

## The Use of Homeopathic Remedies by the Chiropractic Physician

Jonice Owen, DC,FACO,Chom

Chiropractic doctors are experts in the treatment of musculoskeletal and nervous systems, and in aiding their patients' healing by stimulation of the nervous and immune systems. We are known for our ability to deliver high-quality, high-contact treatment. As a method of primary health care delivery, we do not render services that include the use of prescriptive medications or surgical interventions. However, many chiropractic doctors offer natural adjunctive therapies, regimes and supplementation proven to effectively augment chiropractic treatment. Homeopathic medicine is included in this list.

The homeopathic system seeks to enhance the body's self-defense mechanism by introducing a substance that, when given in a highly dilute, succussed (vigorously pounded) and "dynamized" dosage to a healthy person, will produce the same symptoms the ailing individual is experiencing; this is the "like-cures-like" premise of homeopathy. This eradicating type of treatment seeks expression and discharge of the symptoms. Understanding this principle will aid in understanding the action of homeopathic remedies. In contrast, modern pharmaceuticals are directed against symptoms, temporarily suppressing the system with the danger of more severe disease later.

Homeopathy is a wonderful, natural adjunct to chiropractic care, both in the acute and rehabilitative phase of musculoskeletal injury treatment. In the acute phases, homeopathy aids in pain relief and improved healing time, and may address the emotional components of the injury.

Following injury, the most common remedy given to patients is *arnica montana*. It is used chiefly for injury, strain or overexertion. "It may be said to be the traumatic *par excellence*."<sup>1</sup> An additional benefit of arnica following an injury is better resolution, with reduced tissue congestion and a higher quality of fibrotic repair tissue. A sore, bruised feeling is commonly reported following injuries, a symptom associated with arnica. It should not be used where there is broken skin; for torn and lacerated wounds, one should apply calendula ointment or lotion.

Remedies commonly used following arnica are: *rhus toxicodendron*; *ruta graveolens*; *bryonia alba*; *pulsatilla nigricans*; *hypericum perforatum*; and *bellis perennis*. All in this group of homeopathic remedies are gathered from the plant kingdom.

Potency or remedy strength: In addition to the numerous remedies available, we have a large choice of strengths and forms of the remedies. For use following injuries, I recommend using a 30C (diluted 30 times by a factor of 100) potency of the remedy. This is readily available from health food stores and homeopathic suppliers. If the injury is severe, 200C may be better suited to the intensity of the injury signs and symptoms. Many homeopathic companies advise taking a homeopathic remedy in the acute phase in the following dosage: three to five pellets, three to five times per day for two to three days. In very painful states, some individuals may take the remedy hourly. Once the pain and symptoms subside or lessen, remedy frequency is reduced.

Rule of thumb: When the remedy no longer works, or different symptoms become prominent, a

different remedy may need to be taken.

### Selecting Homeopathic Remedies

The best remedy selection will occur after obtaining specific information from the patient. First, determine the quality of the pain, or a description of the sensations being experienced (i.e., sharp; dull; achy; stinging; burning; etc.). Second, obtain the prominent location of the pain, also called the "area of affinity" (i.e., muscle; cartilage; nerve; cervical region; hip region; left side; right side; etc.). Third, obtain information regarding the circumstances that make the patient or injured area feel better or worse, also called a "modality" (i.e., being left alone, still or unmoving; moving or stretching the area; applying ice or heat; etc.).

*Arnica* is the initial remedy most often used in injury. In some cases, continued use is recommended. It has an affinity for blood, blood vessels, nerves and muscles. Its sensation is usually described as achy or sore pain. Its modalities are worse after injuries, touch and motion, and better lying with the head low or the injured part outstretched. It is commonly used in physical and emotional shock. An extreme "arnica state," or situation necessitating the use of arnica, occurs following a particularly severe injury. The injured person just wants to be left alone, saying "I'm OK," even when it's obvious he or she should seek some type of emergency treatment.

