

Letter to Editor

The approach to headache of the adult-elderly patient in an Italian homeopathic surgery: The rules of the visit according to Hahnemannian uniqueness

Valerio Massimo Magro

From, Department of Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Naples, Italy.

ABSTRACT

Headache is a disorder that can also be disabling. Although the prevalence declines with age, headache remains a common neurologic complaint among elderly people. Homeopathy, by not suppressing, facilitates the free transit of the healing current from the inside to the surface (temporary aggravation), so that a harmonious balance is restored and healing is, this time, lasting. This is why it benefits from the homeopathic remedy. The choice of remedy is a delicate and difficult moment. We discuss taking care of the elderly patient afflicted by headaches through a homeopathic evaluation of the symptoms and of the patient as a whole, through a methodology that ultimately leads to the choice of the only homeopathic remedy that will constitute the patient's therapy, by reviewing the various characteristics of homeopathic remedies or better of the headaches caused by them, in order to then obtain the simillimum.

Keywords: Homeopathy, Simillimum, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Evidence-based Medicine, Elderly People.

Dear Sir,

We have had the opportunity to read the review by Lingeswaran R on the basis of homeopathic treatment, governed by the law of similar [1] and we have certainly read and appreciated the work of Green and Owen to carry out an interesting review of the works that have investigated the treatment of headache through homeopathic medicine [2].

If on the one hand, the method of bringing homeopathy back to a concept of evidence-based medicine through the search for clinical studies appears commendable, we believe this to be at the same time one of the weak points of homeopathy, which is detached from allopathy precisely due to a methodology that does not it is based only on the "malaise-remedy" combination, but sees this as a piece of a much more complex puzzle that tends to individualize

the cure on the basis of rules that are difficult to subject to EBM.

Headache is a disorder that can also be disabling. Allopathic medicine (International Classification of Headache Disorders, created by the International Headache Society - IHS) has studied headaches by organizing them into a very complex classification, which explains the complexity of the topic [3, 4]. Although the prevalence declines with age, headache remains a common neurologic complaint among elderly people. The analytical attitude of allopathic medicine identifies a localized pathological process in the headache; a disease that, once treated in a targeted way, with an elective therapy, disappears and returns the person to a state of health. Homeopathic medicine deviates significantly from this concept, since the morbid localization is a sign of disease, not the disease itself. As the arrival of an infection presupposes the occurrence in the individual of a fall of his defenses (of

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Correspondence to: Dr. Valerio Massimo Magro, Homeopathic Physician, Echocardiography Unit, Department of Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Piazza L. Miraglia 2, 80100, Naples, Italy. **Email:** valerio_magro@hotmail.com

which the germ can take advantage), so the decrease of the homeostatic functions of the Immune, nervous and endocrine system (we speak of Psycho-Neuro-Endocrine-Immunology, PNEI) makes the explosion possible in the subject of the disease [5].

Hahnemann's method. In this regard, Hahnemann, in paragraph 16 of the Organon, speaks of Vital Energy, that is, of a dynamic spiritual principle that harmonizes the parts in the whole, stabilizes and vivifies the person [6]. The conclusion is that, when a perturbation of the Vital Energy occurs - which today, far from the era in which Hahnemann lived, would be defined as a depressed psychic, humoral and metabolic situation -, it is created in a particular terrain (homeopathic constitution) condition that, in a predisposed person, leads to the establishment of a state of illness [7, 8]. The disease that will develop will depend on the particular predisposition of the subject to develop a certain type of pathology (predominant miasma).

Illness is the expression of the subject's perturbed vital state, which tries to return to a state of balance. In fact, a natural ability (*vix medicatrix naturae*) to go towards health is inherent in man. Hence, the concept of healing arises immediately after that of illness. The purpose of the doctor is to restore health to the sick, that is, to heal them (paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Organon): such healing is obtained upon returning to the state of health by going through the state of illness [9-11]. So, the allopathic and homeopathic approach to pathology is different than the homeopathic method: by disregarding this concept of soil, we are raging against the morbid localization, ignoring that it is nothing more than the intensification of a vital process that has the purpose of fixing, materializing and finally solving an imbalance.

