

An insight into the evidence base of homeopathy

It is worth noting here that homeopathy, from:

‘Homeo’ = *like, similar, same (Greek)*

‘Pathy’ or ‘Pathos’ = *suffering, feeling (Greek)*

Implies ‘similar suffering’ and is based on the principle often described as ‘like curing like’. This means that a remedy capable of producing a pattern of symptoms in a healthy person, when administered to a person experiencing similar symptoms, will cure that person. Therefore the appropriate ‘homeopathic’ remedy for an individual is the remedy that is able to produce the very symptoms that patient is experiencing. The remedy, therefore, stimulates these symptoms even more, albeit quite subtly, i.e. the remedy actually helps your symptom response. This is of course in line with the intention of the healing body but, of course, diametrically opposed to most pharmaceutical interventions that do in fact suppress your symptom response.

As such, homeopathic remedies can be of any type, strength, and concentration, and in fact, other kinds of interventions can be homeopathic in principle, i.e. stimulating the symptom response of the patient. Some homeopathic remedies especially those of plant origin can be given in the concentrated forms known as mother tinctures and others are much more diluted, which has the effect of drastically reducing any possible aggravation of symptoms.

However, many more remedies are diluted to such a high degree that the original substance may no longer be present, this is often used as a justification for the assumption that homeopathy cannot work. Remember, however, unknown to many of the critics of homeopathy’ the criticism of ultra high dilutions does not address the homeopathic principle but just these very dilute remedies.

If it is possible to continually dilute a substance until there is no original material left in solution and yet the solution still has an effect, this does appear to contradict all known chemical and physical laws. It is this issue that is continually raised by many orthodox scientists and doctors in a relentless, although unsuccessful, attack on homeopathy, yet homeopathy continues to gain in popularity around the world.

At first sight the continued dilution beyond the material presence would certainly appear to be irrational, however on closer inspection we can see that the phenomenon inherent in the dilution affect is pervasive throughout our world; it can be explained and demonstrated with present day chemistry and physics without negating what we already know in physics and chemistry. Just as it is possible to walk around a spherical earth and not fall off, without negating what would still happen if you were to walk off the edge of a cliff.

First of all, we know these remedies have an effect on people and there are many controlled trials demonstrating their therapeutic effect in humans: Researchers from Limburg University Holland conducted a two year study and published their results in the BMJ 1991; 302: 316-23. They reported on 105 controlled clinical studies i.e.

comparing to a placebo pill (a dummy pill) and found 81 showed that homeopathic remedies have a therapeutic effect beyond the impact of just placebo.

"The amount of positive evidence even among the best studies came as a surprise to us. Based on this evidence we would readily accept that homeopathy can be efficacious if only the mechanism of action were more plausible. The evidence presented in this review would probably be sufficient for establishing homeopathy as a regular treatment for certain indications".

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Clinical trials of homoeopathy**

However even these trials often fail to convince the sceptics and they believe that 'the placebo effect' is, in fact, the only way that these remedies can have any affect on a patient; so it appears many conventional practitioners have now conceded that homeopathic remedies can 'work', but through the belief of the patient and not the real affect of the remedy. However, clinical trials involving animals and babies also show effects beyond placebo, where the placebo effect, (i.e. due to the belief in the medicine in a baby or animal), would be minimal if not non-existent.

A study of homeopathically potentised remedies showed a reduction in the need for repetition of insemination and reduced semen loss in the treatment of fertilisation of female pigs.

Riaucourt A. L'Exemple de la Filière Porcine. Annals of the "Entretiens Internationaux de Monaco 2002", 5-6 October, 2002

In a study of homeopathically potentised remedies, the incidence of haematomas was reduced by 30 % in turkeys during transportation. The study was randomised, placebo controlled and double blinded.

Filliat C. Particularité de l'utilisation de l'homéopathie en production avicole. Annals of the "Entretiens Internationaux de Monaco 2002", 5-6 October 2002.

To further test the effect of the high dilution homeopathic remedies it is possible to conduct studies on cells in test-tubes, these are of course more objective effects, as they are not at all dependent on the belief system of a patient.

In a multi-centre study including four research centres in Europe, the effect of high dilutions of histamine (10^{-30} – 10^{-38} M) was confirmed. Researchers were able to document that high dilutions of histamine inhibit human basophil degranulation. Results cannot be explained through molecular theories.

Belon P, et al. FAC. Histamine dilutions modulate basophil activation. Inflamm. Research. 2004; 53: 181-188

So there are of course plenty of scientific studies demonstrating the effect of the ultra high dilute homeopathic remedies; it would, therefore, appear that it is the lack of a physical or chemical model to explain the effect of the remedy that is the major stumbling block in its acceptance. However, there are in fact experiments that are able to give possible mechanisms and quite easily explain the effect of the ultra high dilute homeopathic remedies.

For example, any substance with a repeatable structure can be studied with 'thermoluminescence', a method of heating previously irradiated substances which then gives off a pattern of emitted light that is characteristic of that substance. It is often used to study crystals and in an experiment involving ice with dissolved salts, researchers in Switzerland found that the characteristic emissions of the salts lithium chloride and sodium chloride could be found even in ultra high dilutions when there was, in fact, no lithium or sodium chloride left in solution.

