

## Homeopathy and Influenza - the Spanish Flu Experience



Stephen Malthouse, MD  
The Immunity Challenge Conference

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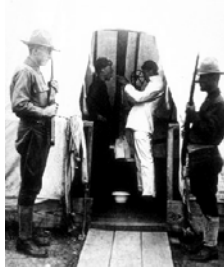
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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- The Spanish flu was first reported in Canton, China in February, 1918 and spread with amazing rapidity across the world - to Asia, Europe, North and South America, Africa, India, Australia and New Zealand – spurred on by the movement of military troops in WWI.
- Where did it start? China, Tibet, France, Ft. Riley (US)?
- It was called the Spanish flu (the Spanish Lady; "The Naples Soldier" by the Spanish) because it was first officially recognized in Spain in May 1918. Spain was neutral in the First World War and had no need to censor the illness from its population in order to maintain focus on the war effort.
- It went on to kill an estimated eight million people in Spain alone.




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- The first wave was relatively mild - symptoms sufficient to incapacitate a person but with low mortality. It is referred to in some accounts as the Three Day Flu.
- The epidemic seemed to subside over the summer months.
- It was not until late August 1918 that the second wave appeared, after a probable mutation of the virus, beginning in Freetown (Sierra Leone), Brest (France) and Boston (USA).
- The onset of the second wave was different. Symptoms included sudden onset of high fever, severe incapacitating aches and pains, severe headaches, sudden collapse and prostration and death within hours or days. Its rapidity and severity shocked and puzzled physicians and laypersons alike. Etiology?
- At first some soldiers looked so surprising well, with good colour (or flush), that the Regimental Medical Officers viewed them with skepticism and sent them back to duty. The symptoms would speedily advance, leading to the heliotrope hue of air hunger, cyanosis and death.



As sailors and soldiers fell ill, doctors puzzled over the mystery illness they were confronting.

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"Twenty-two year old Joseph Alexander traveled from St. George's to St. John's to enlist in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment on October 14, 1918. Two days later, he went on sick parade and was admitted to the Barrack Hospital – diagnosis: "Influenza". The next day, he was transferred to the General Hospital. He died on October 20, 1918. His name appeared in the Casualty List in the *Daily News* on October 22, 1918, a military career of 6 days."

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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- The epidemic reached its peak in September and October 1918, slowly decreasing in November and December. This was followed by a Third Wave in February, March, and April of 1919.
- The previous Flu Epidemic of 1889-90 had high morbidity (40% of world's population) but a low mortality rate, affecting mainly the young, old and frail.
- For that reason, the prospect of another flu epidemic was not viewed seriously except for the decrease in the numbers of Front Line soldiers and reduced production on the Home Front because of sickness in the general population.
- Spanish influenza was unusual in that it struck down many young, healthy adults. More than 50 per cent of all influenza victims were between 20 and 40 years old. Millions of children were orphaned. The "manpower" that ran the economy was decimated.




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- So fast did the 1918 strain overwhelm the body's natural defenses, that the usual cause of death in influenza patients---a secondary pneumonia---never had a chance to establish itself. Instead, the virus caused a primary viral pneumonia with an uncontrollable hemorrhaging.
- 50% of pneumonia cases died.
- Some died within 6 hours of exhibiting symptoms. Dr D.G. Stine: "I saw one patient die within 18 hours of the onset of the disease".
- "As their lungs filled ... the patients became short of breath and increasingly cyanotic. After gasping for several hours they became delirious and incontinent, and many died struggling to clear their airways of a blood-tinged froth that sometimes gushed from their nose and mouth. It was a dreadful business."  
(--Isaac Starr, 3rd year medical student, University of Pennsylvania, 1918.)




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- Because of frequent hemoptysis and epistaxis (often shooting more than a foot from the bedside), the doctors, nurses and orderlies walked around the wards covered in blood.
- Ominous signs: heliotrope coloring ("as blue as a huckleberry"), bilateral ptosis (drooping of eyelids).
- Reports of people falling off their horses dead; dying walking down the street
- Ships returning from WWI were often called "floating caskets"; so many men were sick and dying that body fluids were "running through the corridors".
- In some cities, trains would pause at each stop long enough for the still warm bodies to be carried onto the platforms to await collection by the ambulances.
- In city morgues, "Bodies the color of slate were stacked like cord wood from floor to ceiling".

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## A medic's letter 1918

*"Camp Devens is near Boston and has about 50,000 men or did have before this epidemic broke loose. It also has the Base Hospital for the Div. of the N. East. This epidemic started about four weeks ago and has developed so rapidly that the camp is demoralized and all ordinary work is held up till it has passed. All assemblages of soldiers taboo.*

*"These men start with what appears to be an ordinary attack of La Grippe or influenza, and when brought to the hospital they very rapidly develop the most vicious type of pneumonia that has ever been seen. Two hours after admission they have the mahogany spots over the cheek bones and a few hours later you can begin to see the cyanosis extending from the ears and spreading over the face... It is only a matter of a few hours then until death comes, and it is simply a struggle for air until they suffocate. It is horrible. One can stand it to see one, two or twenty men die, but to see these poor devils dropping out like flies sort of gets on your nerves. We have been averaging 100 deaths per day, and still keeping it up...*

*"We have lost outrageous numbers of nurses and Drs. And the little town of Ayers is a sight. It takes special trains to carry away the dead. For several days there were no coffins and the bodies piled up something fierce; we used to go down to the morgue and look at the boys laid out in long rows. It beats any sight they ever had in France after a battle."*

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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

### Mortality figures

- Affected 20% of people. Estimated total case fatality 1.9-30% percent
- 5 % of the world's population died. Estimate 20-100 million. (Compare: 11 million deaths in WWI).
- A large numbers of flu deaths probably went unreported in less developed countries. (Possibly 20 million people died in India alone.)
- In Canada the death toll exceeded 50,000, spreading from east to west on the trans-continental railway.
- In Saskatchewan, the mortality was said to be more than 5,000. The incidence of illness was one in four - virtually every family experienced the disease.
- Some smaller villages in Quebec and Labrador were almost completely wiped out.



Hearse in Wisconsin




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

"The influenza struck quickly. People were seized by a sudden weakness, headaches, pains, fever, and a chill - like cold water running down the back. Erstwhile healthy people collapsed on the street or at work, "as if struck by lightning". Some were dead in 24 hours."