Any therapeutic action that acts at the local level - therefore, sectorally -, without taking this into account, ends up suppressing a manifestation that, with its exemptionary character, has a positive purpose (that of "throwing out", in fact), ending up by deepening what the body tried to make more superficial, centrifugal, aggravating the state of disease, causing the future reappearance of symptoms (non-lasting healing) and the appearance over time of other morbid manifestations (homeopathic metastases), in plans always deeper, as has been said, with the denting of ever more noble functions of the human body (paragraphs 23 and 38 of the Organon). Homeopathy, by not suppressing, facilitates the free transit of the healing current from the inside to the surface (temporary aggravation), so that a harmonious balance is restored and healing is, this time, lasting. This is why it benefits from the homeopathic remedy. The choice of

remedy is a delicate and difficult moment. From the above, being the pathology that the patient reports - the headache, in this case - not the actual disease but only a part of the whole, of the real disease, it is clear that the homeopathic doctor, in the search for the simillimum, he will have to look at the individual as a whole, to arrive at the suitable remedy for that individual (medicated individuality): therefore, we will try to treat that patient with headache and not the patient with that particular type of headache. In other words, we will try to treat that patient who has a headache and not the patient's headache.

The research of the simillimum in the patient with headache. The postulate is that there is no headache but several people, each with their own particular headache. One of these will be the patient who will be treated by the doctor. As each handshake differs from the others not only by the physical characteristics of the hands that shake, but also by the way in which the handshake takes place and by the mental attitude of those who shake the hand, so a patient with a pathology - headache, in this case - must be characterized in its entirety. The individual will therefore be studied, through the homeopathic anamnesis and physical examination, paying attention to his signs and symptoms (general and local symptoms and signs, in order of importance) and how they are characterized (modalization) in the individual himself (paragraph 18 of the Organon).

The simillimum is the homeopathic remedy which, if given in the healthy subject (proving), evokes the same symptoms that characterize the patient and which, administered to it, is able, if the Vital Energy is sufficient, to restore the altered balance [12]. The homeopathic doctor, at this stage, must take the symptoms of the patient into great consideration, leaving aside those of the disease. Local symptoms will therefore be collected, modalizing them according to what will emerge from the interview; the general symptoms (as shown below) and, very important, the mental symptoms concerning the subject's psychism will be modalized, finally choosing, among the wide range of reported symptoms, only the minimum number of symptoms of maximum value (i.e. very marked ones, well characterized and above all peculiar to that person).

In compliance with the minimum maximum value syndrome (for Hering at least three are needed), at least one symptom, the most important in choosing among the many remedies that the homeopathic doctor can resort to, must be mental. Mental symptoms in fact represent the true symptoms pertinent to Vital Energy. Generally, they lie concealed and showing them allows the patient's real

picture to appear. Each remedy has its own individuality, not to mention its own personality, to bring out during the homeopathic interrogation, whatever the disease is traditionally understood allopathically, as in this case the headaches, that you want to treat [13, 14]. Remedies and headache. Aconitum is an emotionally and mentally tense; the terror of the suddenness of the affection from which he is caught terrifies him so much as to make him fear death. Antimonium Crudum is a gloomy, contradictory one who does not like to speak.

He has lost the desire to live out of boredom in life. Prone to sadness and anger when receiving attention, even small ones. Argentum Nitricum, generally calm, reveals himself, in view of a deadline, an agitated, a frenetic, always worried about not having time to do everything he has to do. It is, together with Gelsemium, the "exam remedy". Arsenicum Album is characterized by anxiety and anguish, with great prostration. Aurum Metallicum goes from being a balanced person (stenic phase) to depression, melancholy, guilt and self-condemnation, to suicide (asthenic phase).

