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An approach to the Hahnemannian concept of Psora: “The road less travelled”

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Abstract

Homoeopathy is a wholistic science and based on the law i.e., Similia Similibus Curentur. The totality of symptoms forms the sole guide for the selection of a remedy. But Dr. C.F.S Hahnemann (1755-1843) was dissatisfied with the temporary relief in long lasting progressing diseases based on totality of symptoms only. Then he studied these cases retrospectively and found a certain pattern of disease in patient's family history and past history which he felt explained the true basis of chronic diseases. He called these patterns as *Miasm*. He described three types of fundamental miasms – Psora is one of it. Psora is the mother of all true chronic diseases except the syphilitic and sycotic. It is carried from generation to generation increasing the susceptibility to disease. Thus, to bring cure to any chronic disease, there is a need to consider fundamental miasm along with the accessory circumstances.

Keywords: Miasm, chronic disease, psora, hering's law of cure

1. Introduction

Dr. Hahnemann (1755- 1843) explained in § 22 that the totality of the symptoms of the disease to be cured, a medicine must be sought which has a tendency to produce similar or opposite symptoms. He declared finally in § 50 that the sole therapeutic law of nature is cure by symptom similarity. From the early days of his career Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) experienced great success in the treatment of acute diseases but as early as 1816 he was becoming concerned because the constitutional health of his patients seemed to be slowly declining. As he pondered the nature of this continual deterioration in his patients, he began to search for a deeper understanding of the processes that lie behind chronic diseases. Going by the descriptions by numerous stalwarts of medicine and his own observations of case histories of his patients, he found some pattern owing it to Miasm. Thus, he gave the concept of fundamental miasm as the basis of true natural chronic diseases. In §204 Dr Hahnemann(1755- 1843) explained that if we deduct all chronic affections ailments and disease that depend upon a persistent unhealthy mode of living (§ 77) as also those innumerable medicinal maladies (§ 74) caused by the irrational, persistent and pernicious treatment of diseases result from the development of these three chronic miasms, internal syphilis, internal sycosis, but chiefly in infinitely greater proportion, internal psora, each of which was already in possession of the whole organism, and had penetrated it in all directions before the appearance of the primary, vicarious local symptom of each of them (in case of psora, the scabious eruption). This led him to the conclusion that the presenting symptoms of a chronic disease represent merely the tip of a floating ice-berg. Hence, the original disease being deep seated, the whole history of chronic disease associated with accessory circumstances and the underlying miasm should be taken into consideration ^[1].

The description ahead presents to the reader an opportunity to see through the evolution and development of Psora along with its Primary manifestation which if not treated properly or suppressed leads to the secondary innumerable manifestations presenting themselves through a number of mental and physical generals and peculiar general modalities thus calling for an appropriate and suitable antipsoric treatment.

2. Miasm

2.1 Etymology ^[2]

From 1660s	“Effluvia arising from the ground and floating in the atmosphere, considered to be infectious or injurious to health”
from Modern Latin <i>miasma</i>	“Noxious vapours,”
from Greek <i>miasma</i> (Genitive <i>miasmatos</i>)	“Stain, pollution, defilement, taint of guilt,”
from stem of <i>miainein</i>	“To pollute”.
Through a medieval Italian ^[3]	malaria (literally “bad air”)

According to Farlex Medical dictionary ^[4]. It is an obsolete term for a harmful or noxious atmosphere, emanation or exhalation; an evil humour. In Homoeopathy, a toxic or noxious influence on the body, producing illness. A general weakness or predisposition to chronic disease that is transmitted down the generational chain.

2.2 Definition: Miasm are dynamic morbidic agents inimical to life, which are not perceivable by our senses but only by its effect, cannot be touched or captured ^[5]. It denotes not an influence from without, but a change from within. It is the basis of all true natural chronic diseases. Miasm is not a disease – it is the factor which makes the disease- the symptom complex possible ^[6].

