate to the anatomy of the parts, the more external they are: the more relate to the tissues, the more likely they are to be particular. But the more they relate to internals that involve the whole man, the more they become general - lecture 33 [7].
7. If there be but one remedy that has the numerous generals, and covers those generals absolutely and clearly and strongly, that will be the remedy that will cure the case. One strong general can over-rule all the particulars you can gather up - lecture 33 [7].

8. There is nothing about common symptoms that will enable you to find a remedy, but for these common symptoms we have a class of remedies. When you see a rubric containing a dozen, fifteen or twenty remedies, you may often know it is a common symptom - lecture 33 [7].
9. To enable you to pick out of that group of remedies the one that will cure you must study both the generals and the particulars of the patient and the generals always first. You go from generals to particulars - lecture 33 [7].

Discussion

1. Common Symptoms are commonly found in all diseases and are useless in prescribing. All Pathognomonic Symptoms are common symptoms. Absence of pathognomonic symptoms is a Characteristic Symptom.
2. General Symptoms are first in importance. And then comes particulars.
3. Similar types of particular symptoms at two or more parts can be considered as a general.
4. General symptoms >> particular symptoms. If a remedy is more similar with respect to the generals of the case, the remedy will cure.
5. If a rubric has many remedies, it may be a common symptom.

Dr. Richard Hughes views - The principles & practice of homoeopathy, 1902

1. In such early stages maladies are often recognizable by rational signs alone, and mainly by symptoms of a subjective nature. The entire organism of the patient should be examined in every possible way, and that the totality of symptoms should not be made the basis of the prescription. The constitutional, general symptoms are often more conclusive as to the proper treatment than the more obvious local symptoms [8].
2. "The examination of patients by the homoeopathic prescriber is far more minute than that ordinarily practiced. He pays more regard to subjective symptoms" [8].

Dr. Stuart Close's views - The genius of homoeopathy lecture and essays on homoeopathic philosophy, 1909-1913

1. It becomes necessary in homoeopathic prescribing to carefully separate the primary, functional symptoms which represent the morbid processes itself, from the secondary symptoms which represent the pathological end products of the disease - chap 4 [9].
2. If there is doubt as to which symptoms are the primary and which are secondary the history will decide. In the evolution of disease in the living organism, functional changes precede organic or structural changes. "Function creates the organ". For homoeopathic prescriber the totality of the functional symptoms of the patient is the disease - chap 4 [9].
3. Symptoms are the outwardly perceptible signs or phenomena of internal morbid changes in the state of the previously healthy organism, and are the only means of knowing what the disease is. When the symptoms are removed the diseases cease to exist - chap 4 [9].
4. The last appearing symptoms in a proving are the most

