

Margaret Roy

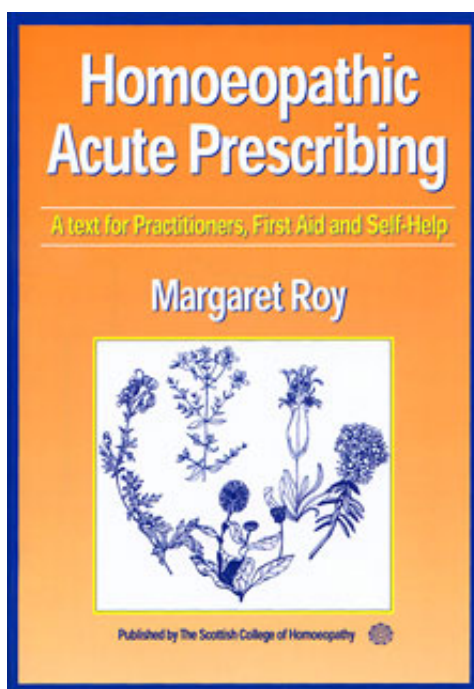
Homoeopathic Acute Prescribing

Reading excerpt

[Homoeopathic Acute Prescribing](#)

of [Margaret Roy](#)

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Tel. +49 7626 9749 700

Email info@narayana-verlag.com

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LESSON 3 Headaches

- Aims:** To understand the homoeopathic treatment of headaches.
To know the difference between tension, sinus, bilious headaches and migraines neuralgic headaches.
To recap the value that the Homoeopath puts on symptoms.
To understand the difference between an exciting cause and a modality.
To understand the difference between an exciting and a maintaining cause.
To understand the homoeopathic view of an acute illness.
To study the relationship of an acute illness to the constitutional case.
To study the remedies *Nux vomica*, *Pulsatilla* and *Bryonia*.

New keywords used in text:

Maintaining cause	concomitant symptoms
exciting cause	susceptibility
acute	predisposition
chronic	repertorising

What are Headaches?

Pain in the head is usually a local symptom that the Homoeopath calls a particular symptom. It is seldom an incident in itself unless caused by something like a severe blow to the head. Usually it is related to other health issues so, although the Homoeopath may look for an immediate acute remedy, the overall general health needs attention. We call this working constitutionally, i.e. on the constitutional case which Hahnemann called the chronic case.

Sometimes the head pain symptoms cannot be separated from the constitutional symptom picture, for example when caused by a tumour or high blood pressure, or even rheumatism in the bones of the skull. We will not deal with such headaches here. Migraines proper are a debility of the nervous system. They come into our remit here when they are caused by nervous strain that is then a maintaining cause. When part of the constitutional picture, headache may appear before menstruation or at menopause (Time). As part of a larger constitutional symptom picture, the whole needs treated constitutionally to get deeper relief. Before menstruation or at menopause then become General modalities.

FOUR TYPES OF HEADACHE

Our world today is full of stress and over-stimulation of the nervous system - stand in a street and look around you to see the multi-coloured hoardings, the flashy shop windows and displays within shops, to hear the noise of traffic and people and feel the vibration of music in most shops. Leisure? What do you do? TV, film, disco? Film makers today talk about an impact every 2-3 minutes to keep the viewer's attention. For *attention* read alertness of the nervous system. Job? Time boundaries, schedules to finish, rush, hassle travelling to work, what and where is lunch, closed in, noisy buildings, people you would not normally choose to be around? Life today is very different for the nervous system than even 30-40 years ago. Is it surprising therefore that it is weakened leading to neuralgic pain in the head and visual disturbances, with sensitivity to light and noise? The migraine headache appears more common in these days. It is often above one eye and one sided. It may have numbness or be described as excruciating. Often there is clumsiness, dropping things or the person is prone to trip and knock things over. Memory or speech may be affected showing the involvement of the brain.

A tension headache is usually found in the muscles at the back of the head, the nape of the neck, where the patient has continuously contracted the muscles so they go into spasm. It often extends to the

shoulders or over the top to sit above the eyes where it throbs sharply or, more often, feels tight. It could be described as like a band or a vice. Such headaches are better for rest.

A bilious headache is one of congestion where the action of the liver is insufficient to remove all the toxins that are the product of catabolism. The head may feel heavy, consciousness dull. There may be a feeling of pressure at the top of the head or all over. They may feel the head would burst. The sensation is often throbbing. Lying down and heat do not help as these increase the flow and therefore exposure to more toxins. This patient is often nauseous. They may even feel better after they have vomited. If the eyes are affected, it is with a sore pain. Vision may be occluded with black spots that indicate the poor action of the liver.

The sinus headache is usually frontal over the eyes, or cheekbones, where there are sinuses in the bones of the skull. Either there is catarrh there or dryness so they feel full and heavy or stuffy. Drainage is affected by gravity so the sensations are worse stooping or lying down. Sometimes the sensations are worse for sudden movement like turning the head quickly - when this happens the ears may be involved with catarrh. The pain is an ache or a dull throb. The patient describes a fullness. They are sensitive to dry heat, and usually better in the open air where the sinuses drain as coryza.

So many of us have headaches. There are so many remedies but there is much Individuality in the symptoms. We will look more closely at this shortly. First an exercise.

EXERCISE

Describe the type of headache **you** suffer from.

Can you gather a few more headache types from your family?

Check that you have *full symptoms* with Time, Location, Sensation and Modality.

