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## Dreams: Scope & limitations of its use in clinical aspects of homoeopathy

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### Abstract

Dreams hold significance in clinical homeopathy as valuable symptoms that provide insights into the patient's mental and emotional state. They offer a unique scope to understand the subconscious mind and aid in individualizing treatment. However, using fixed interpretations and incomplete dream descriptions can limit its usefulness. Careful analysis and consideration are crucial to avoid bias and misinterpretations. While dreams enrich the totality of symptoms, they may not be applicable in certain cases, like infants or unconscious patients. Balancing the scope and limitations of dreams in clinical homeopathy ensures a comprehensive and accurate approach to remedy selection and patient care.

**Keywords:** Dreams, homeopathy, scope, limitations

### Introduction

Dreams are a succession of thoughts, images, and sensations that occur in a person's mind during sleep, particularly during the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep phase. They are influenced by both past and present experiences and can sometimes hold significance for the future. Different types of dreams have been analyzed and interpreted based on various themes such as fear, threats, insecurities, vulnerability, struggle, frustration, desires, sexuality, the need for change in perception and individuality, among others. Some dreams are believed to serve as warning signs and can impact a person's personality. Dreams are closely linked to neurophysiological processes in the midbrain, which are responsible for memory and human emotions. The scientific study of dreams is known as "Oneirology" <sup>[1]</sup>. Dreams primarily take place during the two hours of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. Their duration can vary, ranging from a few seconds to 20-30 minutes. When individuals are awakened during the REM phase, they are more likely to remember the dream they were experiencing. On average, a person has three to five dreams per night, although some individuals may have up to seven. However, the majority of these dreams are promptly or rapidly forgotten. Interestingly, dreams tend to become longer as the night progresses <sup>[2]</sup>. Sigmund Freud believed that "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a deeper understanding of the unconscious activities of the mind." His influential book on dream analysis has paved the way for numerous hypotheses, concepts, and research exploring the significance of dreams <sup>[1]</sup>. Freud's work has been instrumental in shaping the field of psychology and our understanding of the hidden aspects of the human psyche through dream interpretation.

According to Carl Jung, dreams are considered the psyche's way of communicating essential messages to the individual. In his model of the psyche, dreams emerge from the ego. Jung's extensive collection of books, with various volumes, serves as a rich source of understanding the significance and interpretation of dreams <sup>[1]</sup>. Through his work, Jung delved into the depths of the human psyche, shedding light on the hidden meanings and symbolism present in dreams, offering valuable insights into the unconscious mind.

Dr. Farokh J. Master's Homoeopathic Dictionary of Dreams views dreams as nature's miracles rather than mere products of a wandering mind during sleep. He sees dreams as an interface that connects the process of life with our conscious personality. In this perspective, dreams hold a deeper significance and play a vital role in bridging the gap between the subconscious mind and our waking self, providing valuable insights into our inner thoughts, emotions, and experiences <sup>[3]</sup>.

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**Dreams can serve as:** <sup>[3]</sup>

1. An expression of what is occurring in the physical body.
2. A means of balancing the physiological and psychological activities within us.
3. Dreams are an incredibly original source of insight and information within us, capable of scanning information and generating new ideas.
4. Dreams can be seen as a manifestation of human super senses
5. Dreams hold the potential to offer solutions to problems, not only in our personal life but also in our relationships and work. They serve as a unique platform where our subconscious mind can process and analyze complex issues that we face in our waking life.
6. Dreams provide a pathway to access the known world of our experiences while also offering intimations from the unknown. They serve as a bridge between our conscious and subconscious minds, allowing us to delve into familiar memories, emotions, and events from our past.

**There are several common types of dreams** <sup>[1, 2]</sup>

**Daydreams:** These start with compelling thoughts, memories, or fantasies when the imagination runs wild while being awake.

**Normal Dreams:** Arising mostly during REM sleep, these dreams are considered essential for our survival and well-being.

**Nightmares:** Nightmares are distressing dreams that evoke disturbing emotions like fear and anxiety in the dreamer.

**False Awakening Dreams:** A vivid type of dream where the dreamer feels like they have woken up, but in reality, they are still asleep.

**Lucid Dreams:** In lucid dreaming, the dreamer is aware that they are dreaming and may have some level of control over their dream.

In Homeopathy, dreams are regarded as the inner essence of an individual at a subconscious level, providing insight into their state of mind, hidden desires, and wishes. Analyzing these dreams can help in the selection of the most suitable homeopathic remedy (similimum) for the individual's overall well-being.

