

Complex Homoeopathy Takes Sporting World by Storm

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Published in the German journal "Bio – Gesundheit für Körper, Geist und Seele", 4/2004, 10-16

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Caption: A bumper sporting summer: a whole range of events gives top athletes the chance to flex their muscles. They've all got something to prove. Complex homoeopathy offers natural and uncontroversial performance enhancement. Its adherents include sporting personalities such as Lothar Leder (above), currently Germany's most successful triathlete, professional cyclist Davide Rebellin (centre), and Franzi von Almsick (below)

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This summer's shaping up well: the Olympic Games in Athens, the Tour de France, the UEFA European Cup... top international athletes contending yet again for every second, every centimetre, every goal. Drawing on their last ounce of strength before the eyes of a spellbound public. When you're this close to your personal limits, it's no longer enough "just" to be incredibly fit and in the pink of health. Behind every star athlete stands a medical expert with the wherewithal to regenerate a ward's performance levels in next to no time. Amazingly the hot favourite in the sports medic's bag of tricks is complex homoeopathy, more accurately known as homotoxicology.

Take the case of Jesus Carballo: the Spaniard is the world's reigning gymnastics champion. Regarded as the man to beat during the Athens Olympics, he's training to take gold. Carballo is therefore accustomed to weighing up every exertion while adhering to a strict dietary regime.

Then, with the event just a few months away, the star athlete suddenly develops shoulder pains. They are incessant, whatever the degree of strain. A win in Athens is definitely in jeopardy. An MRI scan reveals nothing. The doctors can shed no light on what is disabling the world-class gymnast. Carballo searches around desperately for an answer. He even takes part in an international conference on sports traumatology in Madrid.

There he meets the German performance physiologist and sports physician Professor Peter Billigmann. On the day in question, the latter is giving a talk on complex homoeopathy in high performance sport. The interest is huge. Billigmann hears about Carballo's problem and invites him onto the stage. Taking the reigning world champion as his subject, the doctor impressively demonstrates just how effective complex homoeopathy can be. He carries out a trigger point infiltration and injects the painful areas of the shoulder with homotoxicological preparations. The relief sets in while Carballo is still on stage. The prescription: a course of the same preparations, to be taken three times a day, with drops and ointment in addition.

The naturopathic concept works. Two weeks later the sports physician receives a fax from Spain – from Carballo. The gymnast is over the moon. The shoulder is healing well. His chances of being fit for Athens are good.

Professor Billigmann is one of the most prominent users and advocates of homoeopathic combination preparations in Germany and abroad. He treats approximately fifty to sixty high performance sportsmen and women, who compete both at a national and international level. These include, among others, the Gerolsteiner cycle racing team and its current World Cup champion Davide Rebellin, Germany's most successful

Caption: When it comes to combination preparations, the composition of the active homoeopathic ingredients is paramount. They also provide effective relief from common ailments.

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triathlete Lothar Leder, winners of the European table tennis cup TTC-Grenzau, the national league volleyball team VC Mendig, and the Düsseldorfer EG team from the German ice hockey league. Moreover, Billigmann also supervises the athletes at the Rhineland Palatinate/Saarland Olympic training centre.

With such an incredibly diverse sporting clientele, the doctor focuses particularly on boosting performance. This covers four areas: capacity to perform, degree of stamina, rate of recovery, and stimulation of the immune system. Complex homoeopathy has played a central role in this process for five years. Countless sporting events and training sessions have provided the medic with a solid foundation of values born of practical experience. When prescribing treatment, he combines these with his knowledge of the individual athlete's weak points.

Put briefly: what is complex homoeopathy exactly, or more accurately: homotoxicology? And why is it so perfectly suited to high performance sport? According to the definition of its founding researcher, the doctor Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg (1905 – 1985), his biological combination preparations provide the link between modern conventional medicine and the classical homoeopathy of Samuel Hahnemann. They

bring together the latter's maxim of healing like with like and conventional medicine's scientific preoccupation with treating according to indication. As a result treatment is quick to take effect and often causes no side effects. Simultaneously the combination preparations accurately correct malfunctions in the body's own feedback controls and functional processes while promoting the excretion of toxins.