- valuable and characteristic. In the same way, the last appearing symptoms in a disease, especially the chronic disease, are of the highest rank in selecting the remedy - chap 10 ^[9].
5. In general, a symptom is any evidence of disease, or change from a state of health. Hahnemann defines symptoms as - "any manifestation of a deviation from a former state of health, perceptible by the patient, the individuals around him, or the physician" - chap 11 ^[9].
 6. Subjective symptoms are the symptoms which are discoverable by the patient alone, such as pain and other morbid sensations of the body or mind, presenting no external indications. As expressions of the interior states of the organism, and particularly of the psychic and mental states, they take the highest rank - chap 11 ^[9].
 7. Hahnemann defines objective symptoms as - "the expression of disease in the sensation and functions of that side of the organism exposed to the senses of the physician and bystanders". He implies that functional and sensational disturbances precede organic changes; and this is consistent with his basic premise that all disease is primarily a dynamical disturbance of the life principle - chap 11 ^[9].
 8. The totality of symptoms means
 - Totality of each individual symptom - complete symptoms (location sensation, modalities). The modalities of a drug are the pathognomonic symptoms of the Materia Medica.
 - Totality of the symptoms as in all symptoms of the case which are capable of being logically combined into a harmonious and consistent whorl, having form, coherency and individuality. The totality must express an idea. It represents the therapeutic idea and the diagnostic idea - chap 11 ^[9].
 9. Keynote symptom - a characteristic or keynote symptom is a generalization drawn from the particular symptoms by logical deduction. The keynote system was taught and practiced by Dr. Henry N. Guernsey. The term keynote is merely suggestive as used in this connection, the reference being to the analogy between Materia Medica and music. The keynote in music is defines as "the fundamental note or tone of which the piece is accommodated." In pathology the term "pathognomonic symptom" expresses what might be called the keynote of the disease. the differences by which one remedy is distinguished from another are the keynotes of the remedy. It is simply the predominating feature or symptom which directs the attention to the totality. Its function is merely suggestive. There is usually something peculiar in the case, some prominent feature or striking combination of symptoms that directs the attention to a certain drug. Reference to the repertory and materia medica will verify and complete the comparison - chap 11 ^[9].
 10. Dr. C. G. Raue pointed out that scarcely one of the keynotes or characteristic symptoms belongs exclusively to a single remedy, and cautioned us not to diagnose a remedy on one symptom only, be it ever so characteristic. Dr Hering said "every stool must have at least three legs, if it is to stand alone." He advised selecting at least three characteristic symptoms as the basis of prescribing - chap 11 ^[9].
 11. The most valuable indication of the remedy are to be found in:
 - Subjective morbid sensations and phenomena which come within the sphere of the patient's own experience and are perceptible to him alone.
 - Objective signs of disease which are perceptible to the unaided or natural senses of ourselves, the patient or others - chap 12 ^[9].
 12. Mental symptoms are of highest importance - chap 12 ^[9].
 13. The suffering of the organism produced by the drug is expressed in symptoms, which are the language of the disease. In homoeopathic parlance, therefore these are termed "pathogenetic symptoms", a term which is preferable because it is accurate and truthful - chap 13 ^[9].
 14. Characteristic symptoms are general symptoms, or generalizations, inferred or deduced from particular symptoms by the logical process of generalizing. In other words, characteristics are the individualizing factors of case or remedy - chap 16 ^[9].
 15. The true totality is more than the mere numerical totality or whole number of the symptoms. It may even exclude some of the particular symptoms if they cannot, at the time, be logically related to the case. Such symptoms are called "accidental symptoms" and are not allowed to influence the choice of the remedy - chap 16 ^[9].
 16. Generals are more important than particulars in constructing a case as a basis for prescribing. Nearly all mental symptoms are generals because mental states can only be expressed in general terms. Modalities, or conditions of aggravation and amelioration applying to the case as a whole, or the patient himself, are generals of high rank - chap 16 ^[9].
 17. Particular symptoms, or those which express the suffering of some part, organ, or function of the body have a twofold use. sometimes generals are drawn from them or they are the differentiating factors between two or more remedies. Nothing in particulars can contradict or contra-indicate strongly marked generals, though they may appear to do so - chap 16 ^[9].
 18. Negative general symptoms are the absence of certain striking or customary features of a disease, especially general symptom of a case - chap 16 ^[9].

Discussion

1. Primary functional symptoms = the morbid process (disease) itself. Secondary symptom = the end products of disease(pathology).
2. The totality of the functional symptoms of the patient = disease
3. Subjective symptoms = expression of the interior state of the man himself. Specially symptoms of the mind are of the highest rank in evaluating a symptom.
4. Disease → dynamic disturbance of the vital force → dynamic derangement expressed outwardly by subjective and objective (functional) symptoms → pathological end results.
5. Keynote symptoms = generalized form of characteristic symptoms of provings. So, prescribing a single keynote is wrong. They just draw attention of the prescriber to a specific drug for further consideration.
6. At Least three keynote symptoms (three-legged stool) or more should match to the case for keynote prescribing.

7. Remedy indication = subjective symptoms + objective signs.
8. Mental symptoms = highest grade in evaluating a case.
9. General symptoms (of the whole person) always >> particular symptoms (of some specific part).
10. General symptoms of highest rank to be considered in a prescription:
 - Mental symptoms.
 - Modalities
 - Conditions of aggravation and amelioration.
11. When expected common feature of a disease is absent in a case = NEGATIVE GENERAL SYMPTOM. (High grade)
12. Last appearing symptoms of a case - Highest grade
13. Totality of symptoms
 - Totality of each individual symptom = L/S/M
 - Totality of all the symptoms arranged in a whorl = which indicates a therapeutic and diagnostic idea and determines a sensible picture that can be easily likened to a remedy.

