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The homoeopathic materia medica: A different perspective

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Abstract

A true homoeopathic physician should have an artistic mind as homoeopathy is an art. The artist in the homoeopath can be able to analyse the patient symptoms and get the true totality of each individual case. He can apply the correct similimum to his suffering patient based on the totality of symptom. A good physician must have the ability to make the totality of each individual case and selecting the appropriate remedy to that totality. An excellent prescription is based on a physician's ability to perceive the symptoms, arrangement of symptoms on its merit and a thorough knowledge of materia medica.

In this article I try to focus on the main issues in application of materia medica and possible solutions to that.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, materia medica, comparison, individuality, practical utility, learning methods

Introduction

The most expert healer is the man who knows how to handle his Materia Medica." The words of CM Boger reminds us that no one can be an expert homoeopathic physician without thorough knowledge of materia medica. Most of the practitioners may have wide knowledge on materia medica but may not have the ability to apply this knowledge to selection of remedy. Applied materia medica thus help us to apply in both learning and practical application.

Homoeopathic materia medica

Our master Samuel Hahnemann clearly explained in aphorism 143. "Homoeopathic Materia Medica is a collection of real, pure, reliable modes of action of simple medicinal substances a volume of book of nature".

Thus homoeopathic materia medica is a compilation of pure symptoms that is experienced by the prover mainly through drug proving and provide a base for the construction of homoeopathic repertory.

Objectives to study materia medica

1. To understand the curative power of drugs.
2. For individualize the patient which forms the basis of our principle similia similibus curentur
3. Help to differentiate one drug from other and its clinical applications.

Dunham has put clearly in his saying

"The vast collection of symptoms of which the Materia medica is composed is incomprehensible without an understanding of the principles upon which it is based along with the meaning of symptoms their method of classification and interpretation."

So on Dunham's opinion we should attain the knowledge of understanding the principles on which the materia medica is based, meaning of symptoms and their classification and interpretation. Proper study of materia medica help us to understand the remedy picture.

Problems in achieving the objectives

There are difficulties in the very nature of our Materia medica and in the methods of study.

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Construction of materia medica

There are different types of materia medica based on the view of different authors. They are of different opinions and perspectives. This makes a beginner a lot of confusions. We can't learn a drug as a whole from single textbook. A proper understanding of different textbooks is necessary in order to put in practise.

Prejudice

This includes various factors like

- Mistakes in understanding certain language usages in olden times and their correct English translations.eg) snuffles, zymosis, suppressed exanthemata, purulent ophthalmia etc.
- Uncertainty of certain sensations.eg) headache as if tornado in head-carbo animalis, sensation as if heart suspended by a thread.-kalicarb, Lachesis
- Casual reading just before exams.
- Using favourite remedies for case which reflects his prejudice attitude.
- Framing fixed images of certain medicines.eg) lycopodium- coward, platina- haughty.

How to apply materia medica in practical aspect

Homoeopathy is constructed on the foundation of "similia similibus curentur"

So knowledge of materia medica and its proper application helps to differentiate each individual case. Try to learn the essence of drug from various source books and compare the differences of each drug and apply it in clinical practise.

Keen observation

A keen observation and thorough knowledge of materia medica helps us to reach a similitum very quickly.

1. As soon as the patient enters observe them. Body language also favours the selection of remedy.
2. Personality of the patient is important in individualizing the case.
3. There are different types of prescription depending upon the cases. In acute cases knowledge of keynote makes apt prescription.
4. In chronic cases constitutional approach is usually followed.
5. Some remedies have action on certain organs.so learning from organopathic action of drugs is useful in such cases.
6. Prescriptions using clinical tips by great authors.
7. Psycho analytic type of prescription – based on mental symptoms, personality, temperament.

How to study materia medica

- There are no shortcuts to learn materia medica...we must read and read.
- Bacon himself has given us in this few lines that some books are to be chewed, some are to be browsed through, some must memorize. We should make a habit of writing all important points in a book then and there and have a sort of index for it.
- Regular reading of homoeopathic material medica can yield more knowledge on remedies and we will get new symptoms on every reading.
- Refer source books for doubtful symptoms. For eg) both euphrasia and alliumcepa shares common symptom "open air gives relief". But referring to source

book gives us new knowledge that in euphrasia only headache is better in open air all other complaints are aggravated in open air.

- Learn mental symptoms by constantly referring dictionaries. We can easily differentiate the similar words. mental picture can easily learned by looking into kents lectures, ML Taylors drug picture and dunhams material medica.
- Repertory help us to study a remedy and its value in a particular symptom. One of the easier way to learn materia medica.
- Try to extend the keynotes. In allens keynote bryonia has general modality complaints aggravated by slight motion and ameliorated by pressure and absolute rest. But by referring other books in abdominal complaints alone aggravation by pressure.
- Knowledge of small remedies help to tackle in acute conditions,
- Using softwares. This help us to cut down our time. We can learn easy.
- Relationship of remedies: helps us in second prescription. Studying a chronic remedy relation gives us a clue to the acute conditions. For eg) if headache is very persistent even after natrummur, nux vomica will relieve.
- Aconite complementary to sulphur in all cases.
- Clinical tips from experienced authors help us very much in practical application.

Conclusion

One must study through applied Materia Medica, try to compare at various levels, differentiate the closely coming remedies learn to match the portrait of the patient with that of the image constructed through the study of books and apply at bedside. Materia Medica, philosophy and repertory are so closely related to one another that no homoeopathic doctor can aspire to do better cure without the constant study and application of these three disciplines. These are few learning suggestions. One rule which is applicable to all what ML Taylor said." Read a drug every day and two on Sundays". So, keep reading.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

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