

Homeopathy and Influenza

The “flu” is a hot topic in the news these days. All the media coverage has created tremendous fear among people who believe their only options for dealing with influenza will come from their doctors and the pharmaceutical companies. Adding to their fears is the warning that there may not be adequate supplies of the flu vaccine for those who choose to be vaccinated. The merits of vaccinations and anti-viral medicines for influenza are publicized, while their drawbacks and effectiveness are rarely questioned. There has been almost no public discussion of the effectiveness of homeopathy in the treatment of influenza.

Homeopathy was used with great success in the United States to treat patients during the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. According to the records and personal accounts of homeopathic physicians who treated people during the Spanish Influenza, homeopathy was highly effective. In most cases, only one or two homeopathic medicines were needed.

As a rule there is a small group of homeopathic remedies (1-5) that are most effective for each epidemic. This group of remedies is called the genus epidemicus. They are chosen after careful observation of several cases early in the epidemic. Selection is based on the patterns that emerge once the common symptoms of those early cases are compiled. The genus epidemicus for each epidemic will likely be different from the groups of remedies that were useful in previous epidemics, which makes it difficult to speculate exactly which homeopathic remedies will work best in the likely event of another influenza epidemic. However, homeopaths now have the ability to communicate directly with other homeopaths all over the world, which enables us to work much more quickly, efficiently and accurately than ever before.

In 1921 Dr. W. A. Dewey published a paper on the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 in *The Journal of the American Institute of Homeopathy* entitled, “Homeopathy in Influenza—A Chorus of Fifty in Harmony.” The following are excerpts from his paper:

- In a factory in Chicago, Dr. Frank Wieland reported influenza in 8,000 workers with only one death. All were treated with homeopathy. Dr. Wieland also reported that no aspirin or vaccines were used.
- Dr. T. A. McCann of Dayton, Ohio, reported that 24,000 cases of influenza given conventional medical treatment had a mortality rate of 28.2%, while 26,000 cases of influenza treated homeopathically had a mortality rate of only 1.05%.
- Dr. Dudley Williams of Providence, Rhode Island, reported no deaths in cases of uncomplicated influenza and only a 2.1% mortality rate in those who developed pneumonia. He observed that doctors who used salicylates (including aspirin and quinine) as the main treatment had a 60% mortality rate in patients who developed pneumonia.

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- Dr. G. H. Wright of Glen, Maryland, said, “I attended over one hundred cases without any fatalities. I never deviated from the homeopathic remedy. I never gave aspirin. One case that was loaded with aspirin before I saw him, referred to me from an old school physician, died. This epidemic should encourage us to renewed faith in homeopathy.”
- Dr. H. R. Roberts in Derby, Connecticut, asked 30 physicians for data. They reported 6,602 cases with 55 deaths, which is less than 1%. Roberts himself reported 81 cases, all of whom were treated with homeopathic medicines and recovered.
- According to Dr. A. H. Grimmer of Chicago, Illinois, “It is a rare thing for pneumonia to develop if a good homeopathic physician is called during the first 24 hours of an attack of influenza. An appalling death rate comes from the baneful results of large doses of aspirin, salicylates, and opium preparations.”
- Dr. J. P. Huff of Olive Branch, Kentucky, wrote, “I almost invariably gave [one of two homeopathic medicines]. I hardly ever lost a case if I got there first, unless the patient had been sent to a drug store and bought aspirin, in which event I was likely to have a case of pneumonia on my hands.”
- Dr. William E. Leonard of Minneapolis, Minnesota, reported that of 150 cases of influenza he treated, “very few had pneumonia, none that I treated from the beginning [with homeopathy]. Only one died under my care, a man of sixty, having had asthma and brought into our Minnesota climate in the midst of a severe winter, a truly septic pneumonia.”

When a major influenza outbreak strikes again—and it will—we can be confident that homeopathy, will be ready and equal to the challenge.