

Diarrhea is a condition that is both unpleasant and potentially dangerous, especially if it continues for a long time. It can cause dehydration and electrolyte imbalances, which may lead to muscle weakness, heart irregularities, seizures, and even death in the most severe cases. Diarrhea is especially dangerous in young children and the elderly.

I treated an elderly woman for chronic diarrhea with an interesting twist that reinforces an important concept in homeopathy--direction of cure--while also demonstrating homeopathy's wonderful ability to treat the whole person.

Estelle, age 81 (how often are someone's age and weight the same)? came to see me in mid-October 2004. She had been struggling with diarrhea every day since early August. A slight woman, 5 feet two inches tall, Estelle weighed just 81 pounds. She was pleasant and stoic, but guarded. It was her niece, a patient of mine, that brought her to see me, and Estelle did not appear to expect any help from homeopathy. (Anything else you might say about her to paint a picture for the reader? Anything about her mood, her personality, looks, etc.? Maybe even say that she was brought in by her son or niece who insisted she see me [we'll change it to another relative than daughter] and that she was not expecting any help from homeopathy.)

Earlier that same year, she had been hospitalized by her medical doctors on three separate occasions for anemia. She was given several shots of the blood-building drug Procrit® and two whole blood transfusions, but no one could determine why she was anemic.

The onset of diarrhea coincided with her last hospitalization. (Did you realize about the iron supplement connection at the time of your first consult with her? Or only later? I moved the iron comment down – truth is, I didn't account for it at first. Because at the 2-week follow-up below you mention that you took note of the iron supplement connection. If you didn't know this or really focus on this from the start, maybe we should remove it from here in the article and only mention it a few paragraphs down at the follow-up.) The bowel movements themselves were quite unremarkable. She was moving her bowels about three times per day, with no discomfort, rarely urgency, and her bowels were not moved forcefully. Her stools were painless, watery, brown, and happened at any time during the day. They were not a particular bother at night.

She had been prescribed the reflux drug Protonix during her last stay in the hospital, though it was unclear why. She denied ever having reflux symptoms. Since the diarrhea had begun, she had been prescribed the anti-diarrheal drug Imodium without relief. She had consulted with a gastroenterologist, who could not find a cause for her diarrhea. He prescribed cholestyramine, a cholesterol-lowering drug, but Estelle chose not to take it. She discontinued the other drugs. She was drinking a can of the nutrient drink Peptamin daily to try to prevent weight loss. How many movements a day or a night? i.e., how bad was this diarrhea? Was she having any other general symptoms apparently related to the diarrhea like weakness, etc.?

Also: What conventional treatments had been prescribed to her for her diarrhea? Was there any effect? Was she still taking any of them during her homeopathic treatment?

Also: what about the iron supplement? Was she still taking that throughout her homeopathic treatment? When did she stop/or did she? If you thought iron was a cause of her diarrhea, was there any thought of stopping the supplement (if she continued to take it, that is). Or was that just something she had to take because of the anemia?

The only concomitant symptoms were 1) mild, non-descript discomfort in her abdomen above her belly button that was not specifically related in time to her bowel movements, and 2) dry itchy skin on her abdomen since her hospitalization in August. There were no useful general symptoms **(not sure a reader would know what 'no useful general sxs' are ... perhaps say what the main general symptoms were, but then why you discounted them (i.e, they were common or they were mild or something). For instance, yes, did she have weakness, tiredness, or some such things--but I didn't place much weight on them in my analysis because they were to be expected in someone with diarrhea of this nature..)** in the case. **She was not weak or tired, and her thirst and appetite were not affected. Indeed there was no other helpful information forthcoming at the initial intake.**