That's why Dr. Reckeweg names this new form of treatment homotoxicology or modern homoeopathy. Furthermore, Professor Billigmann doesn't just favour biological preparations because they're extremely reliable. These days, whatever the sporting discipline, a considerable number of top class athletes are found competing in any one event. In such highly competitive contests, the winner is the athlete who manages to draw on his natural reserves most effectively. Homoeopathic combination preparations provide the perfect foundation and – more importantly – a harmless alternative to illegal stimulants.

Take for instance a cycling team like Gerolsteiner: during the Tour de France the demands made on the team are truly superhuman. Athletes in top form, and not a hint of doping suspicion – that's the task facing responsible sports physicians today.

What ails top athletes?

Generally speaking, star athletes are far more likely to come a cropper through simple ailments rather than any mysterious health problems. Take their susceptibility to infection. Many marvel at the physical fitness of sportsmen and women. Few are aware that the incessant pressure to perform weakens the immune system of top athletes considerably. A study by Professor Heinz Liesen of Paderborn University's Institute of Sports Medicine recently revealed the potential extent of immuno imbalance. This explains why sportsmen and women are particularly susceptible to infection.

Take, for instance, Germany's most successful triathlete, Lothar Leder. As an extreme sportsman he pushes his personal performance to the limit. Swimming 3.8 kilometres, cycling 180 kilometres, and finally running 42 kilometres in just eight hours would see most people in a state of utter physical collapse.

Caption: Professor Billigmann with athletes Davide Rebellin (left), Claudia Pechstein (centre) and Andreas Wecker, Olympic gymnastics gold medallist (right)

Boxed text: Modern homoeopathy in high performance sport

It is indeed something of a sensation. No one, not even Dr. Reckeweg, its founder, could have foreseen that homotoxicology would play such a crucial role in high performance sport. Meanwhile its significance in this area is so great that it's no exaggeration to speak of a new trend.

In the main it is the controversy over doping which is forcing doctors, athletes and coaches to look around for other effective, yet unproblematic substances. Reckeweg's collegial attitude towards conventional medicine has unquestionably played a part in arousing the interest of sports physicians in modern homoeopathy.

Caption: More and more athletes resort to homoeopathic preparations for their injuries

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Understandably Lothar Leder has to take particular care of his immune system. In a discussion forum during a specialist congress the triathlete explains why he was unable to compete a few months earlier in Tokyo: on the flight out Leder was still one hundred percent fit. On arriving in Japan he realised that he had left his personal anti-infection remedy of combination preparations at home. Lothar Leder promptly falls ill. He can't compete. A minor mishap cost him the entire event.

A recently conducted scientific study has just proved that, in terms of healing time, homotoxicological infection preparations are far superior to conventional preparations.

While it took five days for conventional allopathic medication to bring considerable relief or heal symptoms in fifty percent of cases, treatment with the combination preparation brought comparable results, often within two to four days. The combination homoeopathic preparation also had the upper hand when it came to tolerance. 85 percent of patients rated this as "very good" in contrast with a mere 37 percent in the allopathic control group.

The medical treatment of athletes is of course far more complex. There is greater concentration on improving performance and stamina. This aim is furthered by stimulating the intermediate metabolism. Enzyme blockages frequently occur in the citric acid cycle. This in turn impedes cell respiration. In such instances, certain homotoxicological preparations prove particularly effective as biocatalysts. They are designed to dissolve such blockages, for instance, by neutralising harmful oxygen free radicals. This effectively strengthens toxin resistance, thereby promoting detoxification.

At the onset of the sporting season, athletes are especially concerned with being able to draw on their hard-earned performance reserves during an event. Professor Billigmann has himself come up with a cocktail of combination preparations. A blend which – individually dosed – has proved effective for many of his athletes during closely observed training sessions. He generally administers the preparations half an hour before an event is due to begin. The cyclists are especially delighted with this treatment. They don't overacidify as quickly and get off to a better start at the beginning of the race.