2.3 History of Miasm

Hippocrates (460- 370 BC) was the first physician to use the term “Miasm” which has its origin in the Greek word for taint or fault he postulated that certain infectious diseases were transmitted to humans by air and water tainted by miasms. This was rather a common term in medicine during Hahnemann’s time to indicate *the unknown cause of a disease*, which if once attacks the vital principle, pollutes the whole system in such a way that a permanent and intractable disease state is produced. This inference has been made from what Dr. Hahnemann (1755- 1843) writes in aphorism 79 in ‘Organon of medicine’- “hitherto syphilis alone has been to some extent known as such a chronic miasmatic disease.....”⁷The miasma theory was accepted from ancient times in Europe and China. The theory was eventually given up by scientists and physicians after 1880, replaced by the *germ theory of disease*: specific germs, not miasma, caused specific diseases ^[1, 3].

Dr. Hahnemann (1755- 1843) after discovering and practicing Homoeopathic method of treatment for about 30years (1790-1820 A.D) found that homoeopathy failed to bring a real cure in some diseases. These diseases always had a tendency to relapse at some future time. With regard to treatment of chronic diseases Dr. Hahnemann (1755- 1843) stated that “Its Start Was Pleasing, The Continuation Less Favourable The Outcome Hopeless” ^[8]. He spent 12 Years in investigating the source of this incredibly large number of chronic affections, in ascertaining and collecting certain proofs of this great truth, which had remained unknown to all former or contemporary observers, and in discovering at the same time principal (*Antipsoric*) remedies, which collectively are nearly a match for this

thousand headed monster of disease in all its different developments and forms ^[9]. He was very fond of the history of medicine and liked to study medical authors. In the course of these studies, he was struck with the fact that the most frequent cause of chronic disease was ‘Psora’, the “itch dyscrasia”, and he filled thirteen pages with quotations supporting this view from the following authors: Morgagni (1682- 1771), Sauvages (1710- 1795), J. Fr. Gmelin (1748- 1804), Fr. Hoffmann (1857-1928) and many others, he had observed that almost all chronic disease were sequelae of “psora” ^[10].

He worked tirelessly day and night trying to study the case history of the patients and while studying those histories, he found a certain pattern of disease in patient’s *family history and past history* which he felt explained the true basis of chronic diseases. He called these patterns as *Miasm* and declared that unless the underlined Miasm was completely uprooted from the origin, a chronic disease could not be permanently cured with homoeopathy even if it is a well-chosen remedy. Around 1/8th of the total cases that he studied, he could elicit a definite past history of venereal disease (*Gonorrhoea and Syphilis*). In 7/8th cases there is suppression of a skin eruption or an itch in any form ^[9]. He published his observations on this subject in the book entitled “*The Chronic Diseases*”. Publication of Dr. Hahnemann’s book on chronic disease in 1828 brings forth a violent stir in the whole medical world. After death of Dr. Hahnemann(1755- 1843), a number of homoeopathic stalwarts like Von Grauvogl (1811-1877), O. Lesser (1830- 1887) ^[11], Kent (1849–1916) ^[12], Clarke (1853-1931) ^[13], Stuart Close (1860-1929) ^[14], Robert (1868-1950) ^[15] and others averred ‘the doctrine of Psora is irrevocable’ ^[1, 16]. But a considerable number of homoeopathic physicians like Hering (1800-1880) and Hughes (1836-1902) are against Hahnemann’s view regarding undue generalization in tracing all diseases to one primary disease-process ^[1, 17]. Hufeland (1762- 1836) [contemporary to Hahnemann] quoted, “At last the physician discovers that there is underlying, a hidden scabies or syphilis” ^[10, 18]. Even Baron Ernst George Von Brunnow (1796-1845) to whom Dr. Hahnemann (1755- 1843) had dedicated his work, was also antagonistic to the view of Dr. Hahnemann regarding chronic diseases ^[19].

