

SORRENTO, ITALY | 2019, 25-28 SEPT.

74th LMHI
CONGRESS LIGA MEDICORUM
HOMEOPATHICA INTERNATIONALIS



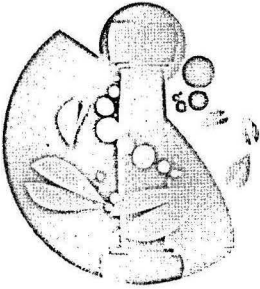
HOMEOPATHY

the medicine of the future
from the ancient heart
similarity at any level of knowledge

Abstract Collection

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The Principle of Similars: scientific hypothesis, rational concept, therapeutic tool, or eternal truth?

The Principle of Similars is the basic principle of homeopathy. It is more essential and fundamental than e.g. the principle of potentization, which might be verified, falsified, or modified without unsettling the core of homeopathy. The Principle of Similars demands “treat likes by likes”, i.e. in order to heal a diseased person, consider the symptoms that are connected by similarity to symptoms of proven remedies, and give a remedy that is connected by similarity to the symptoms of the patient.

The basic idea behind this rationale is the concept that the patient’s life-force suffers under a disease-enemy that cannot be overcome due to the distunement of the former. If being exposed to a similar disease-enemy, however, the life-force may raise its energy and overcome both the old and new disease-enemy and ultimately heal itself. Contrary to allopathic or antipathic treatment which only relieves and palliates symptoms temporarily, the challenge prompted by a similar (artificial) disease-enemy may lead – possibly via a phase of aggravation – to enduring healing.

Hahnemann announced the Principle of Similars to the public in several stages.

1. In his first publication of 1796 he presented it to his medical colleagues as a new hypothesis to be discussed, verified, or falsified by empirical testing.
2. In several publications to a broader public in the years 1805–1810 he suggested several rational theories in order to point out its plausibility, culminating in the first edition of his *Organon*, with which homeopathy had definitely become a scientific doctrine.
3. From the second edition of the *Organon* in 1819 onward Hahnemann considered himself an artist of healing, self-convicted by his medical practice that principles alone may not achieve anything if not being applied in a competent professional way.
4. In his later days, from 1827, Hahnemann finally elevated homeopathy to the rank of a divine truth being revealed to him by infinite grace, thus immunizing himself from refutations on a mundane level.

Each of these stages may have its entitlement as well as its problems. Considering the cultural history of prevailing forms of knowledge, a puzzling dialectic may be disclosed. According to the history of science, the last 5000 years may have witnessed a development from the spiritual, practical and ethical wisdom of sages, towards specialized professional knowledge of craftsmen, towards methodological abstract

knowledge of scientists, towards anonymously gathered fragmentary information and data. Paradoxically, Hahnemann seems to have passed through exactly these stages during his lifetime – in the opposed direction.

1. Excited by the ideals of enlightenment, rationalism, scientific progress, etc., Hahnemann at first assumed it sufficient to suggest a new principle and let the scientific community decide empirically whether or not it may prove to be true and valuable. This first stage may resemble the current situation when people expect homeopathy to be proven or disproven by clinical trials in terms of evidence-based medicine.

2. Soon, however, Hahnemann realized that recognition might not be easily obtained, henceforth laying his emphasis on arguing for the principle's rationality and plausibility to convince people to acknowledge it. To be sure, the success of such an attempt is dependent on the education and horizon of its addressees. Contrary to today's situation, however, Hahnemann could still intellectually connect with erudite colleagues like Hufeland in terms of life-force, dynamic effects, pathogenic influences or the like.

3. After Hahnemann became aware that the claim of rationality was usurped by the allopathic school as well, he left this path of argumentation, obviously realizing that in the name of rationality virtually anything might be justified and promoted. Instead, he adopted the position of an artist of healing, i.e. a kind of meta-instance necessary to ensure that rational concepts and scientific methods may indeed – in every single case – be applied correctly and salutary.

4. Finally, after severe quarrels with heretics about their “unhomeopathic crimes”, Hahnemann refrained arguing in terms of words and propositions and conceived himself as a kind of blissful sage who had been privileged by divine grace to reveal to humankind the only true principle of healing.

Considering the pros and cons of every stage as well as the (critical) cultural history of predominant forms of knowledge, we may now better understand the current difficulty of the Principle of Similars to being acknowledged on a broad consenting basis. On the level of universal wisdom it may – in a physical as well as psychological, political, and spiritual sense – be the only true and sustainable principle of healing. Yet, as Hahnemann had equally experienced, it may be extremely optimistic to expect its plain acceptance by a majority of contemporary stakeholders, influencers, and decision makers in the medical system, as long as they are stuck in today's prevailing most reductionist form of knowledge, the belief in numbers and statistical evidence only.