Belladonna is a sanguine, vital, from acute senses to hypersensitivity, irritability, violence, delirium. Bryonia is the "accountant", the worker, worried about the future and poverty, obstinate, stubborn, angry, anxious, always looking for certainty, stability. Carbo Vegetalis is an asthenic, physically and mentally, lazy, indifferent, without interests. China, on the other hand, is anxious as soon as he is awake, hyper-reactive mentally oriented towards irritability; intolerant to mental effort, he quickly passes to the asthenic phase, much longer, in which tiredness, apathy, the sense of persecution dominate.

Offea is excited, chattering, cheerful, nervous, sleepless, very sensitive to pain. Gelsemium is physically and morally softened, apprehensive. Ignatia is the wounded man, who withdraws in silence to pamper his own hurt feeling. The emotionally unstable up to the contradiction. Ipeca is capricious, pouting, impatient, contemptuous. Kali Bichromicum is in a bad mood, depressed, misanthropic, does not like meeting strangers and strangers. Lachesis is the great excluded, who reacts to this exclusion, depending on the personality: quiet, bashful, lazy, or aggressive, envious, paranoid subject. Mercurius is arrogant, selfish, impatient, hurried, impulsive in the stenic phase, while in the asthenic phase he is depressed, deconcentrated, absent-minded, absent, anxious, discouraged, full of remorse. Natrum Muriaticum is a resentful, resentful, indignant, unable to vent his aggression, who broods and avenges, sulks and cries about past events. Nux Vomica is compared to a "pissed off and

baleful Mr. Precisetti" (observation by Dujani R). Pulsatilla is changeable and variable.

Sepia is irritable and depressed and feels easily attacked, tends to prefer tranquility and loneliness, with an aversion to the profession, family and sex. Silicea suffers from a lack of vital heat, often compliant and indecisive; very scrupulous, for fear of failure she does not willingly take responsibility. Physically and psychically stressed by intellectual work. Sometimes very irritable. Staphysagria is the outraged, the frustrated, the wounded by an injustice, an insult, an unfortunate love, to which he reacts violently with anger and violence. Although less important than mental symptoms, general and local symptoms will also be well characterized, through patient and well-conducted interrogation. The characterization of different types of headache is shown below, indicating the guiding symptoms that characterize many homeopathic remedies [15-17].

Headache can occasionally arise: due to the cold (Glonoinum: headache in the temples, on wet and rainy days, the patient feels the heart "throbbing" in the head); after surmenage (Nux Vomica; Antimonium Crudum: pain after consumption of acidic food, attenuated after vomiting or diarrheal crisis); excess smoke (Ignatia); after cold bath (Antimonium crudum: headache with / without vomiting or nosebleeds, improved by lying down in a cool place); from constipation (Alumina: improvement with the regularity of evacuations); recent (Arnica) or previous (Natrium Sulfuricum) head injury; traveling (Petroleum; Cocculus); sun exposure (Glonoinum; Natrium Muriaticum); menstruation or hemorrhoidal bleeding (Lachesis Mutus); sexual intercourse (Phosphoric Acidum: sensation that the head is about to burst, after sexual intercourse, worsened by movement, noise, cough and heat, on the side of the head resting on the pillow; Staphysagria: sensation of "full head").

Headache can also arise as a consequence of other (physio-) pathological states. Example: after tiredness (Calcarea Phosphorica: the adolescent quickly grew in height. Pain worsens with concentration in the study; Natrium Muriaticum: after intellectual effort, starting with visual disturbances and flashes of light; Kali Phosphoricum: after stress from study or work, with a strong feeling of exhaustion and without ability to react; Gelsemium: after strong emotion, a fright.

Associated with tremors of arms and legs and desire for tranquility); anaemia (China: beating headache, worsened by movement, exposure to the sun, mental efforts, closing the eyes, improved by holding the head in the hands. Great

hair sensitivity; Ferrum Metallicum: anemia with apparent well-being, headache with throbbing pain, red face and cold feet, which worsens with abrupt and violent movements - going down the running stairs -, mental efforts, after 24:00. Improves in the open air), for the presence of menstruations (at the beginning of the cycle, Lachesis: severe pain in the head that improves at the beginning of the menstrual period; Lac Caninum: pain before the menstrual period with migraine alternating left and right.