2.4 Types of Fundamental Miasms: Psora, Sycosis, Syphilis. Here we have discussed only about Psora miasm.

Psora- The word ‘Psora’ originates from Hebrew word ‘tsorat’ meaning ‘a groove or fault’²⁰. In Greek, it is translated as ‘Psora’- meaning cutaneous disease and then into itch ^[21]. Chronic diseases which are not of venereal origin, are only the result of Psora. Of all the three miasm, Psora is the most infectious. It is transmitted by contact, used objects, things etc ^[20]

2.5 History of Psora ^[5]. The primary symptom of Psora has now become only as a peculiar cutaneous eruption, accompanied by voluptuous itching and characteristic smell which is easily suppressed and most infectious (Figure. 1).

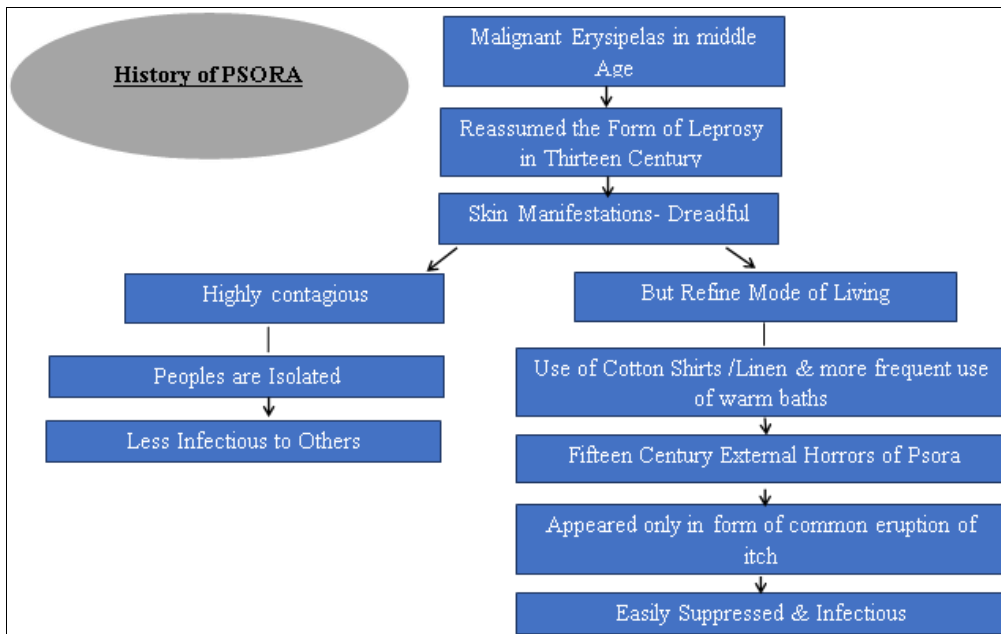


Fig 1: History of Psora [5]

2.6 Development of Psora [5]. (Figure. 2)

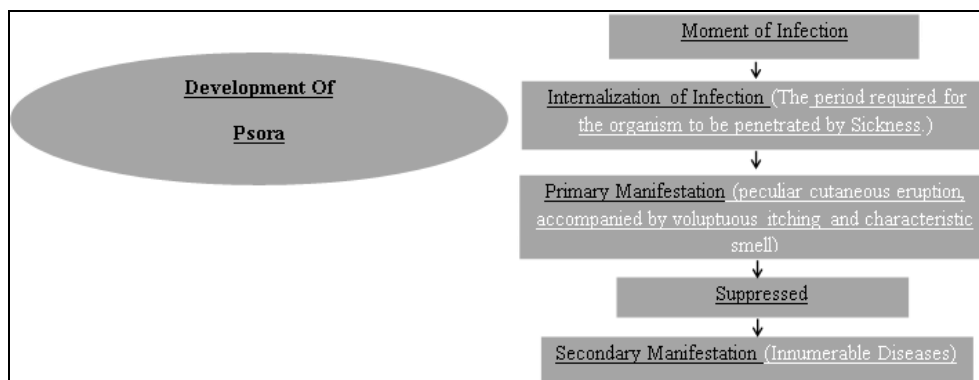


Fig 2: Development of Psora [5]

2.7 Investigation of Psora [9]

For its investigations, the ascertainable physical constitution of the patient, his moral and intellectual character, mode of living and habits, his social and domestic relations, sexual function, past history, intrauterine history etc., are to be taken into consideration.

