

Denis Demarque

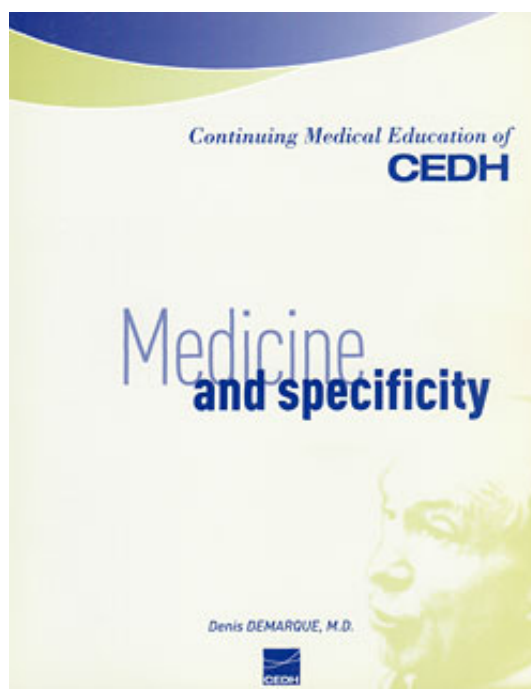
Medicine and Specificity

Extrait du livre

[Medicine and Specificity](#)

de [Denis Demarque](#)

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numerous examples. Furthermore, in pathogenetic experiments, some subjects were refractory to treatments. [...] See excerpt n° 70, page 70.

As an endnote, Teste remarked even further: "a deep study of the antidotes and the ant/dote process seems to me the only solution to reach a real theory of similia similibus". The antidotes' relationships are based on the specific qualities of the relevant medicines. Teste's suggestion brought the problem back at experimental level, where it should have stayed all along. His hypothesis could then be validated whereas Hahnemann's hypothesis remained on a theoretical level forever.

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Hahnemann's criticism of the "treatment of the name 'of the disease'"

The first homeopathic journals reported some arguments, sometimes even violent ones, among Hahnemann's disciples regarding specificity. These discussions were due to Hahnemann's contradictions on this essential issue. These controversies unveiled the real characteristics of Samuel Hahnemann's experimental therapeutic and its place in modern medicine.

Hahnemann's starting point as well as his essential focus was the therapeutic and, oddly, the medication. [...] See excerpt n° 11, page 71. Samuel Hahnemann's greatest work was the compilation of a Materia Medica based on experimentation and setting the rules for applying it to diseases and patients. He spent his life on this work. We can't blame him for not having written Nosology and pathology treatises. He never denied the need for these sciences since he admitted the existence of specific diseases. He criticized, rightly so for his times, the lack of validated scientific criteria. He could foresee a real danger - still valid nowadays - in prescribing medicines based solely on arbitrary names for diseases, to "treat the name of the disease" as he used to say, like prescribing homemade remedies "recipes".

Even for specific diseases he condemned this practice. The symptoms characteristic of certain types of diseases are validated by abstraction. It is essential to take into account the patient and his

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or her individual reaction to the disease. For example, getting cold, cramps, vomiting, profuse diarrhea, tendency to collapsus, all cholera-specific pathognomonic symptoms bring up Camphora, Cuprum, Veratrum album, Antimonium tartaricum, Arsenicum album... The notion of individualization for each specific case is necessary. Jules Gallavardin explained this in a very eloquent manner. [...] See excerpt n° 12, page 72.

Since then, great scientific advances have been made in pathology and Nosology. There are still many morbid states that are impossible to classify due to the lack of specific criteria. Depending on the various countries and/or authors we continue to label them with pathological names that are totally arbitrary. Prescribing a medicine on such shaky grounds invariably fails to produce satisfying results. The individualization method based on universal characteristic symptoms is the only valid one.

We should proceed with extreme caution when transcribing pathological names found in the books of ancient homeopathic physicians. Materia Medica and repertories need to be regularly updated. For example, the term "cancer" had a very different meaning one or two centuries ago.