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- Medical facilities were swamped. Only the most fortunate flu patients received hospital care. Most influenza deaths occurred at home.
- In San Diego, California city officials imposed the precaution that everyone had to wear gauze masks when within the city of San Diego. Masks of four-ply surgical gauze which were tied around the mouth and nose were given out to all residents of the city.
- This law was less than popular with the local citizenry. Holes would be cut in the masks to enable people to smoke. Women would wear the masks as a veil, letting them hang loose around their necks. Civil libertarians fought the law on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. The penalty for disregarding the law was a fine of one hundred dollars and thirty days in jail.




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## Proposed causes of the mysterious epidemic

- Cholera
- Typhoid fever
- Food poisoning
- Appendicitis
- Chlorine gas poisoning
- Mustard gas in the atmosphere
- Scarlet fever
- Sandfly fever in India
- Typhus in Ireland
- Pneumonic plague
- An entirely new disease
- "It looked like influenza, it talked like influenza, it walked like influenza, but it really didn't *act* like influenza"

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Charles Lewis of Cape Town boarded a train to his parents' home in Sea Point only 3 miles away. The conductor signaled the train to depart and suddenly died on the platform. Within minutes, a passenger died; then 4 more were struck down. The train stopped 5 times to unload the bodies. With less than a mile to the destination, the engineer slumped over and died.

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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- In the course of the epidemic nearly every known therapy was tried -- quinine tablets, bleeding, castor oil, digitalis, morphine, enemas, aspirin, tobacco, hot baths, cold baths, iron tonics, no. 9 pills, phenacetin, phenol, vaccines containing streptococcus and pneumococcus, injections of mercury perchloride, brandy, whiskey (\$20 a quart) and expectorants of pine tar.
- Tobacco as a germicide (Britain) : autopsies performed in a cloud of tobacco smoke.
- Wear nightcaps (Paris); remove false teeth at bedtime (Rhodesia); don't lick your marbles (Vancouver).




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- Little was known about the virus, except that it was contagious. Folk remedies and patent medicines that claimed to prevent or cure influenza abounded.
  - Poultices of goose-grease, bran, lard and turpentine and compresses of fir-tree spills, mutton tallow and mustard.
- 'Fruit-A-Tives' purported to give the power to resist the disease; and Eucalyptus oil and Peps tablets claimed to cure it. The most popular tonic by far was alcohol. But prohibition made that remedy difficult to obtain.
- Druggists sold six-ounce bottles of brandy for two dollars, and then only with a doctor's prescription. In early November, the Saskatchewan government gave in to strong public pressure to ease the situation and announced, reluctantly, that a prescription was no longer necessary. There was such a run on medicinal alcohol that the government rescinded the order after only seven days.




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- People stayed shut up in their homes. There were reports that whole families had succumbed and that their bodies lay undiscovered for weeks.
- The government was put in the awkward position of attempting to legislate neighbourliness.
- In Saskatchewan, an order-in-council suggested that people check on their neighbors from time to time, to help out with the chores and keep the furnace lit.
- The Provincial Bureau of Public Health closed Saskatoon's theatres, bowling alleys, and billiard halls. There was a civic ban on all public meetings, the schools were closed, and church services were cancelled indefinitely.
- Traveling salesmen and touring theatre companies were stranded. In some communities, it was a criminal offence to shake hands.
- In the U.S., railways demanded passengers have a document certifying they were free of the flu.
- Ordinances made it illegal to spit, cough, or sneeze in public -- with threat of \$500 fines in New York City.




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919



"My father, his face somber, said to me 'We didn't want to tell you of the misfortune that had descended upon us, because we didn't know when you would be home, and we knew the news would make your life there unbearable. The terrible flu epidemic has taken 3 of your brothers and 2 sisters in just nine days.'"

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## A Reprieve?

- With the approach of Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, there developed a general notion that the grip of the influenza would be broken. Just as the Armistice had ended the Great War, so, it was widely felt, it would end the Great influenza. A sense of optimism and celebration at this prospect built in the general populace.
- A prominent Saskatoon physician shared the optimism. "The only effect this celebration is going to have on the influenza situation," he said, "is to improve it." Quite the opposite was true, of course. The Saskatoon victory parade began at 2 a.m. and lasted throughout the day. Even the northern lights participated by putting on a show. Previously careful people, not yet exposed, poured into the streets and became fodder for the re-invigorated epidemic.
- It took 20 months before the epidemic finally waned. Northern areas, unaffected by the 1918-19 wave, were attacked in the 1920s.
- In the wake of the Spanish flu, encephalitis lethargica, or sleeping sickness, claimed an additional 5 million lives.




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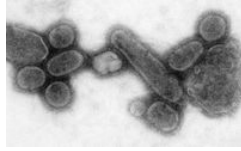
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## The Spanish Influenza virus

- In 1933, the virus that caused influenza (in general) was finally isolated by three English scientist, Smith, Andrews and Laidlaw.
- Spanish flu virus H1N1. Initially found from autopsy tissue from Private Vaughn, 21-year old soldier who died in Sept 1918 at Camp Jackson, S.C.
- 1951 --Alaska "Lucy" -- 30 year old Inuit woman -- Teller Mission, 85% of village's pop. died in 5 days -- one mass grave.
- 1998 exhumations on Spitsbergen Island (Norway) of 7 miners buried in the permafrost.




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## Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- How did patients of homeopathic physicians fare during the Spanish flu?




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## Homeopathy is ...

- A very specific therapeutic method using natural substances in ultra low doses to stimulate the body's own resources
- Lifestyle, diet & obstacles to cure important
- Differs from naturopathy




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## A Different Medical Approach

- Stimulation
  - Homeopathy uses dilute substances to trigger the body's healing response.
- Inhibition/substitution
  - Conventional medicine uses substances to interfere with the disease process

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## Who uses Homeopathy?

### GREAT BRITAIN

- 42% of MD's refer patients to homeopathic practitioners
- 20% of Scottish GP's use homeopathy in primary care
- 5 NHS homeopathic hospitals in GB

### FRANCE

- 30,000 physicians use homeopathy
- 69% of physicians believe H. to be an effective therapy

### GERMANY

- 25% of physicians use homeopathy

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### INDIA

- 102 homeopathic medical schools
- 125,000 trained and degree-level homeopathic practitioners
- 50% of population uses homeopathy

### RUSSIA

- More than 500 homeopathic MD's

### USA

- >2000 homeopathic practitioners

### CANADA

- >3000 pharmacies selling homeopathic meds

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## How it all started ...