2.7.1 Latent Psora [5]. Suppression of an itch-eruption followed by only moderate ailments and complaints: the internal malady of Psora, although as yet of slight degree but increase unceasingly and often for years unperceived by the eyes; so that anyone, who does not know the signs of its latent presence, would suppose and declare such persons to be healthy and free from any internal malady. Some manifestations of it are

- Mostly with children: frequent discharge of ascarides and other worms; insufferable itching caused by the latter in the rectum.
- The abdomen often distended.
- Now insatiable hunger, then again want of appetite.
- Paleness of face and relaxation of the muscles.
- Frequent inflammations of the eyes.
- Swellings of the cervical glands (scrofula).
- Perspiration on the head, in the evening after going to

- sleep.
- Usually cold hands or perspiration on the palms.
- Frequent cramps in the calves.
- Frequent attacks of dyspnoea.
- Predisposition to catching cold.
- Uneasy, frightful, or at least too vivid, dreams etc.

2.7.2 Secondary symptoms of Psora

Innumerable forms of disease can be produced by it which mentioned under aphorism 80 in ‘Organon of Medicine’- (... Nervous debility, hysteria, mania, epilepsy, cancer, gout...) [9]. There are lots of examples regarding it, mentioned in the book of the chronic disease. For example- A man of 32 years had the itch driven away by sulphur ointment, and he suffered for 11 months from the most violent Asthma until by drinking birch juice the eruption was brought back on the 23rd day; a man whose itch had been driven off, but who was of robust constitution, was seized with cataract [5]. Hahnemann’s(1755-1843) theory is again justified by another instance that under proper homoeopathic treatment of a chronic disease having history of suppressed skin manifestation in the past, the old eruption definitely reappear satisfying Hering’s law of cure [1].

2.8 Treatment

Dr. Hahnemann(1755-1843) explained in § 206 F.N. that during the treatment of chronic diseases we must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the assertions of the patients of their friends who frequently assign as the cause of chronic, even of the severest and most inveterate diseases, either a cold caught by a thorough wetting, drinking cold water many years ago or a former fright etc. these causes are much

too insignificant to develop a chronic disease in a healthy body, to keep it up for years, and to aggravate it year by year, as is the case with all chronic diseases from developed psora. The assigned causes could only rouse into activity the latent chronic miasm ^[9].

Few guidelines regarding treatment mentioned in the book ‘The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homoeopathic Cure’ are ^[5]: (Table 2)

Table 1: The treatment mentioned in the book ‘The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homoeopathic Cure’