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Hahnemann's followers and specificity

Samuel Hahnemann arrived in Paris in 1835. The same year, on September 15th, the Gallican Homeopathic Society (Société Homeopathique Gallicane) gave a meeting in his honor where the founder of Homeopathy declared: "I only acknowledge as my followers the individuals committed to the practice of pure homeopathy and whose prescription is totally freed from the methods used up to now by the old medicine...In a letter dated October 3rd, 1836 to Constantin Hering, he wrote: "I found here a great number of so-called homeopathic physicians..."²¹ Many new adepts did not understand the notions behind the method. They just added the prescription of some homeopathic medicine to their classic clinical practice. These medicines were chosen

21. Ch. Janot, *Histoire de l'Homeopathie française*, Author's library - 1936 - p. 44-45

« Hahnemann studied both sides of an individual. He understood both the somatic and psychological aspects. »

too slightly characteristic to display after that, a picture of the disease in clear and peculiar outlines". (§ 198) In the following paragraphs, Hahnemann detailed the method for treating chronic diseases: looking for the etiology, studying the medical history, looking at treatments previously taken, importance of the surrounding environment. He insisted on "the state of the disposition of the patient often chiefly determines the selection of the homoeopathic remedy". (§ 211). He always insisted on the necessity to look at all symptoms and treat equally all diseases.

"The instructions I have to give relative to the cure of mental diseases may be confined to a very few remarks, as they are to be cured in the same way as all other diseases, namely, by a remedy which shows, by the symptoms it causes in the body and mind of a healthy individual." (§ 214)

Hahnemann studied both sides of an individual. He understood both the somatic and psychological aspects. In spite of his very precise and clear indications, his disciples did not always follow his advice. In homeopathic clinical practice there are two essential and mandatory elements for selecting the appropriate medicine or medicines for a specific case: the value attributed to the symptoms and their ranking.

Hahnemann encountered many difficulties when trying to match a specific disease characterized by pathognomonic symptoms to a patient presenting specific reactional symptoms to this disease. Many blamed him for these apparent contradictions. They had a tendency to prescribe medicines based on the names of the diseases. The school of J.T. Kent made the opposite conceptual mistake: obliterating the disease to only focus on the patients and their general symptoms, mainly the mental ones. We are far from Hahnemann's much more subtle philosophy that is, in fact, closer to clinical realities.

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Specific concrete medicines

In clinical practice, it is mandatory to associate both the individual and the general. In his work, Hahnemann always highlighted one or the other.

Each patient is unique and the disease exists only in relation to that patient. But, if we push this argument to the point of absurd reasoning, we would need as many specific medicines as there are unique patients. In reality the notion of species implies the notion of groups. In clinical practice we have groups of similar symptoms, syndromes, and diseases specified by their causes or their evolution... and groups of patients according to their sensitive types. A German homeopathic physician, Schroen, Hahnemann's contemporary, in order to underline the fact that we should never forget "the specific case, while treating the disease"³⁸, called the homeopathic medicines: "concrete" specific medicines.

There are some homeopathic-specific medicines:

- **for a functional symptom validated by its intensity, location, modalities and concomitant symptoms.**

For example, a patient can come in for a painful episode of biliary lithiasis. The physician can prescribe an antispasmodic drug based on the notion of spasms, even if this drug is not exempt of iatrogenic side effects, but this notion isn't specific enough to justify the prescription of an efficient homeopathic medicine. The concomitant modalities: improvement by local heat, large pressure and above all when the patient is bent in two, bring up the indication of *Colocynthis*. If the attack is triggered by anger in an irritable patient it also brings us an additional qualification.

- **for a syndrome validated by a characteristic group of symptoms.**

It is necessary of course to look for the etiology. For example the association of paleness, sweating, fainting tendency and sometimes sleepiness marks the emergency indication of *Antimonium tartar/cum*.

- **for an histopathological lesion validated by:**

-the location and concomitant symptoms, —
the conformity to a known morbid cause, -the
conformity to a general reactional mode.

