
FEATURE ARTICLE

Homotoxicology: The Basis of a Probiotic, Holistic Practice of Medicine

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The Fundamentals of Homotoxicology

The physician who has become involved with homeopathy soon becomes acquainted with the basic principle of this practice of medicine: *similia similibus curentur* ("likes are cured by likes"), as it was formulated on the basis of medical experience gained by Samuel Hahnemann. It has since been corroborated in a great number of tests that it is indeed possible to influence symptoms and diseases with homeopathic potencies of a medicinal substance in a holistic sense, in other words, the overall therapy of disease as manifested through the human body, its functions, soul, and spirit. Homeopathy represents therapeutic effect through stimulation. The body is stimulated to a reaction by extremely small impulses. A great number of diseases today are characterized by a multiplicity of aspects and symptoms, e.g., by multi-morbidity as brought about by modern civilization.

But how does the physician determine the effective homeopathic agent — the *similimum* — for inducement of the required stimulus?

Decades of experience on the part of the physician are necessary. In this difficult process of determination of a particular *similimum*, the employment of homeopathic complex medications can prove highly advantageous: the use of medicinal preparations which are composed of a group of homeopathic constituents. The combination preparations cover a broad spectrum of possibly responsible initiating causes and functional disorders. They also take into account constitutional circumstances and environmental influences.

It is the great service of German physician Dr. Hans Heinrich Reckeweg to have provided a solidly founded scientific background for classical homeopathy. In the following, a brief elaboration will be provided on homotoxicology as developed by Dr. Reckeweg, and on the therapeutic consequences which have resulted therefrom.

Reckeweg coined the term "homotoxin" in the sense of "human toxin." Homotoxins are therefore substances which are toxic to man — i.e., which cannot be broken down and

eliminated quickly enough to remain harmless. Homotoxicology proceeds from the fundamental fact that all vital processes are involved with the transformation of chemically comprehensible agents. In the event of illness, these chemical substances are the toxic agents of the disease. Analysis, indeed, can detect such toxins which are active in diseased tissue, as they are eliminated in excretions such as perspiration and pus. Within the body, they are responsible for those processes which we call disease.

The Concept of Disease in Homotoxicology

For thousands of years, healers have sought the origins and explanations of disease. Originally, it was evil gods or spirits who had entered into their diseased victims. As early as in the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek cultures, however, it was determined that damage to bodily humors, or their faulty combination, could be responsible as the origin or disease. Beginning with the eighteenth century, the theory of toxin damage lost acceptance. Rudolph Virchow developed his cytology in the nineteenth century — a pathology which assumes that the organism is a "kingdom of cells" with mutual dependencies and collaboration among the single cells. The root of disease is sought here in disorders or pathological alterations in the individual cells.

Virchow's cellular pathology had extraordinary fruitful efforts on scientific medicine beginning from the second half of the nineteenth century, and proceeding until the present. There were weak points in this standpoint, however, which made it necessary to supplement by other models of explanation, and to reflect on these additional explanations.

Homotoxicology as developed by Hans Heinrich Reckeweg represents an ongoing development in etiological research, with the objective of employing for therapeutic use the various areas which have manifested themselves as critical in the diagnosis of disease.

Accordingly, Reckeweg views diseases as agent-related reaction processes in which homotoxins can cause certain symptoms to appear: e.g., an inflammation. Within the course

of the inflammatory process — to remain with this example — the toxins involved can be rendered harmless by an organism sufficiently capable of reaction, and eliminated from the body.

Reckeweg's homotoxicology is based on a completely new, dynamic concept of disease. Illnesses are processes, clinical pictures, and syndrome manifestations which indicate that the body is struggling with toxins and that the organism is attempting to render these poisons harmless and rid itself of them. It therefore follows that this further-developed manner of regarding disease must also have corresponding consequences for therapy. Indeed, Reckeweg incorporated into homotoxicology modern concepts such as the change of flow equilibrium and cybernetic control processes.

According to Reckeweg, therapeutic measures should involve as few undesirable side effects as possible in the already damaged organism. At the same time, however, they should effect an optimum of healing or relief of complaints. For example, this outlook means that — after careful consideration of the holistic situation — the circumstances of disease can call for surgical correction, the employment of chemotherapy, or other measures such as radiology.

The inhibition or suppression of symptoms signifies that the body is prevented from eliminating the homotoxins — the toxic substances — which are involved. In treatment with antihomotoxic therapy, Reckeweg employed single-constituent homeopathic preparations, or suitable combination medicines, for a great variety of different symptoms. Employment is made of substances of all kinds, according to homeopathic principles. These include preparations from plants, organs, and tissues, disease products (nosodes), trace elements, intermediate substances, and homeopathically prepared allopathic medications, as well as attenuated toxins and chemical compounds of all types.

The Homotoxic Phases of Disease

According to Reckeweg, the body's defensive struggle against homotoxins can be broken down into six different pathological toxin-defense phases. In the first three, namely, the excretion, reaction, and deposition phases, the body's defense system can still cope with the detoxified poisons by excretion or deposition. These phases are designated "humoral phases" in which organs and cells do not suffer damage.