Feeling as though I had little to go on except painless diarrhea, I prescribed *Aloe* 200c, which is a prominent remedy for passive, painless, or involuntary diarrhea. This was not a great homeopathic prescription, as I had no particularly characteristic symptoms on which to prescribe. (why *Aloe*?--because it's known for painless diarrhea? Did you consider any other sxs to choose *Aloe*, like the pain in her abdomen, or skin itching or anything else? Or is it the lead rx for painless diarrhea and so you chose that? Anything else that helps explain your choice might be good to add.) Two weeks later Estelle reported no improvement in the diarrhea. She did report that she was tending to have more urgency for stool on rising early in the morning. Her abdominal itching was gone. I also learned at this point that her diarrhea had begun with the use of an iron supplement in the hospital. **Felling that the iron had caused her problem, she had stopped taking it. However, she clearly traced the onset of the diarrhea back to the use of this supplement.** Iron normally causes constipation, so I read the onset of diarrhea concurrent with the iron as a characteristic symptom of the case. On further research, I found both *Sulphur* and *Pulsatilla* to be indicated for ailments from the abuse of iron. Given that her urgency for stool came on early in the morning, I gave her *Sulphur* 200C.

(One thought: instead of being connected to the iron supplementation, might the diarrhea have been the result of a c-diff infection picked up at the hospital? Is there any way to differentiate between the two possibilities? If not, that is okay--but you might want to say something like, although it could have been something she picked up in the hospital, I **You can edit as you see fit – I didn't report, but it could be included – that she had an extensive lower GI workup that turned up absolutely nothing out of the ordinary. thought it was also a possibility that it was linked to the iron supplement that she started taking upon her release from the hospital.)**

One month later (at a follow-up visit? **Yes**) she reported that she had the first normal bowel function that she'd had in months. It lasted two days and then reverted back to

diarrhea. (It was three weeks after she took the sulphur How soon after taking the Sulphur did this good effect occur, do you know?) We repeated a single dose of *Sulphur* 200C(200c? one dose?) but to no avail. Estelle had dropped four pounds to weigh only 77 pounds at this point.

Taking the original response we had to the *Sulphur* 200C as a positive sign, I decided not to give up on it yet. Rather, I tried a change in dosing to see what would happen. I tried giving her (what potency? once a day? any particular reason as to why you decided to go with this protocol? e.g., I still thought Sulphur was a good choice because she had gotten some improvement and it covered such and such symptoms; so i decided maybe she needed ongoing treatment with low daily doses--or whatever the reasons may have been) *Sulphur* 6C twice daily, and we finally got some improvement. She began to have occasional normal stools in addition to diarrhea. I took this as a sign of improvement and continued the plan for three months(for about how long?). By early April 2005, after also trying *Sulphur* 30C twice daily (anything specific to say here? like perhaps now she was taking 12 c twice a day or whatever?), I was not exactly pleased with the results. She continued to have variable stools (better than having daily diarrhea), but there did not appear to be any trend toward improvement. Estelle also continued to be anemic, requiring monthly Procrit shots. Her abdominal discomfort was no better.

The Sulphur did not seem to be resulting in enough progress. On questioning her further, I discovered that she was prone to dry mouth, especially in the morning, but had an aversion to drinking water. Since *Pulsatilla* was the other remedy indicated for diarrhea from abuse of iron supplements, I gave her *Pulsatilla* 30C two doses daily.

A few weeks later in late April, Estelle's bowel function was still mixed, but there were more incidents of normal stools and her abdominal discomfort had improved dramatically. For the first time in many months, she was not anemic and had skipped her Procrit shot. Her weight was 76 pounds. By the end of May she still had variable stool, but again skipped her Procrit shot.

(Maybe say something here about how even with the improvement noted above, you still felt a bit desperate that the diarrhea wasn't gone. Any particular reason? Like that you were worried about her because she'd dropped another pound or whatever?) We could probably skip this altogether, as it is NOT an example of good homeopathy – though that can be a good lesson as well. It was just a matter of making a poor decision to try to get her better faaster. Feeling desperate to help the diarrhea, I made the mistake of giving her *Podophyllum*--a routine homeopathic prescription for diarrhea! It did nothing.