Following physical activity, it is crucial that an athlete receives support during the physical regeneration process. After all, by this time, the body is awash with metabolic

end products. Microtraumatisation occurs. This produces an inflammation reaction in the body. Homotoxicological treatment alleviates the

Caption: Spain's star gymnast Jesus Carballo was plagued by agonising shoulder pains. Homoeopathic combination preparations provided healing.

Boxed text: Made to swim 3.8 kilometres, cycle 180 kilometres and finally run 42 kilometres within 8 hours, most people would be in a state of utter physical collapse.

Boxed text: The trend in homoeopathy

A recent survey confirms: today 75 percent of all practising doctors prescribe homoeopathic preparations, combination preparations in particular.

Although Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg cannot strictly be said to have invented treatment with homoeopathic combination preparations, his theory of homotoxicology makes him one of the most prominent advocates of this approach.

These days homoeopathic combination preparations are developed by a number of biological pharmaceutical producers. In short: such preparations don't just contain a single active homoeopathic ingredient, but rather a blend of several active substances in individually appropriate dilutions. Homotoxicology is without doubt one of classical homoeopathy's best-known derivatives.

Caption: Homoeopathic combination preparations are now an essential part of the sports medic's treatment repertoire

Caption: Succussion of the various homoeopathic potencies is still carried out by hand. Of course this not only requires a high degree of precision, it also takes a considerable amount of physical strength

Caption: The ampoules are subject to a final quality check, during which they are closely monitored for cracks and other flaws

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symptoms, while stimulating the detoxification process.

Professor Billigmann always carries his portable dry chemical unit with him during events. It enables him to diagnose quickly what physical problems his athletes are currently coping with. All the unit requires for its analysis is one tiny drop of blood. The test result is displayed after just three minutes.

For instance, if levels of haemoglobin – which gives blood its red colour – are down, the doctor administers ferrum metallicum. If the level of uric acid is higher than normal, it's an indication that the body is overacidified. In such cases Billigmann reaches for his detox kit.

By the way, the same Professor Billigmann was himself European junior cycling champion in 1972. Prior to taking his pre-meds, he celebrated some 80 victories in the saddle. For him, accompanying the cyclists on tour is therefore a truly special experience. And every victory gives him particular satisfaction.

Case in point: when the Italian professional cyclist Davide Rebellin joined the Gerolsteiner team in 2002 his performance plummeted dramatically. He was prevented from competing in the Tour de France. For health reasons.

Wagging tongues prophesied the end of Rebellin's career. Professor Billigmann examined him from head to toe and discovered that the professional cyclist had developed a food intolerance, which manifested itself in metabolic malfunction and diarrhoea. Over a period of several weeks he built Rebellin up again. Using a combination of conventional medicine and complex homoeopathy.

Going on to win the Amstel Gold Race, the Flèche Wallone and Liège-Bastogne-Liège races in a single season, Rebellin achieved something that even the legendary Eddi Merckx never managed.

Top swimmer turns sports physician to the stars

The 53-year-old orthopaedic surgeon and sports physician, Dr. Roland Matthes, based in Marktheidenfeld, also has a special relationship with sport. Four Olympic golds (1968 and 1972), three times World Champion and five times European Champion, as well as 16 world records make Matthes the most successful German swimmer ever.

Berlin, beginning of June this year. In front of 320 prominent guests, the former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher presents the legendary swimmer – the first athlete from the former GDR to receive one – with the fifth Golden Sports Pyramid 2004 in recognition of his lifetime achievements.