*Rhus toxicodendron* has affinities that include ligaments, fibrous joints, the spinal cord (and its nerves) and the sciatic nerve. Its sensation may be shooting; stitching; tearing; sore; bruised; or stiff-type pain. Its modalities are worse with exposure to wet, cold air, chills and drafts. They are worse on beginning motion and better with continued motion, heat (wraps and baths), rubbing and stretching. The movement displayed appears creaky, much like a rusty gate.

*Ruta graveolens* has an affinity for the fibrous connective tissues, such as flexor tendons, joints, wrists and ankles, lumbar spine, cartilage and perisoteum. Its sensations include a bruised; sore; aching; heavy; or restless feeling. Its modalities are worse from overexertion (eyestrain, injury, sprains); all types of cold (air, wind, damp, wet applications); lying; and sitting. It is better used when the patient is lying on the back, applying warmth and moving the area. This is a remedy commonly used in overuse of the wrists and repetitive stress and strain injuries. If other areas are injured, a weak feeling or inability to use them is commonly reported.

*Bryonia alba* has an affinity for the serous membrane of the head; chest; joints; abdomen; right side; liver; and lymphatic tissue. Its sensations are sharp, catching or bursting pain with the least movement. Its modality is worse with the least motion: stooping; exertion; coughing; and breathing in (rib pain). It is worse when becoming overheated, agitated or angry, and better with pressure to the injured area; pressing bandaging the injured area; cool, open air; or on quiet, cloudy or damp days. The injured person usually feels or acts rather irritable. His or her family members may tell you about it, or you may observe a normally pleasant patient becoming gruff and grouchy, overly irritated, or in too much pain to answer or even think about questions.

*Pulsatilla nigricans* has an affinity for the mind, mucous membranes and veins. Its sensations are markedly shifting or changing. The painful symptoms constantly change location. The modalities are worse with warmth (room, air, clothes, bed, applications) and better with fresh, cold, open air; uncovering the injured area; erect posture; and gentle continued motion. The injured person is usually better after a good cry, and this is a wonderful remedy for a patient who is thrown into a crying, emotional state after the injury and needs emotional support. The behavior of the "pulsatilla state" is recognized by its weeping and clinging tendencies. This patient needs great emotional support from the family, the chiropractic support staff and the chiropractic physician.

*Hypericum perforatum* has the sensation of very sore, painful parts, intolerably violent, shooting, stabbing pain along nerves, and numbness. Its areas of affinity are the spinal nerves, coccygeal nerves, and tips of the fingers and toes. Usually its sensations are described as very painful, sore parts and intolerable, violent, shooting, burning or tingling pain along nerves. The pain often extends out from the injured area and shoots upward, as in the case of a pratfall, where pain will shoot up the back. In the case of hypertension or hyperflexion cervical injury, the pain may shoot from the neck up to the head or out to the arms.

*Bellis perennis* has an affinity with the blood vessels; nerves; spleen; joints; left side; and to deeper tissues. Its sensations are bruised, sore and fatigued. Its modalities are worse after an injury or sprain, touch, cold baths or becoming chilled when hot, and when hot, and better with continued motion and local cold application. It may be indicated when there is a "seat belt" type injury or blow to the abdominal or pelvic area. "If it's hard to tell if it's arnica, ruta or rhus tox... bellis perennis covers all of these aspects."<sup>3</sup>

Preferred homeopathic remedy application: I prefer the following method for repeated use of a homeopathic remedy: Take several pellets of the selected remedy and place them in a dropper bottle, filling it with water. Once the pellets dissolve, shake the bottle vigorously, 10 times. Administer a dropper full of the solution, under the tongue. When a dose is repeated, shake the same solution vigorously 10 times and repeat. This method continues to invigorate or "dynamize" the remedy, and the same solution may be used for two to three days.

This has been an overview of several readily available homeopathic remedies. If further homeopathic support is warranted once the subacute phase is completed, a more comprehensive list of homeopathic remedies and strengths should be considered.

### References

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Jonice M. Owen, DC, FACO, CHom  
Emeryville, California  
[owendc@mindspring.com](mailto:owendc@mindspring.com)  
[www.jowenchiro.com](http://www.jowenchiro.com)

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