Dr. Garth Boericke's views - A compend of the principles of homoeopathy for students in medicine, 1929

1. Fortunately, bulk of the Homoeopathic Materia Medica is made up from provings on the health. The symptoms obtained from toxicological observations and from provings are also called pathogenetic symptoms and the full record, in order of their development is called the drug pathogenesis - chap 6 ^[10].
2. Basic or absolute symptoms are those that appear in every proving (also in most diseases) and are of general nature and usually diagnostically important. They are of little value to determine the specific homoeopathic drug indicated, but taken together furnish a suggestive beginning. ex. - malaise, headache, weakness, eructation, fever and pain. Basic or absolute symptoms which are qualified by location, sensation and modalities come under the class of determinative symptoms - chap 6 ^[10].
3. Determinative symptoms are individual or personal ones if found in a patient or a characteristic "keynote or guiding symptoms, if found in a drug's pathogenesis." When encountered in disease or a drug proving are alike and usually consists of -
 - Modalities
 - Mental symptoms
 - Qualified basic or absolute symptoms
 - Strange, rare or particular symptoms- as mentioned by Hahnemann - chap 6 ^[10].
4. Characteristic symptoms may be either basic or determinative symptoms depending on those particular drugs propensity. If the drug produces marked pathology chances are that its characteristic symptoms would be basic in nature such as anemia and nephritis of lead or the thick, cracked skin of petroleum; on the other hand, drugs like bryonia or nux would be more apt to show these characteristics in the determinative group of symptoms, such as a particular modality or sensation. This is because every drug is a medical force and can expend its disease producing properties in a way peculiar to itself as follows -
 - Location of tissue proclivity (elective affinity)

- Sensation or kind of action
 - Modalities (agg/ amel) - chap 6 ^[10].
5. If well marked, mental symptoms have highest grade and importance in homoeopathic prescribing - chap 7 ^[10].
 6. General modalities are second in importance. These are the reaction to the environment and as a whole how that particular individual reacts to season, heat and cold, to time of day, etc. - chap 7 ^[10].
 7. The last class of determinative symptoms (well-marked sensation, modality, or concomitant) are the strange, are and particular ones about which Hahnemann has spoken - chap 7 ^[10].
 8. Pathologic symptoms are basic or absolute - anemia, hypertension, hyperchlorhydria, fibrillation, bleeding etc. - chap 7 ^[10].
 9. Clinical symptom is one which does not appear in the proving of a drug yet nevertheless has been inadvertently relieved by that same drug, given for another purpose - chap 7 ^[10].

Discussion

1. Basic or Absolute symptoms of G. Boericke = Common symptoms of Kent = General symptoms of Hahnemann. = Pathologic Symptoms = General/ Absolute symptoms -important for diagnosis
2. Determinative symptoms of G. Boericke = Characteristic general symptoms of Kent = Singular, striking, uncommon, peculiar symptoms of Hahnemann. = Contingent/ Peculiar Symptoms - low diagnostic value, high prescribing value.
3. Basic or absolute symptoms qualified by location/ sensation/ modalities = determinative symptoms.
4. Mental symptoms = Rank 1.
5. General symptoms = rank 2.

Dr. H.A. Robert's view - The principles and art of cure by homoeopathy, 1936

1. Any disturbance of this vital energy immediately shows itself in the lack of harmony through the outward manifestations of our beings; in other words, symptoms. Disease first must be caused by a disturbance of the vital energy and that in itself sets in motion a train of symptoms exhibiting an exact picture of the way in which the vital energy is disturbed - chap 3 ^[11].
2. Nature cries out most loudly and points the direction most clearly, because at this time symptoms are produced that are of inestimable value in the selection of the constitutional remedy - chap 4 ^[11].
3. The homoeopathic physician must complete every symptom; rounded out as to
 - Time and place
 - Sensations
 - Kind of distress
 - Type of pain
 - Modalities - aggravations / ameliorations.
 - Causation - chap 8 ^[11].
4. In considering totality, complete symptoms (location, character and modalities) along with the modalities (aggravations / ameliorations) are the most important. Next in order is the character of sensations - chap 8 ^[11].
5. The most important symptoms are the general

