

## **Beliefs, endorsement and application of homeopathy disclosed: A survey among ambulatory care physicians**

### **Appendix B – Glossary**

#### **Miasms:**

According to homeopathic doctrine, chronic diseases (that is to say any refractory or relapsing conditions leading to an increasingly declining health condition) are caused by underlying «fundamental causes», that he called «miasms».

By that, Hahnemann redefined the concept of «miasms» originally described by Hippocrates. Hippocrates had postulated that air and water, contaminated by «miasms», a noxious form of «bad air» were the causes of disease. Hahnemann took up the concept of infection, but did not assume the contagious agents to be gaseous compounds; he rather spoke of «miasmatic animalcules or agents» that affect a person's health constitution, make it susceptible for disease and show themselves in the shape of multiple symptoms. The miasmatic constitution could be passed from ancestors to following generations and trigger disease syndromes in the descendants. Therefore, according to homeopathic doctrine, the treatment of chronic diseases requires different remedies than acute conditions, even though the apparent symptoms may be similar. Hahnemann's successors further developed the concept. All versions of the doctrine have, however, in common that they require a different and more elaborated handling of homeopathy that is seen beyond the scope of home prescribing. Therefore, we chose participants' treating habits «according to the theory of miasms» as indicator of strong adherence to homeopathic doctrine.

#### **Law of the similar:**

Hahnemann postulated that all effective drugs produce symptoms in healthy individuals similar to those of the diseases that they treat and established the doctrine «Like cures like» (*similia similibus curentur*), known as the «law of the similar». As a result, homeopathic treatment requires matching of patients' symptoms with the known effects of specific substances in healthy individuals and administration of the respective substance in form of a homeopathic remedy.

#### **Homeopathic remedy:**

Hahnemann believed that large doses of drugs causing similar symptoms (see law of the similar) as the disease would aggravate illness, whereas low doses would induce cure. Thus, he advocated extreme dilutions of the substances and devised a technique for making dilutions that he believed would preserve a substance's therapeutic properties while removing its harmful effects. Homeopathic remedies are products manufactured in accordance to homeopathic doctrine including mother tincture production and ultra-dilution with or without infusion in small sugar pellets also known as «globuli».

#### **Single remedy:**

According to Hahnemann's doctrine, the therapist attempts to match a single substance to the totality of symptoms. A single substance processed in accordance to homeopathic

manufacturing practice represents a single remedy. Along the homeopathic treatment process and evolvement of patients' symptoms, it can happen that the choice of remedy must be reconsidered.

**Complex remedy:**

Blending of several substances and following preparation according to homeopathic manufacturing practice results in so called complex remedies that are supposed to address specific organs or common symptom complexes, so called «proven indications». The choice of complex remedies is not determined by the classic process of total consideration, hierarchisation and repertorisation as described by Hahnemann. Therefore, we chose participants' treating habits «using complex remedies» as indicator of moderate adherence to homeopathic doctrine.

**Total consideration:**

Total consideration describes the detailed examination of patients' history including physical, mental and emotional states, life circumstances and any physical or emotional symptoms at the beginning of a homeopathic treatment. So, the therapist attempts to gain the «big picture» of the disease and the patient as a whole and translate this information into a complex formula of mental and physical symptoms, including likes, dislikes, innate predispositions and even body type. Based on this «big picture», the therapist then searches the matching remedy using the techniques of «hierarchisation» and «repertorisation» (matching in the sense of the law of the similar).

**Hierarchisation:**

Hierarchisation describes a technique homeopaths use for classifying and prioritizing the plenty of symptoms recorded during homeopathic anamnesis (see also total consideration).

**Repertorisation:**

Repertorisation describes the process of selecting a matching remedy for an individual patient with the help of a homeopathic encyclopedia, the so called «Repertorium». Such encyclopedias, list various symptoms in rubrics according to homeopathic categories and hierarchy (see also hierarchisation), provide detailed information on symptoms' qualities, circumstances and prerequisites of their appearance and list substances that were described to produce similar symptoms in healthy individuals. Consulting these encyclopedias is meant to help a therapist finding the right remedy for a patient according to the law of the similar.

**Proven indications:**

Since the technique of individualized remedy selection by total consideration, hierarchisation and repertorisation is very laborious, some successors of Hahnemann proposed to match diagnoses instead of individual symptoms with homeopathic remedies. They published according assignment tables, known as «proven indications». This approach is a renunciation of Hahnemann's doctrine and was deemed «cook book homeopathy» by followers of traditional homeopathy. Therefore, we chose

«remedy selection according to proven indications» as indicator for only moderate adherence to homeopathic doctrine.

**Metaschematism:**

According to Hahnemann's theory of miasms, chronic diseases express themselves in form of different symptoms. When a chronic disease changes its expression, this is called «Metaschematism». Initiating isolated treatment of symptoms without considering the underlying miasm will suppress the symptom, but not cure the disease. On the contrary, the chronic disease will undergo «Metaschematism» and erupt in form of other, more severe symptoms.