"As a working hypothesis, we believe that this phenomenon results from a marked structural change in the hydrogen bond network (of the solvent) initiated at the onset by the presence of the dissolved ions and maintained in the course of the dilution process, probably thanks to the successive vigorous mechanical stirrings."

Rey L. Thermoluminescence of ultra-high dilutions of lithium chloride and sodium chloride. Physica A 323 (2003) 67–74

As other experiments have shown, there appears to be an informational exchange that leaves an imprint in the water or another solvent, much the same way as somebody leaving an electromagnetic imprint of their voice on a tape or information on digital CD. You don't need to leave any substance you just need to rearrange the structure to impart the information; this can then have an effect on whatever is sensitive to reading that information. If you make a recording on tape, CD or even write a message in sand you are rearranging the existing structure without leaving any new material, only those sensitive to the message can read it. A digital player can read a CD, a tape player read a magnetic tape and a human of appropriate literacy read the writings in sand. The action of homeopathic remedies is totally congruent to what we are now using in electromagnetic technology and informational technology of the 21st century.

Dr J Benveniste found that the therapeutic effect of homeopathic remedies could be erased by putting the remedies in a degaussing machine which is a powerful electromagnet used to erase magnetic tapes:

Water seems to be a kind of liquid magnetic tape using electromagnetic fields to store molecular information

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology 1991, 5: A1583

Modern research is also acknowledging that the human body emits radiation and not just in a haphazard manner, consequently external radiation can resonate with this in ways that we are just beginning to research, the impact of specific patterns of external electromagnetic radiation is bound to be more significant when we realise that we are physiological bodies emitting and therefore sensitive to these kinds of energies.

This summer Dr Hyland will give two papers at international conferences outlining his research into the phenomenon that biological systems, including the human body, generate and emit extremely low intensity radiation in the

form of photons (a microscopic packet of light energy), and that these photon emissions are not random but display coherence... the very weak emission of which can be viewed as an outward sign of an orderly functioning metabolism.

Science Daily (Jul. 29, 1998)

The action of the homeopathic remedy also has an optimum effect at the correct dilution, this means that sometimes more dilute remedies have a greater effect than less dilute, because of the nature of less aggravation and the optimum frequency of the message. But it is also likely that continued dilution can have less of an effect than the previous dilution, therefore an optimum is required for the frequencies to match, this matching is called 'resonance', consequently it is not entirely true to say that, the more dilute the remedy, the more effect it will have.

"Living organisms are all a bit like radio receivers, and you can get resonance between external radiation and living things if the radiation matches natural frequencies,"

Dr Hyland, Science Daily (Jul. 29, 1998)

The phenomenon of leaving an energetic or informational trace has also been demonstrated on the molecular level as well; in 1984 Dr. Peter P. Gariaev, PhD of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences conducted experiments to show that DNA (the molecular components of our genetic code) is able to give off coherent electromagnetic waves that persist even when the DNA has been removed.

A quartz cuvette with a DNA sample is moved from one location to another. And a trace, a phantom, is left in the air in the original location of the sample. This phenomenon was registered using the laser spectroscopy method by P. Gariaev in 1984 in Russia and by the group of R. Pecora in 1990 in the U.S.A. Gariaev also investigated the stability of the phantom and he found the following. After blowing the phantom away by the gaseous nitrogen, it comes back in 5-8 minutes. And the phantom disappears completely after 1 month. We remark that sound waves radiated by the DNA molecules were registered in these experiments. (www.emergentmind.org)

Further experiments have found that it is possible to transfer this information from one group of cells to another such that information enables healing or disease. Three series of experiments with identical protocols were conducted by P. Gariaev's groups Moscow, Russia (2000); in Toronto, Canada (2001); and in 2005 Nizhni Novgorod, Russia (2005).

A control group of rats was injected with a lethal dose of a poison called alloxan which destroys the pancreas, the organ responsible for insulin production in an organism. As a result, all the rats in the control group developed type 1 diabetes (high blood glucose concentration level) and died within 4-6 days. Then the same lethal dose of alloxan was injected to another group of rats. When the rats in this second group reached the critical condition, they were exposed to healing wave information. As a result of that exposure, the sick rats got healed: their blood sugar level got normalized and

their pancreas got regenerated. This healing wave information was produced by a laser bio-computer when the laser beam scanned the healing matrix. The healing matrix was created when the bio-computer read information from the pancreas and spleen, which were surgically removed from healthy newborn rats of the same species as those used in the alloxan experiments.

Therefore as acknowledged by many scientists in this field, research demonstrates the electromagnetic and informational dimension of cells suggesting that cells do not only communicate by the movement of physical molecules from one cell to another or by nerve impulses but by coherent electromagnetic fields. This may be likened to the manner in which we are able to communicate with each other with radio, television and mobile phones.

Professor of Chemistry David Colquhoun in his criticism of homeopathy reflects the view of many in the pharmaceutical world and states in an article reported by Tony Edwards in WDDTY July 2006: "One of homeopathy's basic principles is the less you give of a drug the bigger effect it has. That's like saying the less whisky you drink the drunker you get"...