- Samuel Hahnemann, MD born in Germany 1755
  - Quinine experiment 1790
  - “Let Like be cured by likes”
- Law of Similars:
- A substance that can cause certain symptoms when given in large doses to someone who is healthy ....
- ..... can cure those same symptoms when given in smaller doses to someone who is sick.

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## Principles of Homeopathy

- Like cures like
- Infinitesimal doses
- Holism
- Individualization

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## “Like cures like” – Law of Similars

A substance that can cause symptoms in a *healthy* person can, in a smaller dose, cure those same symptoms in a *sick* person.

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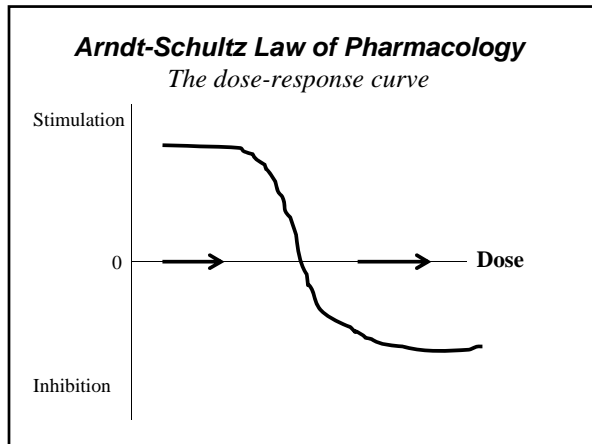
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- Examples in Conventional Medicine...**
- Ritalin
  - Nitroglycerin
  - Digitalis
  - Antihistamines
  - Atropine
  - Scopolamine hydrobromide
  - Epinephrine
  - Serotonin
  - Halothane
  - Benzodiazepines
  - Barbiturates
  - Tricyclic antidepressants
  - MAO inhibitors
  - Carbamazepine
  - Morphine
  - Salicylates

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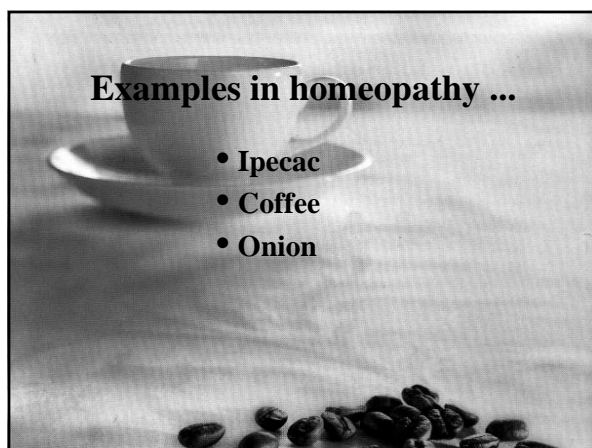
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**Medical Post**

## It's official: Hair of dog helps banish hangover

(Continued) — If there is ever a time when you wake up needing a hangover cure, take a guess to the San Carlos of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London.

And there sure there is a cure.

Dr. Calton has shown scientifically why many humans have been for years — after the last of the day can cure your hangover.

In other words, a small dose of alcohol can block the metabolism of the body that causes that dreadful experience of headache and nausea.

Dr. Calton said it's not the alcohol in the drink that causes a hangover but the metabolism of the alcohol.

There are complex, specific molecules like methanol and acetone. Methanol is thought to be the worst and because there is a lot of it in a very small dose, the effect is a very small dose of the worst.

The body — the metabolism — metabolizes the methanol and forms acid.

But a small amount of ethanol, the type of alcohol found in most drinks, overpowers the formation of methanol and forms acid giving an effective fix.

But a glass of sherry is enough to clear all the hangover and Dr. Calton, president of the London Times, already enjoying a lovely glass, after he published his findings.

The point to make is that the right of drink which is important which is the link.

Dr. Calton, a consultant neurologist, said some top levels have their own secret society for hangover cures. But they are all based on a small amount of alcohol, dissolved up to a small amount of water in the stomach.

Up to half of all drinkers claim to suffer, or nearly to experience a hangover.

Dr. Calton said symptoms are often mild to moderately severe. They are more so people who become angry or depressed while drinking, and people who experience or have experienced a drinking event in the past year.

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## Principles of Homeopathy

- Like cures like
- Infinitesimal doses
- Holism
- Individualization

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## 2. Infinitesimal doses (ultra low)

- Potentization = dilution & succussion
- Medicines are often diluted beyond Avogadro's number ( $6.02 \times 10^{23}$ )
- Activates medicinal properties
- High level of safety
- Can be selected to best match patient's requirements

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January 11, 2009 **NEWS**



**Listen to Bond: drink your martini shaken, not stirred**

Scientists Drs. John Twissick, left, and Monica Bond (Photo taken after their findings that shaken martinis have stronger antioxidant properties than the stirred version.)

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**Principles of Homeopathy**

- Like cures like
- Infinitesimal doses
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- Individualization

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**3. Holism**

- Homeopathy treats the whole person
- Views the pattern of symptoms as the body's defense mechanism reacting to adverse stimuli
- Attempts to treat all of the patient's mental, emotional and physical symptoms with a single remedy, if possible

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## Principles of Homeopathy

- Like cures like
- Infinitesimal doses
- Holism
- Individualization



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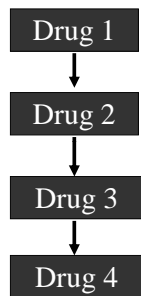
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## Conventional approach to treatment



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## 4. Individualization in homeopathic prescribing



Not based *primarily* on  
diagnostic category

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### Homeopathy treats people, not diseases

*"It is more important to know what sort of patient has the disease than what sort of disease the patient has."*

-- Sir William Osler

*"The germ is nothing. The terrain is everything."*

-- Louis Pasteur

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### Comparison of conventional vs. homeopathic outcomes in the Spanish Flu

(Recorded in the J of the American Institute of Homeopathy 1921)

- In Philadelphia 26,795 cases of influenza treated by homeopathic physicians had a mortality rate of 1.05% compared with the "average old school mortality of 30%". -- Dr. D.W. Pearson (Philadelphia, Penn)
- Dayton Ohio, 24000 case treated allopathically mortality rate 28.2%; homeopathically, 1%. -- Dr. T.A. McCann (Dayton Ohio)
- In Connecticut, 30 homeopathic physicians reported 6,602 cases with 55 deaths, (<1%).
- In a factory in Chicago, Dr Wieland reported treating influenza in 8000 workers, with one death. *Gelsemium* was practically the only remedy used. He reports no aspirin was used and no vaccines.