**Scope of dreams in homoeopathy**

- In homeopathy, dreams hold great significance as they are believed to be reflections of the unconscious mind. They provide valuable insights into a person's hidden desires, aversions, and inner conflicts. By understanding the innermost turmoil and subconscious aspects of the individual through their dreams, homoeopathy aims to find the most suitable remedy to promote healing and restore balance in the person's overall well-being <sup>[2]</sup>.
- In homeopathy, dreams carry significant importance as they play a crucial role in the process of drug proving and remedy selection. During drug proving, when individuals (provers) take a substance to understand its medicinal properties, any dreams experienced by them are recorded and included in the Materia Medica. As a

result, homeopathy has a dedicated chapter on dreams, compiled from various sources such as the Therapeutic Pocketbook of Boenninghausen, Knerr's repertory (from Hering's Guiding Symptoms), Kent's Repertory, and more recent repertories <sup>[3]</sup>.

- Dreams are given a higher priority in the selection of the similimum, the most suitable remedy for the patient. They are considered valuable symptoms that help form the totality of symptoms, contributing to the individualization of both the patient and the remedies. By carefully analyzing the patient's dreams and matching them with the corresponding remedies in the repertory, homoeopaths strive to establish a complete cure, addressing not only the physical symptoms but also the emotional and psychological aspects of the patient's health. This holistic approach allows homoeopathy to deeply understand the patient's unique condition and provide personalized treatment for lasting healing <sup>[3]</sup>.
- In Kent's Repertory, there are several first-grade important remedies listed under the rubric "Dreams" in sleep chapter (Table 1). <sup>[4]</sup> These remedies hold significant relevance and are commonly prescribed for various dream-related symptoms <sup>[2]</sup>.

**Table 1:** First-grade remedies for dreams in Kent's Repertory

Rubrics	Medicines
Dreams, accidents	Ars, Graph.
Dreams, amorous	Amm-M., Nat-C., & etc.
Dreams, anger (quarrels)	Nux-V.
Dreams, anxious	Acon., Alum., & etc.
Dreams, business	Nux-V, Rhus-T.
Dreams, confused	Puls.
Dreams, dead, of the	Ars, Mag-C., Thuj.
Dreams, dead bodies	Anac.
Dreams, death	Lach.
Dreams, difficulties	Amm-M., Ars.
Dreams, disease	Nux-V.
Dreams, events of the previous day	Bry.
Dreams, falling	Bell, Thuj.
Dreams, journey	Kali-N.
Dreams, mental exertion	Ign., Nux-V.
Dreams, nightmare	Paeon, Sulph.
Dreams, roaming over fields	Rhus-T.
Dreams, robbers	Alum, Mag-C., Nat-M.
Dreams, thirsty	Nat-M.
Dreams, unpleasant	Sulph.
Dreams, vexatious	Asar, Graph, Sulph.
Dreams, vivid	Anac, Aur.
Dreams, water	Amm-M.

**Homeopathic case-taking, dreams serve a dual purpose** <sup>[5]</sup>

- **Revealing suppressed desires and emotions:** Dreams offer a window into the subconscious mind, uncovering hidden desires, emotions, and fears that may not be consciously acknowledged by the individual. Analyzing the content and symbolism of dreams can provide valuable insights into the patient's inner world and emotional state.
- **Providing relevant rubrics for repertorization:** Homeopaths use repertories, which are reference books containing symptoms and their corresponding remedies, to find the most suitable remedy for a patient. Dreams experienced by the patient are considered as important

symptoms and are included in the repertory under specific rubrics. By incorporating dream-related rubrics during the repertorization process, homeopaths can identify remedies that address not only the physical symptoms but also the mental and emotional aspects, leading to a more comprehensive and personalized treatment plan.

### Comparison with other leading repertories Homoeopathic medical repertory by robin murphy <sup>[6]</sup>

#### Dreams chapter: Dreaming, general

- **Asleep on falling:** Kali-C., Nat-M., Sil, Spong, Staph, Thuj.
- **Awake, dreams while:** Acon, Bell, Fl-AC, Ign, Nux-V., Op., Ph-AC., Phos, Sil, Sulph.
- **Closing eyes on Sep.**
- **Continued, waking after:** Chin., Lyc, Nat-M., Psor.
- **Continuous dreams:** Phos.
- **Daytime, periodically during:** Cann-I.
- **Sleep during:** Nux-V.
- **Emotional causes from:** Acon, Alf, Ambr, Cann-I., Cimic, Coff, Gels, Hyos, IGN, Kali-BR, Nux-V, Op., Sep., Stram.
- **Fever during:** Nux-V., Puls, Spig.
- **Menses during:** Nux-M.
- **Perspiration with:** Ars, Phos, Sep.

### Boenninghausen's therapeutic pocket book <sup>[6,7]</sup>

#### Sleep chapter is with subsections. Last is Dreams

- Dreams in general, Anxious, of animals, of battle, of the dead, of difficulties, of falling, of fire, of ghosts, of bad luck, of quarrels, of shooting, of sickness, of thieves, of thunder, of water.
- Confused.
- Confused, continued after waking, a continuation of former ideas.
- Historical with indifference, indifferent in day's business.
- Mental effort, of excelling in mental work.
- Pleasant of dancing, of fantastic, of festivities, of gold, Intellectual, full of imaginations, journeys, joyful, of love.
- Unremembered.
- Vexatious, disgusting, with humiliation, of the illusion of hope, of sick people, with strivings, of vermin.
- Vivid.
- Dreams, Waking.