This is, of course, a misunderstanding of homeopathy and a confusion of two separate systems; firstly homeopathy is a therapeutic tool for enhancing the existing healing reaction of the body and can use concentrated tinctures, as well as ultra-dilute, the ultra-dilution of remedies is not the homeopathic principle. Secondly the informational and energetic aspect of the homeopathic remedy needs to 'resonate' with an existing state in a patient to have any effect at all, the remedy is not just any diluted 'drug', an individual's homeopathic remedy only refers to an appropriate remedy that is able to elicit the same (or similar) symptom response that they are currently exhibiting.

In addition, when there is 'similarity' there is an optimum potency/dilution, which means that more dilute remedies can have a greater effect up to an optimum dilution, after which point, greater dilution can have less effect, therefore it is not a linear relationship of '*less is more*'.

We, therefore, need to recognise that information cannot be measured in weight and likewise, material effects are not analogous to energetic or information effects. You can break a glass by dropping a heavy object on it or you can break a glass by directing sound waves at it, the sound waves that are similar to the natural frequency exhibited in the glass can break the glass. This is a well known, demonstrable, phenomenon that has been repeated and recorded many times. Sounds waves of greater frequency will not break the glass, neither will waves of less frequency, the sound waves have to be similar in frequency so they 'resonate' with the frequency of the glass, just like the necessity for the homeopathic remedy to stimulate symptoms similar to the symptom pattern of the patient.

Therefore even though sound waves and a heavy object can both break glass, you cannot compare the two states in the same manner. Sound cannot be measured in units of weight and similarly, it is not possible to have an optimum resonant weight of an object that can break the glass as you can have with the frequency of sound

waves. What is true of weight is not true of sound waves and vice versa, because the more weight you drop on the glass the more likely it will break. The object breaks the glass because its force is proportional to its weight; this is not analogous to the resonant effect of waves.

Whisky makes you drunk because of its toxic material effect on the physiology of the body and this is not analogous to the effect of a homeopathic remedy, just as the information in a story can create feelings of sadness in a person which will have a measurable effect on the biochemistry of the body, you cannot measure the amount of story in 'weight of substance'. Nevertheless, both physical substance and energy/information can and do affect the physiology of the body, the properties of them, however, need to be measured appropriately and likewise, the properties of one do not negate the properties of the other.

Once we give ourselves time to delve into the issues a little deeper we can see that the difference is in fact quite obvious, and we are able to see that this is more than just an issue of ultra-dilution. The ultra-dilute homeopathic remedy is also relatively easy to understand in principle and does not in any way refute the physical laws of chemistry, just as the laws of electromagnetism do not refute the physical laws of the material world, although there may be implications to accepting the phenomena of homeopathic and holistic medicine.

- If symptoms of illness are understood as intelligent and beneficial, this would require we use medicines to work with the symptoms of illness, as opposed to only working to stop them and therefore many 'over-the-counter' pharmaceutical medications and many prescribed medicines could become much less required.
- If symptoms are reactions to our environment, it would become imperative to look at our environment and lifestyle, e.g. the toxic, emotional and nutritional influences on health and illness; therefore most of the public and healthcare professions would have to incorporate many more aspects in their understanding of disease and use of therapeutics.
- If ultra-dilute remedies have a therapeutic effect, then many medicines can be manufactured at incredibly low-cost.

To say that there is nothing in a homeopathic remedy is, of course, alluding to the fact that most of the material substance has been diluted out of many of the ultra-dilute remedies. But it is not unlike trying to convince people that the manufacturers of their DVD have put nothing on it, which is also true, there is no substance put on a DVD. You could conclude, therefore, that because there is nothing on the DVD, it cannot work. But like the homeopathic remedies, the manufacturers would have rearranged the material, not unlike a message in sand, a message that your DVD player can read to give you hours of enjoyment, but they have most definitely put no 'thing' on it. So, of course, some ultra dilute homeopathic remedies may have no original substance but they likewise have a coherent energetic/informational imprint and as reputable experimentation shows they most certainly have an effect.

I have illustrated, albeit very briefly, some of the basic principles involved, in the therapeutic intervention of a few examples of complementary and alternative therapies, in particular homeopathy. All practises however recognise the importance of the 'symptom' as part of the curative response. The question as to how effective each therapy is, in the hands of which therapist, for what illnesses and under which circumstances, is beyond the scope of this book. However the important issue is to understand the principles in which they are practised and in turn understand the wider context of health and disease and therefore the basis of their success and increasing popularity.

Holistic therapists are able to see the connections between the various reactions of the different parts of the body, (disease symptoms) and what the body is reacting to (toxins, physical strain, mental pressure, emotional tension, nutritional deficiency etc), all systems are in fact integral parts of the whole, operating in a sophisticated and coordinated manner. Fever, malaise, lack of appetite, increased blood pressure, tightness in the chest, anxiety, may all be part of a synchronised response to a single event; however, we can only comprehend the function of symptoms in this manner when we are able to see the purpose of these symptoms as they relate to the whole organism.