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### Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- Dr Williams (Rhode Island) reported no losses from influenza and a 2.1% loss in those that developed pneumonia. He observed that Drs using aspirin as the main treatment were having a 60% mortality in those patients that developed pneumonia.
- Dr Sappington (Pennsylvania) reports that from 1500 influenza cases recorded by the Homeopathic Medical Society of the District of Columbia only 15 died. Recovery in the National Homeopathic Hospital was 100%
- In Ohio, Dr McCann treated 1000 cases of influenza homeopathically and had no losses.
- Raymond Siedel decided to become a homeopathic doctor when he was a 10 year old delivery boy for a local homeopath. He said "I saw that people who were taking Aspirin were dying, about half those who were drinking a lot of whiskey were dying, and those that received homeopathic remedies were living."
- "Through the International Hahnemannian Association, I have collected over 17000 cases of influenza with a mortality of 4%." -- Dr. G.B Stearns (New York, NY)

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### Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

"My records show 750 cases with one dead. *Gelsemium*, *Bryonia* and *Eupatorium* were the remedies chiefly." -- Dr. F.A. Swartwout (Washington, DC)

"I treated 618 cases and had 5 deaths. Three of these had had allopathic treatment." --- Dr. RS Faris (Richmond, Virginia)

"I treated 455 case of influenza and 26 cases of pneumonia with no deaths. Remedies: *Gelsemium*, *Bryonia*, *Apis*, etc." --- Dr. T.G. Barnhill (Findlay, Ohio)

"In the month of October 1918, I treated in round numbers, 200 cases of influenza without a death." --- Dr. WR Andrews (Mannington, West Virginia)

"I have treated 267 cases of influenza. No deaths." -- Dr. A.B. Hawkes (Bridgewater, S Dakota)

"Seventy six cases developed in the Children's Home without any complicating pneumonia. Most of the cases were *Bryonia* and *Gelsemium*, which seemed to be successful in carrying them through to complete recovery." -- Dr. J.G. Dillon (Fargo, N Dakota)

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### Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- Dr. H.A Roberts was a homeopathic physician on a troop ship. Another boat pulled alongside to get any spare coffins – the mortality rate was so high.



- Dr. Roberts' ship: 81 cases - all treated homeopathically: 0 deaths.



- "One ship lost 31 on the way."

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### Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

"I had 300 cases and one death; one good homeopathic doctor has 275 cases and no deaths. I am health officer of my city." -- Dr. H.H. Crum (Ithaca, NY)

"I attended over one hundred cases without any fatalities. I never deviated from the homeopathic remedy. I never gave Aspirin." ---G.H. Wright (Glen, Maryland)

"Three hundred and fifty cases and lost one, a neglected pneumonia that came to me after she had taken one hundred grains of Aspirin in twenty-four hours." ---Dr. Cora King (Washington, DC)

"I treated approximately 500 cases which included much pneumonia, lost two cases. Never used Aspirin nor permitted it to be used." -- Dr. A.B. Palmer (Seattle WA)

"I can only testify from personal experience to the invaluable help which homeopathic remedies gave me in treating the many case of influenza that came under my care at the time. I treated over 100, nearer 150 cases; both rich and poor, young and old, male and female; and the results were astonishing. The cases were not picked ones; some were seriously ill when first seen, with high temperatures and bronchial involvement, some had it more mildly, and yet the temperatures in nearly all cases came down in twenty-four to forty-eight hours .... And there was not a single death in the whole of this series and no subsequent complications." --- Dr. Dorothy Sheppard (England)

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### An Interview with Elsa Engle (by Frances Kalfus OMD, LAc)

97 years old at time of interview in 1992.

Were you practicing with Dr. Engle?

Well, I learned about everything. It was like I was a nurse practitioner. I must tell you, during the 1918 flu I did practice medicine without being a licensed doctor for five days, and I did not lose a single, solitary patient.

So the flu hit here in California also?

Good grief, they died. Nowadays they say that they killed them off with the medicines that they gave them, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised, because I know they gave you seven things, but I don't remember what they were. The homeopaths at Hahnemann Hospital didn't lose any. Dr. Engle lost two patients. One was a young woman, who had gotten married just before the war started. She was pregnant and had a bad heart. Dr. Engle was worried because of her heart, whether she was going to be able to carry the pregnancy to term. When the flu came, she died. The other was a woman who also had a very bad heart. I forget what they called that heart disease; her lips were always blue. It was very serious, she was in a very critical state. These were the only two patients we lost.

Do you remember how you treated it?

They all had about the same symptoms. You didn't have to do anything else but give them a bottle of *Gelsemium*, followed with a bottle of *Eupatorium perfoliatum*. We told them to go to bed, and to stay out of the bathtub and out of the shower, and to keep themselves clean with alcohol rubs. In those days we could get them to clean with alcohol. And to stay on liquids. In five days practically all of them were well.

### The age mystery of the Spanish Influenza Why age 20-40?

- In Connecticut, 56% of the deaths aged 20-40.
  - Military base camps a hotbed for influenza activity
  - ASA, TB, immunological memory, cytokine storm, fear-induced susceptibility
- It was generally observed by homeopaths in the US at the time that the use of Aspirin was a major cause of deaths during the influenza epidemic. Its indirect action came through the fact that aspirin was taken until prostration resulted and the patient developed pneumonia.

"The mortality in camp for pneumonia was 25.8%. The lieutenant in charge was persuaded to discontinue Aspirin, Digitalis, and Quinine and the mortality rate dropped speedily to 15% with no medicine whatever." --- (Dr. W.A Pearson, Philadelphia, Penn)

- In Kentucky Dr Huff wrote "I almost invariably gave (homeopathic medicines) *Gelsemium* or *Bryonia*. 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."