During the cycle, Sepia: headache with abundant menstruation Actea Racemosa: frontal species headache that worsens during menstruation and improves with a cold cloth on the head. If menstruation does not appear, Pulsatilla: headache when skipping the cycle); in menopause (appearance at the beginning of menopause: Lachesis: congested, red face, with a feeling that the head is about to burst, strong and intrusive character; Sepia: pallor in the face and accentuated pain in the left eye, indifferent and apathetic character); in case of difficult digestion, without (Antimonium Crudum: appearance after excess food, with eructations with the taste of ingested food, whitish tongue, diarrhea; Ipeca: headache, nausea and vomiting that does not cause relief, clean tongue and abundant salivation ; Pulsatilla: headache after indigestion of pastries, candied foods, fats, ice cream, coffee, chamomile) and with aerophagia (Argentum Nitricum: headache with air in the stomach, frequent regurgitation, worsening after eating sugars and contrariety; Carbo Vegetalis: mal swollen head and belly, regurgitation reduces swelling); with the presence of stomach pain (Argentum Nitricum; Kali Bichromicum: pain under the right orbit, worsens during the day and improves in the evening, with a strong sense of stomach acid; Arsenicum Album: after food poisoning, with abdominal burning that improves with heat application on the stomach); in presence of diarrhea (Podophyllum: headache gets worse when evacuations improve), hypertension (headache that worsens in the heat in the sun in the mountains, with red face: Glonoinum; Lachesis: same, in menopausal women.

Headache that worsens in the same conditions, without red face: Baryta Carbonica), sinusitis (Belladonna; Kali Bichromicum: violent headache, fluid, yellowish or green nasal secretions; Mercurius Solubilis: bacterial overlap after cold, with violent pain, like a grip on the head, more at night and lying down, better in the open air, greenish drainage irritating the upper lip, intense salivation, halitosis, swollen tongue; Silicea: thin subjects with chronic sinusitis), dental malocclusion (Arnica: headache with head congestion and cold body rest, dizziness and nausea with closed eyes; Cuprum: masticatory muscle

spasm headache; Hypericum Perforatum: throbbing headache, beginning at the head and ending above the eyes), cervical arthrosis (Bryonia; Dulcamara: headache from wet climate, after having wet the head or the sea, extended to the neck muscles; Gelsemium; Ignatia: after an adversity, with nervous spasms, aggressiveness and changeable mood, improved by distraction; Colocynthis: pains along the nerves of the face and head, which make the patient nervous; Magnesia Phosphorica: like Colocynthis, but the patient does not get nervous), anxiety (Aconitum: headache with anxiety and fear of dying during feverish illness, physical and mental agitation; Gelsemium; Argentum Nitricum: after prolonged effort or waiting for an important appointment, with/without digestive disorders; Ignatia: migraine after a displeasure, with a lump in the throat, a nail in the head, with triggering from smoking and contradictory symptoms; Staphysagria: frontal headache feeling mistreated or after sexual frustration), depression (Arsenicum Album: agitation and anxiety that worsen around 3, with a feeling that everything is useless, from drugs to medical treatment, but with a strong desire to go to the doctor; Aurum Metallicum: headache, with depression after severe emotional trauma or after profound fatigue, suicidal ideas; Ignatia; Lachesis; Natrum Muriaticum: chronic and periodic headache, after profound sentimental disappointment or great pain, desire to be alone; Sepia: postpartum excruciating migraine or affective disappointment, starting from the left eye and radiating to the back of the neck, started in the morning and made worse by the study, with intolerance to consolation, indefinite sadness and desire for solitude), insomnia (Aconitum; Argentum Nitricum; anxiety to do things quickly and well; Arnica; Coffea Cruda: insomnia due to excess of euphoria, excitement because the head is full of ideas, pain like a nail planted in the brain; Ignatia; Gelsemium).