Conditions	Directions to treat (As per Dr. C.F.S. Hahnemann (1755-1843))
Primary symptom	Highly potentised SULPHUR
Secondary symptoms	Anti- psoric remedy
If a case of mixed miasmatic	Need of different medicines according to predominant miasm and repetition too.
In very tedious and complex cases which have been mismanaged by allopathic treatment	Nearly always necessary to give again from time to time during the treatment, a dose of <i>SULPHUR</i> or of <i>HEPAR SULPH</i> (according to the symptoms; even to the patients who have been before dosed with large allopathic doses of sulphur and with sulphur – baths; but then only after a previous dose of mercury)
In case, the menses previously have been premature or too profuse or too long lasting	Often necessary to give on the fourth day a small dose of <i>NUX VOMICA</i> (one very small pellet moistened with a high dynamization) to be smelled and then, on the fourth or sixth day following, the antipsoric. Until she comes near her full restoration, to smell such a pellet once about seventy-two hours after the beginning of her menses, notwithstanding her continued antipsoric treatment.
But if the female is very sensitive and nervous,	Role of <i>Nux vomica</i> - specifically reduces to order the disharmony arising in the functions of the nerves from so disorderly a flow of the menses and so quiets the excessive sensitiveness and irritability. (Obstacle in curative action of anti psoric)
In cases where epidemic diseases or intermediate diseases (usually from meteoric and telluric causes) comes during the treatment of chronic diseases with antipsoric	The antipsoric treatment will have for the time to be totally discontinued. Instead of this, other non anti psoric remedy must be used.
During acute exacerbation of chronic disease	no use of any intervening remedy during the action of anti-psoric remedy under some conditions-
1) If symptoms have also occurred before in a similar manner, then	It is due to homoeopathic excitation, just wait and watch.
2) If symptoms are different and have never before occurred in this way.	Such symptoms frequently pass off without interrupting the helpful activity of remedy; but if are of a burdensome intensity, in such a case they are a sign that antipsoric remedy was not selected in the correct homoeopathic manner. It must be antidoted.
3) When usual customary symptoms are aggravated and show most prominently on the first days and again on some of the following days, but gradually less and less.	This is homoeopathic aggravation.
4) If these aggravated original symptoms appear on subsequent days still of the same strength as at the beginning or with increased intensity,	It is a sign that the dose of this antipsoric, although properly selected but too large in dose. It does not cure but produces a dissimilar chronic disease. So, either antidote it or, if this is not as yet known, by giving another more suitable anti-psoric.
In incurable diseases such as terminal diabetes or cancer,	Addressing the chronic miasm could weaken the vital force. Do not base the selection of the remedy in these cases on miasmatic symptoms, but rather palliate (with LMs or 6c).

2.8.1 Best time to be taken antipsoric

- a) In the morning rather than evening, a half an hour away from food and drinks, without going to sleep right away (reason – sleep delays the beginning of the action of the remedy)
- b) Medicine should not be taken just before their menses are expected, nor during the flow but, dose can be given, if necessary, four days after menses have begun
- c) Pregnancy is an ideal time to treat the mother with an antipsoric because the women’s increased sensitivity makes her internal psora manifest more plainly. Such treatment will help prevent problems of breast feeding, sore breasts, abscesses and soreness of nipples (mentioned under *aphorism 284 Sixth Edition-* “The

power of medicines.....But the case of mothers in their (first) pregnancy by means of a mild antipsoric treatment, especially with *Sulphur* dynamizations prepared according to the directions in this edition (§ 270), is indispensable in order to destroy the psora – that producer of most chronic diseases – which is given them hereditarily; destroy it both within themselves and in the fetus, thereby protecting posterity in advance. This is true of pregnant women thus treated; they have given birth to children usually healthier and stronger, to the astonishment of everybody. A new confirmation of the great truth of the psora theory discovered by me” ^[5, 9]

- d) Sucklings never receive medicine; the mother or wet –

nurse receives the remedy instead, and through their milk it acts on the child very quickly, mildly and beneficially (*under aphorism 284 sixth edition* – “The power of medicines acting upon the infant through the milk of the mother or wet nurse is wonderfully helpful. Every disease in a child yield to the rightly chosen homoeopathic medicines given in moderate doses to the nursing mother and so administered, is more easily and certainly utilized by these new world-citizens than is possible in later years. Since most infants usually have imparted to them psora through the milk of the nurse, if they do not already possess it through heredity from the mother, they may be at the same time protected antipsorically by means of the milk of the nurse rendered medicinally in this manner.....psora theory discovered by me.”)^[5, 9]

- A cure cannot be accomplished more quickly and surely than by allowing the suitable antipsoric to continue its action so long as the improvement continues, even if this should be many days beyond the assigned, supposed time of its duration, so as to delay as long as practicable the giving of a new medicine.
- It is useful to give a dose of the same medicine of a similarly small amount, but most safely in a different degree of dynamic potency. E.g., if the bottle which contains the solution of one or more pellets is merely well shaken five or six times, every time before taking it.