### The age mystery of the Spanish Influenza

"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 use of large doses of Aspirin, salicylates and opium preparations." --- Dr. AH Grimmer (Chicago, Ill)

"The reason why children fared better than adults in the influenza epidemic were, first they were seen earlier by the physician; second, they were not drugged with "sure cures"; third, they were not filled up with Aspirin; fourth, they were put to bed; and fifth, they were given the proper remedy and had a fine chance." --- J.P. Cobb (Chicago, Ill)

"We treated over 300 cases of influenza among the members of the Student Army Training Corps with no deaths. *Gelsemium*, *Bryonia* and *Ferrum phosphoricum* were the leading remedies. Only in those cases having had Aspirin was convalescence delayed and pneumonia produced." Dr. CB Stouffer (Ann Arbor, Michigan)



### Questions about Influenza + Homeopathy

- Is homeopathy available?
- Is homeopathy safe?
- Is homeopathy inexpensive?
  - In France, research on cost-effectiveness has shown that the annual cost to the social security system for a homeopathic physician is 15% less than that of a conventional physician and the price of the average homeopathic medicine is one third that of standard drugs. (*Healthcare professionals in private practice in 1990. Paris, France: Social Security Statistics; CNAM publication 61*).
  - The cost of one vial of homeopathic medicine (30c or 200c potency) containing 40 doses (80 pellets) is \$5.99 - 7.99 retail and \$3.55 wholesale. The frequency of repetition of the dose is dependent upon the type of illness and speed of onset of symptoms/signs, but is commonly 2 pillules three times daily.

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### Questions about Influenza + Homeopathy

- Is homeopathy effective?
  - Can homeopathy lower the risk of getting infected?
  - Can homeopathy treat or reduce the risk of complications of the infection?
  - Can homeopathy reduce the risks of other prescribed treatments, including vaccination?
  - Can homeopathy speed recovery once the infection is over?
  - Can homeopathy treat related, non-infectious illnesses, e.g., concurrent chronic diseases, grief, emotional shock, anger, depression, anxiety, fear?

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### Influenza + Homeopathy

1. Prevention
2. Treatment
3. Recovery
4. Concomitant illness

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## The History of Homeopathy in Epidemics

### Homeopathic prophylaxis

- Samuel Hahnemann during an outbreak of Scarlet Fever observed that 3 out of 4 children in a family became ill. The fourth, usually the sickest, remained free of the disease. She was being treated with homeopathic *Belladonna* for an affection of the finger joints. He deduced that this might have provided protection.
- In a family of 8 children, with 3 already infected with Scarlet Fever, Hahnemann gave the remaining 5 children *Belladonna*. These children remained disease-free despite continued exposure to their siblings.
- Homeopathic *Belladonna* adopted by the old-school physicians – 1646 children with only 123 cases (7.5% vs. 90% attack rate at that time).
- In 1838, the Prussian government made homeopathic *Belladonna* use obligatory during Scarlet Fever epidemics.

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## The History of Homeopathy in Epidemics

### Homeopathic treatment

- 1813 - Typhus fever – an epidemic that followed Napoleons army to Russia and back. When the epidemic came through Leipzig, as the army retreated, Samuel Hahnemann treated 180 cases of Typhus, losing 2 patients. Conventional mortality was greater than 30%.
- 1830 – Cholera – Hahnemann identified the stages of the illness from reports coming from the east and was able to predict the remedies needed for each stage of the disease. In Europe in 1831 the mortality rate under conventional Tx was 40% (Imperial council of Russia) - 80% (Osler's Practice of Medicine). 2-4 out of 5 people died.
  - Dr. Quin in London, reported mortality in 10 homeopathic hospitals as 9% (1931-32).
  - Dr. Roth, Bavaria, reported a mortality rate of 7% (homeopathy).
  - Admiral Mordoinow of the Imperial Russian Council – 10% mortality (homeopathy).
  - Austria: conventional mortality 66%, homeopathic mortality 33% (the law interdicting homeopathy was repealed).

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## The History of Homeopathy in Epidemics

### Homeopathic treatment

- 1849 Cholera -- Europe – conventional mortality 54-90%; homeopathy 5-16%
- 1854 – Cholera – London epidemic. The House of Commons report did not include homeopathic figures. The House of Lords asked for an explanation – might “skew” the results. Conventional mortality 59.2%; homeopathic mortality 9%.
- 1892 – Cholera – Hamburg – Conventional mortality 42%; homeopathy 15.5%.

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## The History of Homeopathy in Epidemics

### Homeopathic treatment

- 1850's Yellow fever (southern US).
  - Usual mortality 15-85% (Sir Wm. Osler)
  - Dr. Holcome (Natchez, Mississippi): mortality rate 6.43% (homeopathy)
  - Dr. Davis reported 5.73% mortality rate (homeopathy).
- 1878 Yellow fever New Orleans -- mortality 50% (conventional) and 5.6% (in 1,945 cases - homeopathy)

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## The History of Homeopathy in Epidemics

### Homeopathic treatment

- 1862-64 -- Diphtheria – Broome County NY – conventional 83.6% mortality; homeopathy 16.4% mortality
- 1957 --Polio epidemic in Buenos Aires, Argentina – the symptoms of the epidemic resembled those of the remedy *Lathyrus sativa*. Homeopathic doctors prescribed “thousands of doses” prophylactically. No cases of polio were registered by these physicians during the epidemic.

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## Homeopathic Remedies used in Prophylaxis/Treatment (historically)

Diphtheria	Apis, Diphth, Kali-m, Lac-c, Merc, Merc-cy, Phos
Pertussis	Carbo-v, Cupr, Dros, Formal, Pertussin
Tetanus	Arn, Clostrid, Tet, Hyper, Led, Phys, Tet Tox, Thuja
Polio	Bell, Cocc, Cur, Gels, Lath, Physostig, Polio
Smallpox	Ant-t, Colch, Hydras, Kali-cy, Maland, Sarr, Sin-n, Thuja, Vac, Vario, Sil
Measles	Acon, Ars, Ferr-p, Morbill, Puls-n, Puls-pr.
Mumps	Parotid, Piloc, Trif-r
Rubella	Puls, Rubella
Cholera	Ars, Camph, Choler, Cupr, Cupr-ac, Op, Sulph, Verat
Yellow fever	Ars, Caro-v, Crot-h, Eucal

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### Homeopathic Remedies used in Prophylaxis/Treatment (historically)

Plague/Typhus	Bapt, Hyos, Ign, Pest, Ruta
Malaria	Ars-I, caust, Cedr, Chin-s, Eup-per, Gels, Malar, Nat-m, Nux-v, Rhus, Sep, Sulph, Ter
Typhoid Fever	Aethi-m, Thyphoid
Tuberculosis	Bac, BCG, Carc, Dros, Sulph, Tub
Rabies	Bell, Camph, Canth, Hyos, Lyss, Scut, Stram
Scarlet Fever	Ail, Acon, Apis, Bar-c, Bell, Camph, Eucal, Phyt, Rhus-t, Scarlat, Sulph
Influenza	Acon, Apis, Bac, Bry, Carbo-v, Eucal, Eup-per, Formal, Gels, Influenz, Lach, Phos, Rhus-t, Sep, Sulph
Chickenpox	Varicella
Meningococcus	Arg-n, Bell, Chin, Mening.
Hepatitis	Hep. A, Hep B.

