



Homeopathy: a Branch of Western Medicine

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There are important questions to be answered when one is considering homeopathy as a complement to conventional medicine. What is the difference between Homeopathy and what we call Western Medicine today? What are the advantages and limitations of each? Under what circumstances is it appropriate to use Homeopathy? How does Homeopathy compare with other “alternative” modalities such as Naturopathy?

The Original Three Branches of Western Medicine

Hippocrates (c.560 B.C.), known today as the founding father of Western Medicine, proposed that health was maintained and restored through the action of three directing principles of healing:

1. *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* — Imitating nature and following its wisdom;
2. *Similea Similibus Curentur* — “Like cures like”: the use of Similarars;
3. *Contraria Contraribus Curentur* — The use of Contraries. Naturopathy, Homeopathy and Allopathy grew into separate and complementary practices from these three original branches of Western Medicine.

However, in the 1900’s, pharmaceutical influence caused conventional medicine to focus only on the third principle and abandon the first two. In examining each principle’s focus and function in the maintenance of health, we can see how this shift in philosophy over time led us to the imbalance we now experience in our healthcare system.

The First Branch: Naturopathy

Hippocrates’ first principle: *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* *Vis Medicatrix Naturae*, or following and imitating the wisdom of nature, is the founding principle in Naturopathy, and in its purest form, refers to anything we can do as soon as we feel under the weather, not ourselves, or not fully energized. This first stage of holistic medicine forms the foundation of health. Activities such as conscious breathing, natural movements, exercise which stimulates the heart, hygiene, and



eating appropriately for our constitution are key. One must include with these the importance of rest, total relaxation (without stimulants), and a balanced diet of easy-to-digest foods and fresh spring water. *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* also includes assisting the body's well-calculated upheavals such as fever, vomiting, rashes, eruptions, diarrhoea, etc., with certain foods or whole herbs (Herbology). These upheavals are in fact your body's way of healing itself! It has been shown that allowing the body to run its course, with your cooperation and support, actually improves your vitality and immune response. For example, colds have a greater chance to occur when we have been eating too much, or eating too much fast food. Colds are one way for the body to detoxify itself by flushing out toxins. Drinking a lot of water, and steaming ourselves, helps the body flush itself out. Likewise, one assists fevers by wrapping up in blankets and drinking hot "toddies" or drinks that make the fever peak and break, in the process destroying toxins and parasites. MICH Homeopaths are trained to practice this pure form of Naturopathy, in order to determine which actions can help their patients restore their health in the most efficient and optimal way with the least intervention possible. It is only when these activities are not enough to restore health that other intervention may be considered. Hippocrates emphasized the principle: "Primum non nocere" or "Do no harm", saying, "One must be useful and most importantly, not interfere." Only if the actions of *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* fail, he said, should one apply the second principle.

The Second Branch: Homeopathy

Hippocrates' second principle: *Similea Similibus Curentur* or "Like cures like" is the founding principle of Homeopathy. This principle provides the optimal intervention when the organism is having difficulty restoring health on its own. It is highly individualized for the patient, using a specially chosen and prepared remedy according to the following guidelines: It is always from whole natural sources; It must be chosen according to the particular constitution, body type, character and tendencies of the patient, and NOT for the pathology or disease; It is used in the minimum dose possible, so as not to interfere with the body's processes. In the *Similea Similibus Curentur* method, Hippocrates used a minimal amount of one medicine at a time: an eighth of an eighth of an eighth of a drop, or micro-doses of herbs that were diluted and shaken. The method of preparation evolved through the middle ages and was perfected in the 1700's by Samuel Hahnemann, a medical doctor and researcher whose documented findings provide the base of modern Homeopathy. Modern homeopathic remedies are diluted in a laboratory in a process called "potentization", or "dynamization". Once a remedy has been dynamized, it literally no longer contains atomic or molecular content from the original source. The remedy itself is an "energetic signature", imprinted on water molecules (See: *What's In a Homeopathic Remedy?*). Homeopathic medicines are used by the body somewhat like a tuning fork is used by a musician. By finding the remedy that can "tune" a specific individual in a certain state, the homeopath is able to optimize that individual's ability to restore homeostasis and obtain a complete and long lasting cure.



The Third Branch: Allopathy or “Western Conventional” Medicine

Hippocrates' third principle: *Contraria Contrariis Curentur* Hippocrates' third and final principle was traditionally prescribed only on the failure of *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* and *Similia Similibus Curentur*. Meant as a last resort, the third principle was considered effective in extending life when it was in great danger, such as when an illness, upheaval or injury threatened the life of the individual. *Contraria Contrariis Curentur*, or the use of *Contraries*, is the basis of what we call Allopathy, also known today as Western Medicine, mainstream medicine, or conventional medicine. Allopathic medications, or *Contraries*, are typically of greater doses than any form of Naturopathic or Homeopathic remedy, because the intention is to stop or block the body in its natural upheaval. They are contrary to the body's movement. Thus, greater amounts are needed. By definition, Allopathy suppresses symptoms or kills cells. It can respond to an apparent upheaval, but because it opposes the body's natural tendencies and processes, it does not optimize the body's organs or support the return to healthy homeostasis. When we consider that Allopathy is designed to work against the body's natural reactions or functions, we can see how this principle is being used inappropriately in Western Medicine today. The over-use of antibiotics and vaccines results in the deterioration of the immune system over time. The over-dependence on *Contraries* results ultimately in a weakening of the organism's ability to restore and maintain homeostasis. This imbalance and incompleteness in the practice of medicine today seriously compromises the health of patients. At MICH, we envision quality homeopathic care not as an “alternative” to mainstream medicine, but rather, as in Hippocrates' principles, as one branch of the original and holistic Western Medicine model.