2.9 Views on Psora according to different Stalwarts

Dr. Clemens Maria Franz Von Boenninghausen ^[22] (1785 -1864)

“And yet the much reviled and ridiculed theory of the three miasms (psora, syphilis and sycosis) laid down by the founder of our Homeopathy is nothing else than a consequential application of the doctrine of anamnesis of chronic disease, as this is most plainly laid down in aphorism 5 and 206 of the ‘Organon of Medicine’ (5th edition). It is therefore totally incomprehensible how this has been so overlooked, unless other, by no means praiseworthy motives, have been brought into play. I do not wish to deny by any means that there may be perhaps beside the three above mentioned anamnestic indications, and beside the medicinal diseases, one or another additional miasm to which may be ascribed a similar influence upon health. Nevertheless, such a miasm has not so far proved by means of demonstrative documents and it must therefore be left to future investigation.”

Dr. Constantine J. Hering ^[23] (1800 - 1880)

The principle of division, or dissolution, which man had suffered to be introduced into his spiritual nature, must necessarily have embodied itself in a corresponding principle in the material organism. It is this principle which Dr. Hahnemann (1755-1843) calls Psora. In proportion as man's spiritual nature becomes developed and purified, this psoric miasm will be diminished, and will finally be completely removed from the life of humanity. This complete physical regeneration of human nature will necessarily be attended with great changes in all the external relations of man, education, mode of laboring, living, etc.

Dr J.T Kent ^[24] (1849–1916) –Psora could not exist except

for a condition in mankind suitable for its development. There must have been some sickness prior to this state, which we recognize as the chronic miasm Psora. Thinking, Willing and Acting are the three things that make up the science of the life of the human race. Man thinks, he wills and he acts. Thinking and willing establishes a state in man that identifies the condition he is in. As long as man continued to think that which was true, that which was uprightness and justice, so long man remained upon the earth free from the susceptibility to disease, because that was the state in which he was created. But when man began to will the things that were the outcome of his false thinking then he entered a state which was the perfect correspondence of his interior.

Dr. J. Henry Allen ^[25] (1854 - 1925)

He explained psora miasm as: -

1. No other symptom is so pathognomic of Psora as a pruritus.
2. Psora is that potential which when becomes well bonded with the life force, it cooperates with this life force. Together these two along with other miasms, cause all physiological deflections, functional disturbances followed by structural and pathological changes.
3. As we study these miasms, we see they express themselves in their degrees of action (primary, secondary and tertiary); and in their nature (acute, chronic and latent). Tertiary manifestations are in these diseases permitted to develop, principally because we have neglected Psoric manifestations that were latent before the new bond (with syphilis or sycosis, as the case may be), but now aroused by them into new activity by the new stimuli and the bond with the venereal miasm.
4. Cachexia, dyscrasia, diathesis, scrofula, struma, idiosyncrasy, predisposition, & hereditary states, all are expressions of miasmatic action.
5. He observed a new miasma which he named Pseudo Psora which later came to be known as Tubercular miasma.

Dr. H.A. Roberts ^[26] (1868-1950). The miasms are destructive in every way, of both the mind and the body, and they tear at the very spirit of man. Lack of certain elements in the system, or the inability to assimilate them from foods, is the great common denominator of almost all the so called psoric conditions, plus a lack of balance in the equilibrium of health that manifests through a hypersensitivity of impressions – functional disturbances. Psora alone never causes structural changes.

Dr. Proceso Sanchez Ortega ^[27] (1919-2005). Psora corresponds to DEFICIENCY. Psora is undoubtedly the constitutional state of deficiency or lack, in the sense of less, of inhibition. Deficiency or inhibition will bring on a disposition to various immediate disturbances such as excess and perversion.