In mid-June 2005, I gave *Pulsatilla* 200C once daily, which she continued for four months (for how many days?). She finally started to have improvement in her bowel function, going as long as three days without diarrhea. Her abdominal pain improved, and she gained four pounds! (How soon did these various improvements occur after taking the *Pulsatilla*? And anything to say about the transition from 3 days without diarrhea to complete normalcy between June and August? Not necessary to say anything, only if something to remark on.) These changes all became apparent immediately after

beginning the *Pulsatilla*, and improved steadily throughout the four months. In August 2005 Estelle reported that, "I can't get over myself." She was having normal stools every day. She had taken a Procrit shot in July, her first in four months.

By March of 2006, when I last spoke to Lillian, she had moved from *Pulsatilla* 200C to 1M, taken just twice, and her bowels were perfectly normal. She has taken no more Procrit, and her weight was up to 85.5 pounds. At this point we moved to quarterly follow up. I expect her to continue to do well.

Any other improvements – mental/emotional/physical, energy, etc.? Anything else that Lillian or her daughter said about this? Like can you quote her saying how she didn't believe homeopathy was going to help her, but sonny boy, she got darn believes now. Because her other docs had nothing for her or whatever. Her other drugs for diarrhea were problematic. Or anything like that. Anything that her doctors said about her improvement (e.g., they were pleased/surprised/etc.? Point: anything that you can say to paint a strong picture for the results of this case--to prove that it was indeed an improvement--would be good here. Because an outsider reading this might think--well, gee, it just took time. She gradually improved over time.

One funny story is this: When she first started coming, both her daughters accompanied her, and they paid for the visits. Several months into our relationship, I got a call from one daughter saying her mom insisted on doing the visits herself and paying for them. The daughter laughed and said I must be doing something right.

The strong evidence in favor of homeopathy is that we had a three-month follow up during which her diarrhea came back (one month after the first dose of 1M). So she had been having diarrhea again for almost two months, though not as bad as before. We repeated Puls 1M one dose, and the trouble went away immediately. This time it stayed away, AND she knows to call me if she does have trouble again.

So what does one learn from such a case? First, watch the direction of cure. In this case, the presenting complaint was diarrhea, but with a deeper, more serious symptom of anemia. *Pulsatilla* showed its ability to cure the diarrhea by curing the anemia. As soon as I gave her *Pulsatilla*, she stopped needing Procrit shots. I had prescribed *Sulphur* for so long without any permanent improvement, and I could have sped her healing if I had recognized that the anemia wasn't improving. I also should have known to be patient and let the *Pulsatilla* act rather than grasping at *Podophyllum* for a superficial cure.

I know there are different opinions about direction of cure. The key direction that I follow is inside-out. Emotional will proceed general which will proceed internal local which will proceed external local. Even though her chief complaint was diarrhea, I was only able to provide sporadic improvement at best without choosing the remedy that also affected the deeper symptom as well as the presenting symptom. Are you saying perhaps that you were focused on the diarrhea alone because that is what she was requesting help for, and you weren't considering the deeper problem of anemia? And you should have been? And does this mean that you weren't considering it as a symptom/chief complaint

to treat--or as a concomitant symptom to watch/chart for improvement? (This makes me wonder, could you have been prescribing specifically for anemia? i.e., are there remedies indicated for that?)

Above, maybe you can spell out more what you mean by direction of cure. So perhaps you mean that healing took place on the deeper level (from within out) before more external levels (diarrhea). (But isn't there also "in reverse order of appearance" as one of Hering's Laws--which would be okay for diarrhea to end first. Hmm... this stuff always confuses me since it seems there are different possible scenarios that conform to Herings Laws. But maybe Direction of Cure means something else, and you can explain a bit.)

The other important highlight in the case is the wondrous ability of homeopathy to cure the whole person. (by whole person, I presume you mean her anemia and diarrhea both-- or was there anything else improved? No – anemia and diarrhea. Otherwise, she's quite well. Diabetes history, but well-managed without any meds.) Imagine if Imodium®[®], which Estelle had taken without effect, was found to cure anemia. It would be all over the news, and fast-tracked through the FDA. Everyone with anemia would be getting Imodium, mostly without success. Only when you individualize treatment with homeopathy do you experience its wonder.