Reckeweg coined the term "Biological section" for the boundary between these first three phases of disease and the following three, which he called the cellular phases. He designated these later phases the impregnation, degeneration, and neoplasma phases. They represent cellular impregnation, degeneration, and neoformation (carcinogenic processes). From phase four to six, the body falls increasingly under the destructive influences of homotoxins. The organism attempts to maintain its vital state as long as possible, in the most effective way, until cellular damage, organ disorders, and finally uncontrolled growth of the organism advance to the point of irreversibility.

During the first three phases, the humoral phases of the disease, the excretion principle prevails, enzymes remain intact, and the tendency toward self-healing is maintained. During the last three phases, the cellular phases, the prognosis is not favorable. Enzymes are damaged, and the flow of equilibrium is upset. The tendency is toward deterioration, and the prognosis for the patient is dubious.

The Body's Own System of Greater Defense

How, then, does the body attempt to defend itself against the influence of homotoxins? Reckeweg sees the reaction of the organism as a system of what he termed greater defense. The greater defense system consists in turn of five sub-systems which are mutually interlinked and which render homotoxins harmless in their defensive efforts. These subsystems include the following:

- the production of antibodies
- defense by the employment of neuronal adaptation hormones
- toxin defense via the nervous system
- detoxification via the liver
- detoxification via the connective tissues.

The connective tissues represent an extensive deposition and drainage system which receives waste substances coming from the cells, transports them away via the lymphatics, or deposits them.

If, now, chemotherapeutic agents, sulfonamides, immunosuppressive agents, antibiotics, salicylates, and the like are employed to act on the body's greater defense system, extraordinarily effective results can be achieved. The consequences, can, however, also represent an extraordinarily dangerous act of intervention into the normal process of biological defense.

If, on the other hand, the greater defense system can be dramatically influenced in a positive and mutually interactive way, then the progress of disease can be reversed with a consequent phase shift in the humoral direction, toward convalescence. One example of such a procedure is retro-development of a duodenal ulcer to a carbuncle, after the healing of which the ulcer in the duodenum is also healed. Reckeweg termed this process toward the positive direction regressive vicariation. Progress of a disease in the sense of aggravation of the patient's state was designated by him progressive vicariation.

Homotoxicological Therapy

From the above, it is therefore important that the physician administer homeopathic medication in the corresponding homeopathic attenuations. Otherwise, such therapy can indeed amplify the toxin situation in the body, or influence it in other negative ways.

On the basis of the work by Samuel Hahnemann, Reckeweg prepared single-constituent homeopathic agents, as well as combination preparations, for treatment of many and various diseases from the standpoint of homotoxicology. He employed thereby a tremendous number of different active substances. The object of homotoxicological therapy is, again, the

stimulation and regulation of the body's self-healing capabilities. Proper therapy oriented in this manner therefore also includes a biologically healthy lifestyle in the sense of holistic medicine, the avoidance of therapy damage (a danger from excessively powerfully acting chemotherapy), and the achievement of self-help and self-motivation of the patient being treated. In extreme cases, homotoxicological therapy does not preclude the use of other therapeutic measures as are well known from the use of antibiotics and corrective surgery.

A Sketch of Hans Heinrich Reckeweg's Life

Hans Heinrich Reckeweg was born on May 9, 1905 as the son of a primary school teacher in the German city of Herford, in Westphalia. After completing high school, he studied in Augsburg, Berlin, and Münster. He became a doctor of medicine in Bonn in 1929.

As early as his student days, Reckeweg became particularly interested, in addition to anatomy, in chemical-physiological problems, pharmacology, and toxicology. Especially influential for Reckeweg's future were the clinical lectures of the famous Berlin Professor August Bier.

As a student, Reckeweg was involved in his own pharmacological and toxicological experiments, practically without interruption. He also performed a great number of tests of homeopathic medication on his own body. In 1932, he took part in an introductory course in homeopathy, conducted by the Berlin Society of Homeopathic Physicians. This impressive experience highly qualified in homeopathy and extensively experienced in therapeutic work, represented a turning point

in his life. As a result, he became accredited as a homeopathic general practitioner and opened his practice in Berlin.

There, he founded the company HEEL in 1936 and worked in his large general practice until he was called to military duty in 1940. After the end of the war, he operated a practice in Triberg in the Black Forest in 1946, and then moved to Baden-Baden in 1955. There, he exclusively conducted scientific work beginning in 1960, and directed the scientific department of the company HEEL, which he had also moved from Berlin to Baden-Baden.

Hans Heinrich Reckeweg died in 1985 at the age of 80.

In 1923, before he began his medical studies, Reckeweg's father was cured of a serious degenerative kidney disease by homeopathic therapy. His father's physician asked Reckeweg if he, in the course of his future medical studies and career, would also be interested in homeopathy. He answered, intuitively, "Someday I would like to amalgamate homeopathy with conventional modern medicine."

This statement set the direction for the remainder of his professional life. His works published in 1955 on homotoxicology provided the scientific and conceptual foundation for a synthesis of therapeutic possibilities in the sense of modern holistic medicine as keenly striven for by so many of the committed doctors of today.

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