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### Homeopathic Approaches in an Epidemic

1. Nosodes
2. Genus epidemicus
3. Individualized remedies

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### Nosodes are

Homeopathic attenuations (dilution and succussion) of

- Pathological organs or tissues
- Causative agents such as bacteria, fungi, ova, parasites, virus particles and yeast
- Disease products
- Excretions or secretions

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### Nosodes – do they work to prevent disease?

- 1958 influenza epidemic in England, 1100 workers were given *Influenzinum* and 500 workers were given no treatment. No statistical difference in attack rate.
- 1974 Brazil during a Meningococcus outbreak, 18,640 patients were given *Meningococcinum* prophylaxis while 6,430 received no treatment.
  - Treatment group had 4 cases; no treatment group had 32 cases.
- 1932 *Diphtherinum* nosode converted 45 children to Schick test negative (antibodies to diphtheria). (Cavanon).
  - Repeated in 1941 – 23 of 33 children converted (Patterson and Boyd)
  - Repeated again in 1946 (Roux) with similar results.
  - Serum antibodies seemed to last up to 5 years with one dose.
- 1999 (Wayne Jonas) – *Tularemia nosode* (*Franciscella tularensis*) vs placebo vs allopathic vaccination in 142 mice that were subsequently infected with tularemia.
  - Results: Vaccination 100% protection; homeopathic nosode 22% protection compared to placebo.

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### Homeopathic Approaches in an Epidemic

1. Nosodes
2. Genus epidemicus
3. Individualized remedies

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### Genus Epidemicus remedy

- The remedy that fits the majority of patients in an epidemic
- 10-20 patients with the epidemic disease must be individualized for the Genus Epidemicus remedy
- The GE works as a preventive and as the remedy of choice in that epidemic
- The treatment of the epidemic disease is the only instance where a remedy is used to treat many patients

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## Genus Epidemicus remedy

- The role of the homeopathic community will be to coordinate prescribers to find the remedy or group of remedies that best fit the nature of the epidemic (i.e. the genus epidemicus)
- This may vary by region/province/country
- "The selection of the prophylactic remedy must, to some extent, be governed by the nature of the epidemic, and therefore the best preventive cannot always be determined until the epidemic has appeared, and its peculiar nature has been ascertained" (Dr. Carol Dunham)
- In smallpox, at least 12 different remedies found historically for prevention

In the Spanish flu:

- Four main remedies for genus epidemicus:
  - *Gelsemium*,
  - *Bryonia*,
  - *Eupatorium perfoliatum*,
  - *Rhus toxicodendron*

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## Gelsemium (Yellow Jasmine)

- Aching and sore
- Muscular weakness and trembling -- tongue, hands, legs, entire body
  - Lack of muscular coordination
- Can hardly keep eyes open, heavy
- Dull and drowsy
- Dizzy (vertigo)
- Chill running up and down the back
- Headache, from cervical spine extends upward over head, worse mental exertion
- Unusual symptoms:
  - Headache better with profuse urination
  - Fears heart will stop if patient stops moving
  - Children fear of falling -- grasp the nurse or crib




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## I felt as if I was in hell, says bird flu survivor

By Sebastien Berger in Srisomboon ©The Telegraph (Filed: 22/10/2005)

First her chickens died. Then her niece, coughing blood as she expired in her mother's arms.

A few days later her sister, the girl's mother, was dead and Pranom Thongchan was "in hell", lying in a hospital bed.

Her fever raging, she was so weak she could not move and was having difficulty breathing. She was hovering between life and death.

Mrs Thongchan is one of the few people in the world who can describe the devastation that the H5N1 bird flu virus wreaks on a human being.

She lives in the village of Srisomboon at the edge of Thailand's central plains, where a sea of lush green rice paddies begins to give way to the forested hills of the north.

The H5N1 virus, now endemic in south-east Asia, swept through the province's poultry last year, killing the 10 or so chickens Mrs Thongchan kept to supplement the family's meagre income as tenant tapioca farmers.

A few days later her niece Sakuntala, 11, one of five children in the house, fell ill. "She came back from school and suddenly she got a high fever," said 35-year-old Mrs Thongchan. "It was just like a normal fever that all children get so we just gave her paracetamol." The village doctor prescribed another fever-reducing medicine and Sakuntala went to school for another five days as her temperature fell and rose again. On the sixth day she had stomach ache and nausea.

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"I wasn't worried at the time but then the symptoms developed into something quite serious," Mrs Thongchan said. "She could not breathe properly." At the district hospital she was put on a drip and the next day an X-ray showed, in the words of a relative, that "a piece of her lung disappeared". In fact, fluid was building up in the organ.

Her sister Pranee Sodchoen, Sakuntala's mother, travelled from Bangkok, where she works, to look after the child.

Sakuntala was moved to a larger hospital, but on her way to visit her Mrs Thongchan was told she had died.

"By the time she arrived at the hospital she had no lungs," she said. "It happened so fast. She was coughing intensely just before she died. It was at the last moment, blood just kept coming out. Her mother saw her daughter in pain so she tried to soothe her, held her, hugged and kissed her daughter." At the time dengue fever, a mosquito-borne infection, was thought to have killed her, but three days later, at Sakuntala's funeral, Mrs Sodchoen started to feel sick. "It was like a normal fever, normal headache, and dizziness," Mrs Thongchan said. "We asked for paracetamol at the cremation ceremony." Three days afterwards Mrs Sodchoen, 27, a little better but with the fever lingering, went back to her home in Nonthaburi, outside Bangkok. "She had a smile on her face and looked like normal." Two days later she was in intensive care. At the same time, Mrs Thongchan had fallen ill. "I felt a little bit of fever and my body ached," she said.

Two days later she developed a headache. "I started to worry, so I took paracetamol and the fever went away." Then it returned, so severely that she took a five-day course of tablets in a single night, without effect.

"I thought, 'What's happening to me now? I can't stand this for a week, it's too much torture.' " In Bangkok her sister's condition was deteriorating, but two days later Mrs Thongchan felt well enough to go to market.

"That evening when I came back it was like extreme fever. I felt dizzy and faint. My hands turned pale; it seemed like there was no blood in my body. The next morning I hardly had the energy to walk. I had to crawl out of bed and I felt as if my body was starving." After queuing at the district hospital she was given flu medication and sent home. That evening she started coughing.