- symptoms that pertain to the patient as a whole. Then comes the aggravations and ameliorations. The mental symptoms rank very highly as they point to the man himself. Subjective and objective symptoms are to be elicited and recorded - chap 8 ^[11].
6. Generals rank the highest in evaluating a case. Without generals we cannot expect to find the similimum - chap 9 ^[11].
 7. Mental and emotional characteristics have a high value as these are the true reflections of his personality, the man himself. Subjective symptoms are the registration of his physical or other difficulties as expressed upon his personality - chap 9 ^[11].
 8. The objective symptoms are less differentiative though they picture accurately certain phases of the case as the patient little realizes he is manifesting them. Objective symptoms are of more importance in child life than adult life as we see through them the expression of the child's disposition and desires - chap 9 ^[11].
 9. First of all, those symptoms that are common and found in almost all diseases may be left out of our count unless they manifest themselves in a striking manner - chap 9 ^[11].
 10. All the attendant (CONCOMITANT) symptoms should be carefully noted -
 - Those symptoms which rarely appear in connection with the leading disease and therefore found rarely among the provings.
 - Those which belong to another sphere of disease than the principal ailment.
 - Those which have more or less characteristic signs of the medicine even though they have not before been noticed in the present relationship or diagnostic group. - chap 9 ^[11].
 11. Conditions of aggravations and ameliorations may in themselves become generals if they appertain in the same way to several parts of the body, they then become conditions of the man as a whole, or general symptoms - chap 9 ^[11].
 12. Contradictory symptoms help to rule out many remedies; that is symptoms that are decidedly opposed to the provings like thirstlessness of the fever of Ignatia or Apis or Pulsatilla. They may have a strong bearing in choosing the remedy from the standpoint of being themselves a symptom, just like paucity of symptoms. Therefore, alternating or contradictory symptoms or lack of symptoms should be taken as first rank symptoms - chap 9 ^[11].
 13. The chief complaint or the leading symptoms, maybe defined as those symptoms for which there is clear pathological foundation, or the symptoms that are most prominent and clearly recognizable, or the symptoms which first attract the attention of the patient or the physician, or which cause the most suffering, or which indicate definitely the seat and nature of the morbid process which form the warp of the fabric ^[11].
 14. The auxiliary or concomitant symptom or group of symptoms seldom has any definite relationship to the leading symptoms from the standpoint of theoretical pathology. If they do not fit into the theories of pathology, they even have greater individual value in the case. It is the concomitant group of symptoms which, taken in conjunction with the major group of symptoms, makes possible the definite selection of the remedy ^[11].

15. At times the chief complaint seems contradictory to the auxiliary group of symptoms. The physician will find many such alternating symptom groups, any one of which may be the chief complaint ^[11].

Discussion

1. Complete Symptom during case taking by enquiring into = Time and place/ sensations/ kind of distress/ type of pain/ modalities aggravations & ameliorations/ causation.
2. General symptoms (including mental symptoms) = Rank 1
3. Complete symptoms = Rank 2
4. Character of sensations = Rank 3
5. Objective symptoms are important in children. Expression of the disposition and desires.
6. Leave out all common symptoms of a case at first.
7. Enquire for Concomitant symptoms. The lesser concomitant symptoms can be related to the leading symptoms, higher their importance in selecting the remedy.
8. Alternating, Contradictory, Lack of symptoms if found in case = Rank 1.