In the run-up to the Olympic Games, the sports physician's schedule is packed full of appointments. The legendary backstroker is responsible for the medical welfare of four swimmers at the Athens Olympics. Including Franzi van Almsick. During the Olympic qualifiers at the beginning of June she swam the world's second best time in her favourite discipline – 200 m freestyle –

Caption: Former foreign minister Genscher presents German swimming legend Roland Matthes (centre) with the fifth Golden Sports Pyramid 2004 for his services to sport

Caption: Sporting days gone by: in 1972 Professor Peter Billigmann was Europe's junior cycling champion; in 1975, Germany's best amateur cyclist

Boxed text: Jörg Heinrich, professional footballer

Jörg Heinrich is one of Germany's great football legends: 36 games with the national team, winner of the Champions League World Cup with Borussia Dortmund, winner of the Italian Cup with AC Florence. Jörg Heinrich is currently with 1. FC Cologne. At the end of last season, Jörg Heinrich needed a meniscus operation following a knee injury. The usual period of convalescence is six weeks. Far too long a break for a popular athlete like Heinrich. Using mainly homotoxicological preparations, muscle recovery and regeneration were accelerated. The athlete's convalescence was shortened by two weeks. After just one month, the football star was ready to take to the pitch again.

Caption: Homotoxicological preparations helped star footballer Jörg Heinrich cut his convalescence considerably following a meniscus operation

Caption: Germany's top swimmer Franzi von Almsick also swears by treatment with homoeopathic combination preparations

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Boxed text: Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg (1905 – 1985) and the theory of homotoxicology

Having opened his practice in Berlin in 1932, Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg was soon to become frustrated at the lack of satisfactory solutions offered by conventional medicine for the treatment of chronic diseases. Moreover, Reckeweg had always been fascinated by Hahnemann's classical homoeopathy, in which a single substance selected using the Law of Similars was used to restore a patient's mental and physical harmony. Nevertheless, delving into case histories was incredibly time-consuming. Irreconcilable with the daily constraints on a doctor's time. Furthermore, owing to the diversity of environmental influences, the diseases of the twentieth century had become extremely complicated. More complicated than during Hahnemann's time.

Concentrating on the needs of the modern doctor, Reckeweg decided to develop classical homoeopathy further. This didn't just mean expanding the application of single-constituent preparations – as advocated by Hahnemann's adherents today – by concentrating more on the so-called nosodes. A process that entails administering the agent causing the disease in dilute form in order to promote excretion from the body.

Complex homoeopathy gave Reckeweg a unique approach. The meticulous researcher with the keen eye envisaged a school of medicine that would be as indication-based and easily applicable as allopathy while providing causal healing in a biological manner like homoeopathy. His experiments led him to a definition of disease that would provide the revolutionary basis for the scientific theory of homotoxicology that he subsequently developed. According to this definition, disease is "the body's logical defence mechanism". It is the organism's way of countering damage caused by homotoxins (toxins detrimental to human beings). That's why, according to Dr. Reckeweg, the most effective and least aggressive form of treatment is one that supports "the organism in its antihomotoxic (de-toxification) efforts".

The researcher discovered that the tissue matrix in particular tends to store high levels of toxins. This means that every excretion also has to remove the deposits building up in the matrix. While at the same time alleviating feedback control malfunctions in the entire organism.

Reckeweg developed special combination preparations that, like a practised team, target the causes of disease directly. According to indication. Drawing on his extensive knowledge, he would always target the root of an organic problem using several homoeopathic substances. Naturally this increased the chance that the patient would at the same time receive the substance, which Hahnemann termed "the individual". Without a lengthy investigation of the case history. Homoeopathic doctors would no longer need to search for the "one" absolutely suitable substance. It was the birth of modern homoeopathy.

The researcher and his vision

By 1936, being a man of commercial and practical bent, Dr. Reckeweg had already founded his own company, Biologische Heilmittel Heel GmbH: it provided him with the freedom to develop and produce his preparations. To this day, with subsidiaries in over sixty countries, Heel is still the only company in the world that sells homotoxicological products.

Fundamental research and preparation studies

From the outset Reckeweg regarded the scientific recognition of his homotoxin theory as paramount. During the last twenty years of his life – until shortly before he died – a new school of research was to come to his aid: molecular biology. In the same way as modern homoeopathy, the latter seeks to record the molecular changes caused by the chemical processes of homoeostasis. In this way it has been possible to confirm several of Reckeweg's fundamental principles.

A fascinating revelation about so-called mediators is currently the focus of international medical literature. These regulate the general defence mechanisms of our immune system while at the same time co-operating with the part of our immune defences that later develops antigen-specific properties.