"I knew inside myself it was getting worse, and that night I heard my sister had died in Bangkok. I was worried but I couldn't speak to anybody because I didn't want to scare them. I didn't think I was going to die. I tried not to think that way." The next night she was weaker still, and said she "coughed until my intestines were moving. It really hurt".

Alerted by her sister testing positive for H5N1 and dreading the possibility of human-to-human infection and the beginning of a pandemic, specialists from Bangkok travelled north and examined her the next day.

"They separated everybody from me," she said. "I had a fever all the time, feeling cold and shivering and shaking. I couldn't bear it any more.

"I said to the doctor, 'Just do whatever you want to do because I feel I am going to die.' " She was transferred to a provincial hospital and moved to a hastily prepared isolation unit.

"By that time I was so weak I could not get up," she said. "I felt like my heart was going to stop beating. I felt so exhausted I did not have the energy to speak or pay attention to anything. I felt as if I had been running for days or years and I could not breathe.

"It was so tiring and exhausting. I had no energy left in my body, almost no life.

"I felt as if I was in hell." She remained in that condition for six days, wearing an oxygen mask, on a drip, and taking powerful drugs every four hours. On the seventh the fever broke and she was able to eat half a rambutan fruit.

"The next day I felt brand new," she said. "I could take a deep breath for the first time. Three days after that I could stand up, walk a little bit, and put a smile on my face." A few days later she went home. "I thought I would be weaker but after three months I felt normal." This week Thai authorities said the country had suffered its first bird flu death this year after a man in Kanchanaburi province slaughtered and ate a neighbour's sick chickens. His seven-year-old son is seriously ill.

The key to whether a pandemic will happen is whether the virus mutates into a form that is easily transmissible between humans and remains virulent.

Mrs Sodchoen is considered the most likely case in the world of the unmutated virus passing between people as she was more than 100 miles away when the chickens fell ill. In most family clusters of the disease all members have been exposed to birds as well as each other.

Nonetheless the extreme proximity involved - as well as Mrs Sodchoen's actions as her daughter died, both older women shared the girl's bed in hospital, standard practice in Thailand where families are expected to provide patients' basic care themselves - shows how difficult it is for the virus to pass between humans.

Thai authorities are taking the virus seriously and this week specialists from the bureau of epidemiology took samples from 200 villagers in Srisomboon as part of a research project.

While Mrs Thongchan has recovered - "I feel normal, as if I had never been ill," she said - some things have changed, beyond the loss of two family members. There is no poultry at her simple wooden house. Instead four puppies play in the dirt.

"I don't want to have chickens any more," she said. "I don't have a lot but it is not worth it happening again."

### Individualized remedies

- Availability of trained, experienced homeopathic practitioners
- Transportation vs. telephone consultations
- Needed to find the *genus epidemicus*

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Do we need homeopathy in view of a possible Avian Influenza (H5N1) pandemic?




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### Avian Influenza H5N1

- In many patients, the disease caused by the H5N1 virus follows an unusually aggressive clinical course, with rapid deterioration and high fatality.
- The current clinical picture of infection could change
- Incubation period ranging from two to eight days and possibly as long as 17 days.
- high fever, usually with a temperature higher than 38°C
- Diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain, chest pain, and bleeding from the nose and gums have also been reported as early symptoms in some patients




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### Avian Influenza H5N1

- In two patients from southern Viet Nam, the clinical diagnosis was acute encephalitis; neither patient had respiratory symptoms at presentation.
- In Thailand, one patient presented with fever and diarrhoea, but no respiratory symptoms.
- Lower respiratory tract symptoms early in the illness.
- Difficulty in breathing at five days following the first symptoms. Respiratory distress, a hoarse voice, and a crackling sound when inhaling are commonly seen. Sputum production is variable and sometimes bloody. Almost all patients develop pneumonia.
- Primary viral pneumonia, which does not respond to antibiotics.
- Clinical deterioration is rapid – multi-organ involvement




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### Available conventional drug therapy

#### Tamiflu (WHO website)

- Limited evidence suggests that some neuraminidase inhibitors, notably oseltamivir (commercially known as Tamiflu), can reduce the duration of viral replication and improve prospects of survival, provided they are administered within 48 hours following symptom onset.
- However, given the significant mortality currently associated with H5N1 infection and evidence of prolonged viral replication in this disease, administration of the drug should also be considered in patients presenting later in the course of illness.
- The recommended dose of oseltamivir for the treatment of influenza, in adults and adolescents 13 years of age and older, is 150 mg per day, given as 75 mg twice a day for five days. Oseltamivir is not indicated for the treatment of children younger than one year of age.
- As the duration of viral replication may be prolonged in cases of H5N1 infection, clinicians should consider increasing the duration of treatment to seven to ten days in patients who are not showing a clinical response. In cases of severe infection with the H5N1 virus, clinicians may need to consider increasing the recommended daily dose or the duration of treatment, keeping in mind that doses above 300 mg per day are associated with increased side effects.

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### Available conventional drug therapy

#### Tamiflu (WHO website)

- In severely ill H5N1 patients or in H5N1 patients with severe gastrointestinal symptoms, drug absorption may be impaired.
- There have been cases in Southeast Asia where patients were treated with Tamiflu early in the course of the disease but still died. Much is still unknown about the correct dosages, duration of treatment, and eventual resistance levels to these drugs.
- No medication, either prescription or non-prescription, has been tested in a clinical trial for efficacy against H5N1 infection in humans, mainly because of the small number of identified patients to date.
- Cochrane collaboration: In seasonal influenza, Tamiflu reduces symptoms. Return to work by 0.16 days. It does reduce viral shedding from the nose in seasonal influenza (?during a pandemic with higher viral loads), but continues to allow transmission. At double dose, Tamiflu prevented lower respiratory tract complications.

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### Available conventional drug therapy

#### Tamiflu

- Cochrane collaboration: In seasonal influenza, Tamiflu reduces symptoms. Return to work by 0.16 days. It does reduce viral shedding from the nose in seasonal influenza (?during a pandemic with higher viral loads), but continues to allow transmission. At double dose, Tamiflu prevented lower respiratory tract complications.
- "Current evidence from seasonal influenza trials led us to urge caution in making forecasts of possible impact of neuraminidase inhibitor use in any other epidemiological context."