Miscellaneous

- "Of the drugs, therefore, the effects of which pass over in a brief space of time, the primary symptoms appear and disappear within a few hours", "under the action of moderate or small doses, the symptoms of the first order chiefly come to view" - Hahnemann in an essay entitled Suggestions for ascertaining the curative power of drugs, 1796 - chap 4 ^[5].
- "Hahnemann also speaks of a class of symptoms which are generally the effects of very large doses termed as - Reliquias which indicate more or less permanent alteration of tissue, including the symptoms of the agony in fatal cases" - chap 4 ^[5].
- "Hahnemann teaches in Fragmenta & organon that primary [Erstwirkungen] symptoms occur first in the order of time and that occurring subsequently are the Secondary symptoms. The secondary symptoms are not an independant series but were secondary by virtue of their relation of opposition in nature to a series of preceding symptoms. Primary or positive symptoms of drugs are those on which we are to base our prescriptions. There were also occasional occurrence of what he called Alternate [Wechselwirkungen] which nevertheless were not secondary as found in the introduction to Nux vomica (MAT. MED. PUR. 1ST ED.)" - chap 4 ^[5].
- "While the keynotes, according to Dr. Guernsey, will in each instance, form an unfailing guide, the requisite conditions and corresponding totality of the symptoms in such cases being inevitably present. If this doctrine is true - and in practice it has been confirmed by much experience- it is so because these so called keynotes essentially represent a profound dyscrasia of the organic nervous system; either in such sensations of pain as precede even the first functional derangements, and are intended as premonitory admonitions; or in such sensations as arise in connection with, and in consequence of, the initial disorder in these most interior organs of vegetative life" - J.H.P. Frost in Hahnemannian Monthly, Vol II, pg 443 - chap 5 ^[6].

- “First or oldest symptoms - In the treatment of chronic diseases, the first indications of a departure from health are of the greatest value, particularly those occurring before there was any treatment. After treatment, old symptoms reappearing are an indication of cure and no other medicine should be repeated.” -S. Kimball, in Homoeopathic Physician, June 1895 - chap 7 ^[6].
 - “Functional symptoms of an affected organ are of much less value than symptoms which occur in other parts during the exercise of the function of that organ. Symptoms that affect the general organism are of more value than those are functionally related to the organ affected. Example - burning pain in the urethra during or after micturition, is of little value in gonorrhea for it is usually present; but pain in testicles, thighs, or abdomen during or after micturition, or symptoms of some other part not immediately concerned in that function, would be more important.” - S. Kimball, in Homoeopathic Physician, June 1895 - chap 7 ^[6].
 - “Now, you get symptoms in your provings. These symptoms you will find to be embraced under two grand classes, namely, subjective and objective. The subjective symptoms are those which the prover himself experiences, and which he has to express to you in certain language. The objectives are those which apply directly to your senses. They are such as you may see, hear, touch, taste or smell. For instance, if you give the drug we are speaking of, and the prover says he feels pain over the right eye, that is a subjective symptom. You cannot see it, touch it, taste it or feel it. It does not apply to your senses. You know what is pain ; you have experienced it; you can appreciate it in your own mind. But if a boil is produced by this medicine; if there is a cloudy deposit in the urine, or if there are mucous rales or harsh sounds in the lungs; if the heart itself is altered in its action; if a wart appears on the skin, or if sweat breaks out, you have an objective symptom.¹² All symptoms of the Materia Medica are not of the same value. They are relative in value”^[12].
 - Schron lays great stress on the necessity of distinguishing between the idiopathic and the sympathetic symptoms of diseases, whether natural or medicinal, and says, it is only when the medicine and disease resemble each other in their idiopathic symptoms that the former can be held to be specific to the latter. It is, he says, in the homoeopathic method only that this resemblance of idiopathic symptoms is attended to, consequently, it is the only true specific method.¹³ Our investigation of diseases, as well as in our consideration of the pathogenetic action of drugs, we must, says Schron, endeavor to ascertain which symptoms are essential and idiopathic, and which are non-essential and secondary or sympathetic. The right remedy must correspond to the disease in the idiopathic symptoms; and if several remedies exhibit such correspondence, the sympathetic symptoms will enable us to select the most appropriate from among them^[13].
2. We have got to collect the overall symptoms of the patient from various angles till we obtain the individualizing symptoms of the patient. Because without the individualizing symptoms it is not practicable to select the appropriate medicine - chap 24 ^[14].
 3. The general symptoms which are uncommon or peculiar i.e., those which cannot be explained with the knowledge of the Practice of Medicine or Pathology etc. but stand out to the physician as singular, peculiar or surprising, rank as of the highest grade - chap 25 ^[14].
 4. Those symptoms which are to be related to the particular part or organ of the body are termed as local or particular symptom. Of these, the value of the uncommon or peculiar symptoms is greater - chap 25 ^[14].
 5. A concomitant of a symptom means any unexpected accompaniments of a symptom which has no separate existence of its own. The accompanying symptom has no manifest cause to exist with the principal symptom which it accompanies. If the accompanying symptom is expected with the principal symptom or can be explained with the pathology of the diseased condition, it should better be termed as associated symptom instead of concomitant - chap 27 ^[14].
 6. A symptom maybe concomitant and characteristic in one case and a common symptom in another. A strong concomitant may sometime overrule many common general or particular symptom - chap 27 ^[14].
 7. Etiology, constitutional symptoms, concomitant symptoms, rare and striking symptoms occupy the highest priority in the list which constitute the individualizing symptoms - chap 28 ^[14].