3. Cases

Dr. Carroll Dunham (1828-1877), in the book, ‘Science of Therapeutics’, recorded a case of deafness caused by suppressed Psora. Dunham treated a seventeen year old young man for his hearing trouble which started when he

was four years of age. Past history revealed that at the age of three he suffered from eczema of thick, whitish scabs, hard, almost horny, covering the whole scalp. The eruption was suppressed by external application. From that time the child faced the problem of hearing. Dunham prescribed not for direct deafness. He selected homoeopathic medicine *Mezerium* on the basis of skin eruption which remained in the past. The deafness was completely cured [1, 28].

Dr. Eugene B Nash. (1838-1917) noted an interesting case in his book 'Leaders in Homoeopathic Therapeutics'. Dr. Nash treated a lady suffering from Gastritis. She became skeleton-like. Nash found after much questioning that about fifteen years ago she had eczema on the nape and occiput. The eczema was suppressed by the application ointment. Dr. Nash prescribed Sulphur 200th. Her stomach trouble completely removed but the eruption reappeared [1, 29].

Dr. P. Sankaran (1922-1979) mentioned a case in his book 'The Pathology in Homoeopathy'. A three-year-old boy had an ulcer on his lips. The diagnosis was 'cancrum oris'. Sulphonamide ointment was applied on the affected parts. Ulcer disappeared in no time, but left a black patch on the lips. After a couple of months, the black spot also vanished. Some days after this incident, mental abnormality was perceived in the behaviour of the boy. After four years the boy was taken to Dr. Sankaran. Doctor prescribed a selected homoeopathic medicine and the boy recovered. Mental problem was gone but the old ulcer of the lips reappeared. Then the ulcer was treated by homoeopathic method. The result was that the boy remained well in mind as well as in the skin [1, 30].

Dr. S.P. Dey (1931- 2014)

"Based on the history of suppression of skin disease and other basic symptoms of Psora, *Psorinum* was prescribed in a patient who was extremely hot. But the suppressed skin eruptions reappeared and the patient was cured. One may ask why I prescribed *Psorinum* in a hot patient. The fact was that the patient was being treated by many homoeopaths before he came to me. The physician who was in charge of the patient for the last time prescribed the indicated medicine based on the totality but the patient was not cured. So, I thought that the basic Psoric dyscrasia was acting as an obstacle in the way of cure and the indicated medicine prescribed by the previous doctors could not probably reach the depth to remove the dyscrasia. That idea inspired me to prescribe *Psorinum* [31].

4. Conclusion

Psora is the mother of all true chronic diseases except the syphilitic and sycotic. It is the most ancient, most universal, most destructive, thousand headed monster cause of chronic miasmatic disease. Of all the three Miasm it is the most infectious and transmitted by contact, used parts, things etc. It occupies 7/8th part of true natural chronic diseases. It reveals its specific internal dyscrasia by a peculiar cutaneous eruption, sometimes consisting only of a few vesicles accompanied by intolerable voluptuous tickling itching and peculiar odour.

Searching of the most significant points in the whole history of the chronic disease which helps us to find out the Fundamental cause which is chronic miasm. For its investigations, the ascertainable physical constitution of the

patient, his moral and intellectual character, mode of living and habits, his social and domestic relations, sexual function, past history, intrauterine history etc., are to be taken into consideration.

The primary manifestation of Psora miasm is treated with *Sulphur* only. But if it is suppressed and is not treated properly, it leads to its latent stage. When the explosion of latent Psora from its dormant state, it produces symptoms, known as secondary manifestations and requires the anti psoric treatment. It is also justified that under proper homoeopathic treatment of a chronic disease having history of suppressed skin manifestation in the past, the old eruption definitely reappears satisfying Dr. Herring's (1800-1880) law of cure. Hahnemann's (1755-1843) "The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homoeopathic Cure" serves as a pioneer to the key of ideal cure of innumerable chronic diseases. It contains lot of suggestions regarding treatment of chronic diseases which when followed lead to more lasting and reliable cures of various chronic diseases.

"This contribution of "The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homoeopathic Cure" in the domain of medicine is a revolutionary work of Dr. Hahnemann which justify his last word for saying *Non Inutilis Vixi*"

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6. Conflict of Interest

None

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