Indeed all major mediators develop their effectiveness matrices in a degree of dilution commensurate with low to medium homoeopathic potencies. Since homotoxicology relies on these exact potencies, it provides treatment at the efficacy level of the mediators.

Caption: Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg developed the theory of homotoxicology. This entails the targeted application of several homoeopathic substances in the treatment of a physical problem

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to secure a ticket to Athens. – During the 1990s Dr. Matthes was already on the lookout for new ways of treating his athletes. The use of complex homoeopathy in his practice has brought impressive results. The major advantage for Matthes is that the application of homoeopathy is not subject to any restrictions. This makes combination preparations the doctor's medication of choice during competitions.

By contrast, many allopathic medicines, even when administered correctly, are accompanied by a risk of doping. This means the hands of sports physicians are effectively tied when prescribing treatment. Most nasal remedies, for instance, contain ephedrine, which counts as a stimulant. Codeine is a constituent of numerous cough remedies – codeine is also on sport's doping blacklist. And even one coffee too many can cause blood/caffeine levels to exceed permitted parameters.

None of these dangers exist with homoeopathic preparations, because they are both unproblematic – i.e. purely biological – and highly effective. Indeed many athletes these days attach considerable importance to being treated homoeopathically.

For Roland Matthes high performance athletes are like thoroughbred racehorses. After a strenuous session in the pool, they are easily chilled, can catch cold or even a sinus infection. Prevention is therefore a major theme among swimmers too.

In such cases he prescribes his swimmers – including six footer Steve Theloke – a special blend of homoeopathic preparations, even if he suspects an allergic component. Some time ago, for instance, backstroker and bronze medallist Steve Theloke caught an infection during a training session. A blockage occurred which forced the athlete to abandon training. Using chiropractic methods, wheal therapy, and an effective homoeopathic muscle preparation Roland Matthes was able to help the swimmer.

Athletes are also particularly prone to muscular hardening. Once again treatment with combination preparations has brought spectacular results. Among Roland Matthes' clientele is also the former world-class high jumper Carlo Thränhardt. His biggest problem: when training and competing, the high jumper was frequently plagued by knee problems. "Twenty squats in a row with 150 kilo weights followed by 300 jumps – afterwards my right knee, that is the jumping leg, tended to complain", recalls Thränhardt.

Even his doctor at the time treated him with homotoxicological preparations. "Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to compete in a lot of events" – says Thränhardt with conviction. Carlo Thränhardt sums up his experience with modern homoeopathy thus: "I had the feeling that it was simply better for me. If it heals, it's right."

In celebration of Samuel Hahnemann's 200th birthday, BIO will be taking the homoeopathic theme further – with reports on classical homoeopathy and Schüßler salts. If you have had positive personal experience of either, please drop us a line. We will publish the most interesting accounts.

Caption: Carlo Thränhardt has consciously relied on naturopathic medication for years

Caption: These days many athletes swear by homoeopathic preparations

Boxed text: Tips for amateur athletes

Sport is healthy. But only to the correct extent. In the case of many amateur athletes, Professor Billigmann often finds that the positive side gets lost in the stresses of everyday existence. Sport can even make the body more prone to illness if you hurry along to a training session and then put yourself under immense pressure, warns the specialist. Moreover, the physician knows that even amateurs can become addicted to sport: "Because they decided that morning to go jogging, they go out even when it's 40°."

For people whose lives have become thus imbalanced, Professor Billigmann advises they try changing their mental attitude to exercise first and curb their ambitions when it comes to sport.

In general, his recommendations on complex homoeopathy are just as valid for amateur sportsmen and women. Nevertheless, those tempted to self-medicate should err strictly on the side of caution. Even modern homoeopathic preparations need to be matched to an individual's physical condition. And therefore require medical supervision.

Caption: The expert knows that those who put themselves under immense sporting pressure during their free time are more likely to suffer than profit from the experience. Since modern homoeopathic preparations need to match the physical condition of the individual, medical supervision is essential.