Dana Ullman - Homoeopathy: Medicine for the 21st century, 1989

1. The word symptom comes from a Greek root and refers to "something that falls together with something else." Symptoms then, are a sign or signal of something else, and treating them does not necessarily change that "something else." Our differing symptoms represent different levels of defense that our body is synchronously deploying in an effort to survive^[14].
2. Generally, mental Symptoms are regarded as the deepest core of an individual's health, emotional problems are of secondary importance, and physical symptoms of tertiary value. The actual depth of an individual symptom in terms of a person's health is determined by its severity, frequency, and degree of impact on limiting the person's freedom to be and act at his or her potential. Thus, any serious or persistent physical symptoms can be considered deeper diseases than emotional or mental symptoms if they threaten basic survival or make living very difficult^[15].
3. Symptoms on the mental level might be defined as disturbances in a person's cognitive functioning, sense of self, sense of connectedness with the world, or willpower^[15].
4. Acute symptoms represent self-protective efforts of the organism to deal with some type of recent stress or infection. (15) Chronic Symptoms, in contrast, represent recurrent, unsuccessful efforts of the organism to reestablish health. Such symptoms may persist because the person is constitutionally weakened

Dr. S.P. Dey - Essentials of principles and practice of homoeopathy, 2009

1. An uncommon symptom is that symptom which is not generally expected in a disease or in the pathogenesis of a drug. Any symptom which is not explainable with the knowledge of pathology may be considered as a uncommon or peculiar - chap 17 ^[14].

from genetic, lifestyle, or environmental factors and/or because the person is continually stressed or frequently reinfected. Sometimes what seems to be an acute symptom is actually the result of an underlying chronic condition^[15].

Dr. Paolo Bellavite - The emerging science of homeopathy complexity, biodynamics, and nanopharmacology, 2002

1. Reappearance of old symptoms- this phenomenon, which may sometimes be interpreted negatively by the patient, is again a very positive prognostic indicator in the resolution of complicated cases and denotes a return to past levels of disease experienced earlier in the patient's clinical history which has moved on from one form or stage of disease to another almost always of a severe nature. The reappearance of old symptoms also called regressive vicariation denotes that, under the effect of the homoeopathic remedy, the patient is still capable of retracing the "false steps" he or she has taken and getting back to better levels of health. Recognition of such a phenomenon might suggest that the disease history of each individual patient is somehow related to a single pathobiological (or chronopathological) pathway and that there exists some kind of biochemical or neurohormonal "biological memory" persisting in the context of homeostatic system disorders^[16].
2. These symptoms are of little significance in homoeopathic individualization, where they are called "local" or "common" symptoms whereas much greater importance is ascribed to those symptoms which differ from one individual to another with the same disease. These latter symptoms are called the peculiar symptoms. The importance accorded to the peculiar symptoms within the framework of the theory expounded above, is justified on the basis of the fact that they reflect both the patient's physiological homeostasis, regardless of the disease, and the mode of reacting, the way the body bases to face up to the disruption of homeostasis currently underway. It should be recalled that all homeostatic systems are interconnected, with the result that the modulation of one cannot fail to have an impact on the others. It is only by "conditioning" these systems pharmacologically that the particular subject can be helped by a homoeopathic treatment^[16].

Conclusion

Dr. J.H. Clarke brilliantly puts it all into the simplest of words as - "Symptoms are the language in which the disturbing forces, which we know as diseases, speak to us"^[17]. In modern times clinical diagnosis is losing ground to laboratory-based diagnosis, due to the constantly mutating signs and symptoms of diseases. The art of observation laid down by various stalwarts can be of immense help in understanding the dynamic diseases and the peculiarity with which they attack individuals.

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