38. See L Griesselich, *La Medecine homeopathique*, Published by Bailliere, Paris, 1891 -p. 43

The histopathological lesion might look like a local symptom. In fact, it is the result of a general process, yet has the great advantage of being an objective symptom. Characterized by its shape it is sometimes the first symptom used for identifying the medicine.

The false membranes of *Mercurius cyanatus*, the phlyctena of *Cantharis*, the vesicles of *Rhus tox/codendron* are in themselves quite specific. It is necessary to assess these lesions in relation to the disease, the overall symptoms, the etiology and sometimes a general reactional mode.

- **for a stage, a state of acute or chronic disease validated by:**

- its cause, its clinical symptoms and evolution. It is the "specific for the circumstance" according to Samuel Hahnemann.

- **for all the etiological specificities of a chronic disease in regards to:**

- the external physical and psychological causes and
- the internal causes, specific characteristics of a patient in his/her uniqueness.



Specificity and sensitive type

Ultimately all individuals have their own specificity. It is the sum of all characteristics, physical and psychological, that make up their biological personality.

But in fact, there are some groups of individuals, or families, where morbid predispositions (tendencies) and reactional aptitudes are similar. During a pathogenetic experiment or a clinical trial these individuals are identified as "good responders". Hahnemann already reported this fact two centuries ago during his experimentation on *Pulsatilla*.

The existence of types of diseases is the foundation of nosology, the notion of "species of patients" could be called "morbid typology", without any racial undertone.

Excerpt n° 10

ALPHONSE TESTE, *Comment on devient homéopathe*, Baillière, Paris, 1891 - p. 258-259

Translated from the original French text

As far as I am concerned, wrote Teste, I am inclined to thinking that generally the medicine's therapeutic action is more constant, as reported by Hahnemann, than the diseases' action. It can be explained simply by the fact that the processes used to inflict the medicine's therapeutic action on the body are much more reliable and safe, luckily for us, than the means used by nature to make us sick. But if we inserted under the skin of some patients, that were never vaccinated and never contracted smallpox or syphilis, one drop from a small pox pustule or a recent syphilitic sore and we would soon see that the effects obtained would be much less constant than those triggered by the ingestion through the digestive tract of several drops of Aconit or Nux Vomica at the thirtieth dilution.

ALPHONSE TESTE, quote - p. 260

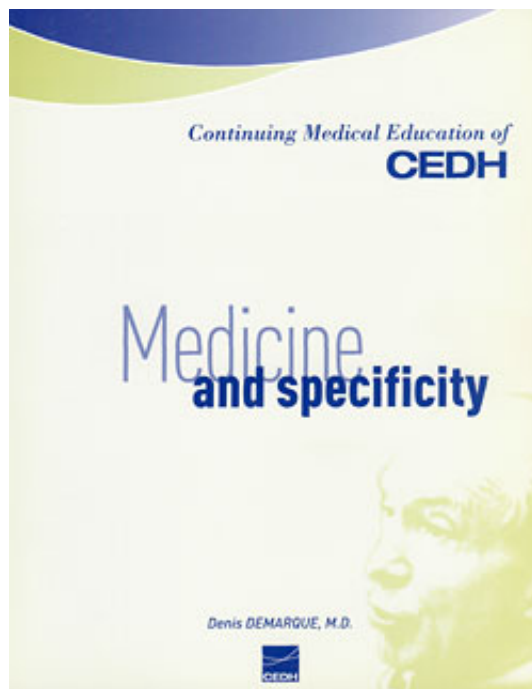
2°) [Hahnemann] is he right when he states that the medicines' power on the living body is greater than that of the diseases?

This proposal seems so hazardous that, with all due respects to Hahnemann's opinion, I will refrain from any comments since I am not quite sure that I understand it completely. How, in fact, can we imagine a medicine that would have a greater power on the body than scarlet fever or cholera?"

ALPHONSE TESTE, quote - p. 271

Teste prefers the term neutralizing medicine to substitutive medicine.

I strongly think that the relationship between the homeopathic medicine and the natural disease, is similar to the relationship between one medicinal disease and the next -when the first one would cover all the symptoms.



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