### Boenninghausen's Characteristics and Repertory by CM Boger <sup>[6]</sup>

Dreams is in chapter Sleep as the last subsection.

In general, followed by dreams in alphabetical order and in the end Aggravation.

### Role of dreams in understanding the mental state <sup>[5]</sup>

Dreams play a crucial role in understanding an individual's mental state by providing insights into their emotions and underlying psychological processes. The bodily reactions or emotional responses experienced during a dream or while recounting it can be essential elements of the overall picture. These emotional reactions often directly relate to the feelings and sentiments concealed within the dreams, offering glimpses into the individual's real mental state.

However, not all dreams need to be subjected to

detailed analysis. The dreams that are most relevant for understanding the mental state are:

- Recurrent dreams that persist over a period of time, suggesting the persistence of specific emotions or unresolved issues in the person's subconscious.
- Vivid, elaborate dreams that are etched in the memory, indicating a potential significance or strong emotional impact associated with those dreams.
- Dreams that have a strong emotional impact on the individual, either during or after their occurrence, hold significant importance in the homeopathic case-taking process. Even if these dreams cannot be easily interpreted or fully understood, they remain striking and leave a profound impression on the person. Such dreams should be considered as essential components of the reportorial totality.
- In homeopathy, the totality of symptoms is crucial for finding the most suitable remedy for the individual. The emotional intensity of these impactful dreams can provide valuable clues about the person's deeper emotional and psychological state. Although their specific meaning might not be apparent, their presence and emotional resonance can guide the homeopath in selecting the appropriate remedy that addresses the patient's unique constitution and overall well-being. Including these powerful dream experiences in the case report helps ensure a comprehensive and individualized approach to treatment.

### Very helpful in the case of Psychiatric Patients <sup>[1]</sup>

- Nightmares are frequently observed in individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and homeopathy offers effective remedies for nightmares, starting from Kali bromatum.
- Moreover, the nature of dreams can provide insights into a person's mental state in cases of depression. People experiencing severe depression may have dreams that are brief and lacking in emotional content. On the other hand, those with moderate depression often have dreams containing negative feelings.
- Homoeopathy presents a promising opportunity in the management of depression. By considering the totality of symptoms, including dream patterns, homeopaths can gain a deeper understanding of the individual's mental and emotional condition. Based on this comprehensive evaluation, homeopathic remedies can be prescribed to address the underlying imbalances and contribute to the overall healing process for individuals dealing with depression.

### Miasmatic View in Dreams <sup>[8]</sup>

Miasm plays a significant role in homoeopathy and dreams can help us to understand the miasmatic background of a case.

### Latent psora dreams

Very vivid dreams, as if awake or sad, frightful anxious, vexing, lascivious dreams.

### Psoric dreams

- As soon as the psoric patient closes their eyes fearful images and distorted faces appear, anxious and frightful dreams.
- Dreams are vivid (dreams as if the patient were

awake).

- Sad, frightful, anxious and lascivious dreams.

### Sycotic dreams

The sycotic patient has sexual dreams with fantasies.

### Syphilitic dreams

- Sexual dreams with perversions and suicidal dreams syphilitic.
- The syphilitic patient dreams of violence; destruction, death and dead bodies, and gloomy forebodings.

### Tubercular /Pseudo Psoric dreams

The tubercular patient Dreams of travelling.

### Limitations of dreams in homoeopathy <sup>[5]</sup>

Adopting fixed interpretations for symbolic dreams, such as associating a snake with sex, can introduce bias in homeopathic prescriptions. Each person's dream symbolism is unique and may carry different meanings based on their individual experiences and emotions. As a result, relying on preconceived interpretations can lead to inaccurate remedy selection.

Dreams that are incompletely remembered or communicated may not be valid for interpretation. A comprehensive understanding of the dream's content is essential to gain meaningful insights into the patient's mental and emotional state. Incomplete dream descriptions can limit the homeopath's ability to assess the full scope of the dream's significance. Instant interpretation of dreams, without proper analysis and consideration of the context in which they occur, should not be used in the totality of symptoms. A hasty interpretation can overlook essential nuances and associations that might be crucial for understanding the dream's implications accurately.

In cases involving infants, deaf individuals, those who are unable to communicate verbally, unconscious patients, or those in a comatose state, dreams may hold no value for analysis. Since these individuals cannot provide information about their dreams, it is not feasible to include dream-related symptoms in the overall assessment for homoeopathic prescribing. Instead, other relevant symptoms and indicators must be given precedence in these cases.

### Conclusion

Dreams play a vital role in homeopathy, serving as valuable clues for determining constitutional remedies. Combining dream analysis with other diagnostic methods enhances the effectiveness of personalized and holistic healing in homoeopathic practice.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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