Another difficult, during the medical visit, is the modalization of the symptoms of headaches. Belladonna is one of the most used remedies in headaches (if symptoms match). Belladonna's headache is sudden, with throbbing pain, pounding like hammering. The movements of the head cause a feeling of heeling. Great sensitivity of the scalp and hair. The face and eyes are red. Dilated pupils. Pain worsens with light, cold air, noise, shocks, moving the head. Improvement with rest and darkness. Mostly frontal headache, with extension to the occiput. Bryonia headache is paroxysmal, extending from the forehead to the nape. The patient is short-tempered and restless. The slightest movement aggravates him, as does anger and anger. Pain improves with absolute rest with cold

applications. The headache from *Nux Vomica* is caused by excessive use of coffee, alcohol (headache the next day), tobacco, Chinese food. Indigestion headache, anger, nervousness, mental application. It is located above the eyes and begins in the morning, getting up, associating with a slight sense of dizziness, nausea and vomiting. Dull pain, applied to the forehead, as if there was a wrapped bandage. He gets worse by bowing his head, coughing, with movement. *Gelsemium* headache is preceded by a drop in vision and is accompanied by heaviness in the head and eyelids, muscle pain in the neck and shoulders.

Skin of the head is sore to the touch. Pain like a circle around the head above the ears or above the eye; the affected eye is rigid and tired in the movements. During the attack the patient is tired, obtuse, weak, apathetic. The headache worsens in the sun or with tobacco and improves or ends with the emission of a large amount of clear urine. *Silicea's* headache, from excessive mental effort - headache of students who apply themselves without profit -, causes the patient to wrap his head with something warm or warm, for relief: a sponge, a sweater etc. The pain is above the eye (plus the right), reaching the occiput. The skin is extremely sensitive. Also relieved, like *Gelsemium*, from imperious urination, as well as from rest and darkness. Instead, it becomes worse with mental application, cold, light, noise.

The pain of *Natrum Muriaticum* is as if many small hammers are banging on the skull. It is associated with visual disturbances (lightning); *Natrum* wakes up already with a headache, which is increasing around ten in the morning. Worsening with sun exposure, with rice, by speaking. It improves with the application of cold bandages on the head. The periodic headache of *Sanguinaria* begins in the occiput, radiates to the forehead and ends above the right eye. Distension of the veins of the temples. Often it increases until the person vomits food or bile, after which it gradually passes. During the attack, noise and light are unbearable. Bedtime and sleep relieve pain, so intense that the patient sinks his head into the pillow, as well as copious urination. *Iris Versicolor's* headache is preceded by a lowering of vision (like that of *Gelsemium*), with zigzag visions, and ophthalmic headaches. Here there is appearance of pain after the disappearance of eye symptoms. Sunday headache, after relaxation after a week of tension. Headache aggravates with immobility and improves with movement. *Lac Caninum* headache is alternating, aggravated by noise and speaking, improved by staying quiet and applying cold compresses. It decreases in the open air and then returns. Feeling that the brain is alternately contracted and relaxed.

End of the visit and conclusions. At the end of the interview and the visit, the homeopathic doctor completes his prescription on a white sheet of headed paper (homeopathic remedies in Italy are not paid by the NHS), indicating, in addition to the date of the visit and the patient's general information, the prescribed remedy, its potency, the dosage and the period of time for which the remedy must be taken, finally adding its signature (there is no need to stamp the recipe). From the beginning of the visit, the patient must be informed - as specified in this brief treatment - about the purposes of the homeopathic treatment, how this will be conducted, what will be the timing of the treatment (slow, gentle, gradual healing, lasting) and its consequences (temporary aggravation, at the end of which the actual recovery will take place), so that an informed consent can be signed which will be given to him by the doctor. The two, therefore, the patient, informed and aware, and the doctor, aware of their duties in taking charge of the patient, will establish the necessary therapeutic alliance, both in allopathy and in homeopathy, to follow that shared path that must lead to recovery [18-21].

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