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### Available conventional drug therapy

#### Vaccination

- 4-6 month lag period using current production methods, limited supply, essential people first, delivery problems
- Effectiveness (elderly, healthy, infants, other diseases present), safety issues, side-effects

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### Available homeopathic drug therapy

1. Oscillococcinum
2. Influenzinum
3. Genus epidemicus

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### Available homeopathic drug therapy

1. Oscillocochinum
2. Influenzinum
3. Genus epidemicus

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### Oscillocochinum®



Oscillocochinum is made from wild duck heart and liver, which are said to be reservoirs for influenza virus. Potentized by standard method to 200 CH.

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### Oscillocochinum®



Cochrane Collaboration -- a meta-analysis of the data from seven controlled trials

- The authors concluded that the when used in treatment, *Oscillocochinum* and *similar homeopathic remedies* reduced the duration of illness by 0.28 days. (Note: anti-virals only reduce illness duration by about 1 day and return to work by ½ day)
- The medicine also increased the chance that the patient considered the treatment effective, compared to the patients treated with a placebo.
- The authors found no evidence, however, that homeopathic remedies are effective in preventing influenza illness.

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## Oscillococcinum®



### Summary

- “Though promising, the data were not strong enough to make a general recommendation to use *Oscillococcinum* for first-line treatment of influenza and influenza-like syndromes. Further research is warranted but the required sample sizes are large.”

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## Oscillococcinum® RESEARCH

1. Double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, multi-center trial of 100 patients Casanova et al, Centre de Recherche et de Documentation Technique, University of Marseilles, France; 1983

### Results

Chills: 87.7% reduction vs. 57.1% with placebo  
 Stiffness: 72.5% reduction vs. 41.9% with placebo  
 Fever: 79.1% reduction vs. 40.0% with placebo  
 Nasal discharge unaffected  
 80.0% of patients treated with Oscillococcinum reported a successful outcome vs. 38.0%,  $p=0.001$

2. Double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, multi-center trial of 300 patients Casanova et al, Centre de Recherche et de Documentation Technique, University of Marseilles, France; 1985

### Results at day 2

Fever was significantly lower in the Oscillococcinum group than in the placebo group ( $P<0.05$ )

### Results at day 4

55.0% of patients treated with Oscillo reported no chills vs. 26.5% with placebo ( $P<0.001$ )  
 70.0% of treated patients reported no aches and pains vs. 48.0% with placebo ( $p<0.001$ )

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3. Double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, multi-center trial of 478 patients Ferley JP, Zmirou, D'Adhemar D, Balducci E, "A Controlled evaluation of a homeopathic preparation in the treatment of influenza-like syndromes". British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, 1989, 27; 329-335.

### Results

Full recovery from flu symptoms within 48 hours was 66.0% greater in the Oscillococcinum group than in the placebo group. ( $p=0.03$ )  
 61.2% of patients in the active drug group had favorable impression on the efficacy of treatment vs. 49.3% in placebo group. ( $p=0.02$ )

4. Double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, multi-center trial of 372 patients Papp R, Shuback G, Beck E, Burjard G, Bengel J, Lehri S, Belon P "Oscillococcinum in patients with influenza like syndromes: a placebo controlled double-blind evaluation." British Homeopathic Journal. April 1998, Vol. 87, pp 69-76.

### Results

The clinical trial showed that Oscillococcinum has a positive effect on the decline of symptoms and on the duration of the disease.  
 At 48 hours, 62.9% of patients treated with Oscillococcinum showed "clear improvement" vs. 48.5% in placebo group ( $p=0.03$ ).

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### Available homeopathic drug therapy

1. Oscillococcinum
2. Influenzinum
3. Genus epidemicus

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### Influenzinum

- A homeopathic preparation formulated out of a re-updated influenza vaccine
- Each year the WHO information for the upcoming vaccine is used to reformulate the new potentized remedy.
- One dose weekly for four doses, then another dose in 1 month's time (total 5 doses)

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### Influenzinum

#### RESEARCH (source unspecified)

- 100 patients, 60% women, average age 47
- **Before treatment:** 82% subjects had flu or similar infection each winter
- **After treatment** (one dose per week x 4, plus one dose one month later)
  - First winter: 11% had flu or cold; 11% rhinitis
  - Second winter: 6% flu or cold; 9% rhinitis

In 1998, the French Society of Homeopathy conducted a survey of 23 homeopathic doctors concerning their use of homeopathic medicine Influenzinum as flu preventive.

- Use of Influenzinum over a 10-year period (1987-1998) in 453 patients.
- In approximately 90% of the cases no instances of the flu occurred when Influenzinum was used preventively.
- Physicians deemed its effectiveness good to very good in 90% of the cases, and not effective in 5% of the cases.

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### Available homeopathic drug therapy

1. Oscillococcinum
2. Influenzinum
3. Genus epidemicus

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### Genus epidemicus

Validity is dependent upon history of use in epidemics and efficacy of individual remedies in general treatment, i.e. does homeopathy really work?

#### BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL 1991

Clinical Trials of Homeopathy. (J. Kleijnen, Pk.Knipschild, and Gerban ter Riet. *BMJ* 302. Feb. 1991: 316-323)

- 25 years of studies reviewed
- 81 of 107 studies showed significant benefits with homeopathy

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### Positive results in homeopathic trials ...

(Clinical Trials of Homeopathy. J. Kleijnen, Pk.Knipschild, and Gerban ter Riet. *BMJ* 302. Feb. 1991: 316-323)

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| • Respiratory infections .....            | 13 of 19 trials |
| • Other infections --                     | 6 of 7          |
| • Digestive system diseases -- ..         | 5 of 7          |
| • Hayfever --                             | 5 of 5          |
| • Faster recovery after abdominal surgery | 5 of 7          |
| • Rheumatological disease --              | 4 of 6          |
| • Pain of trauma -- .....                 | 18 of 20        |
| • Mental or psychological symptoms        | 8 of 10         |
| • Various diagnoses -                     | 13 of 15        |

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**Antiviral Efficacy of Homeopathic Drugs Against Animal Viruses.** L.M. Singh and G. Gupta, *British Homeopathic Journal*, 74 (July 1985): 168-174.

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1. Research supporting the use of *Oscillocochinum* and *Influenzinum* in an epidemic is very limited.
2. Based on this lack of evidence, neither can be relied upon as first line prevention or treatment.
3. Research and clinical experience support the use of homeopathy as a therapeutic modality.
4. Historical evidence supports the use of homeopathy in epidemic situations.
5. The *Genus epidemicus* and individually prescribed homeopathic remedies should be considered among the first line of prevention/treatment methods during an epidemic.





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