You may find another group of symptoms in your list, **Concomitant symptoms**. **Concomitant symptoms** occur at the same time as other symptoms. An example here could be *nausea* or *dizziness*. *Visual disturbance* is commonly a concomitant symptom in migraine headaches.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

The head is one of the first areas that show something is not quite right with our health. Why? Let us look at the Anatomy and Physiology.

The head is particularly prone to pain because of its structure and function. It has a bony box protecting the centre of the nervous system. Within its influence are the sense organs receiving impressions of sound and light, smell and taste. The lower part of the head has openings to the respiratory and digestive systems, passage being assisted and regulated by a hinged jaw. The bones of the box are penetrated by hollows called sinus. Problems occasionally arise here when the epithelial lining tissue over-secretes mucus causing drainage problems. This gives rise to the sinus headache which is often aggravated and ameliorated by changing the position of the head, or by heat or cold that increases or decreases the flow of secretions.

The internal construction of the box is characterised by lack of space. The box is rigid preventing expansion in inflammation or injury. Swelling within the box is dangerous because it puts pressure on the vulnerable brain. Bleeding within the box has the same danger as the brain responds to pressure by altering its function so consciousness is altered or even absent. The brain is protected by two membranes, the meninges, that are further cushioned with fluid filling the space between them. Thus as we leap

about, the brain does not rattle off the bony box but is protected by the same mechanism as the baby in the womb, i.e. fluid. Inflammation in this area, meningitis, may increase the fluid bringing pressure to bear on the precious brain. Meningitis may also involve increase in the cerebro-spinal fluid filling the space around the spinal cord and the ventricles within the brain. Injury to the head is serious because the damage may vary depending on the locality, bruising and bleeding and the pressure arising out of these. This is why *Arnica* is important in head injury - it stops bleeding and bruising.

The role of the brain and nervous system is consciousness and control. Well supplied with nerves whose function is sensation, pain is easily perceived in the head. The neuralgic headache, or migraine, well illustrates this when pain is tearing, excruciating as only nerve pain can be. Numbness associated with many migraines may arise from over-stimulation and burn-out of nerve receptors. Visual disturbance in migraines also shows the effect of nerve dysfunction. When dizziness and nausea are involved the autonomic nervous system has been stimulated. Connections here are through the hindbrain and cerebellum which controls co-ordination of voluntary muscles - dysfunction gives rise to clumsiness. Mixing up words and forgetfulness that occurs with some migraines shows some effect on the memory and language centres in the brain.

The most frequent changes in the head environment occur from the composition of the blood that varies easily as blood is a transport medium. In headaches we are particularly interested in the debris produced by metabolic breakdown, catabolism. Of course, the content of this debris varies from day to day and from individual to individual depending on lifestyle, diet, habit and constitutional make-up, e.g. the individual with a diabetic diathesis will differ from another with a rheumatic diathesis. Each of us may vary daily depending on how much alcohol we have consumed or how much tobacco smoke we have been exposed to. The key is the efficiency of the liver in taking the toxins out of the blood. It may depend on just how much work we give the liver to do hence heavy foods like cheese that are difficult to digest often produce headaches. Because the liver excretes oestrogen from the body, its role is increased prior to the menses so women often suffer headaches before their monthly period. The headache arising here is the bilious headache. Dullness of consciousness arises from the sluggish flow. Worse stooping tells us it is a congestive headache. Worse heat is common as this increases the blood flow.

The tension headache occurs in the muscles at the back of the neck when we steel ourselves to get on with something, or when we bear up under pressure. We grasp our body tightly in order to perform, or overperform, or push ourselves. The continuous tension causes unnatural contraction of the muscles. That may extend down into the shoulders but frequently the tension rises to settle over the eyes where we contract the brows in a frown. The contraction explains why this headache is often experienced as a tightness or cramp.

EXERCISE

Look at the structure of the head in an Anatomy and Physiology textbook.

The Symptom Picture of a Headache

What we have looked at above is the *common* symptom picture based on an understanding of the Anatomy and Physiology. This does not enable us to select a homeopathic remedy although it does enable us to see what needs cured in terms of the five pillars of health, i.e. the maintaining causes. When we have isolated the maintaining causes that affect health in general we can then find the individual causes or symptoms that indicate the homoeopathic remedy.

Maintaining Causes

Maintaining causes are bad health habits. When removed they will enable vitality to be restored automatically. For example, when we have a tension headache we need to reduce the stress levels to stop further damage then relax to enable the muscles to let go the spasm. Until this has occurred cure is not possible. We need to leave the stressful environment, change our attitude to that boss or bit of work, slow down and unburden ourselves. You will find a couple of exercises below to relieve strain in this area at the back of the head.

In the case of the bilious headache we need to reassess the intake of food, drink and air. Is it too much or too little? What is the quality needed to function efficiently? Some foods are poisonous - alcohol, tea, coffee. Others over-stimulate the digestive system and may even affect the nerves - fats, spices, sugars: Some foods may only affect in quantities. Often these food affect anyone, each and every one of us, so are maintaining causes. Others affect different people in different ways. This last group moves us into individual **susceptibility** that becomes the **exciting cause**.

Exciting Causes

To find the homoeopathic remedy we need Individuality; irrespective of the cause we each produce a unique pattern of symptoms. Included in Individuality, but separate, is that to which each one of us is susceptible, the resonance that responds to cause and produces points of change in the symptom picture. The Homoeopath will speak of the underlying chronic pattern of weaknesses that we inherit.

Our family might have heart problems, or be prone to bowel problems, etc. From these weaknesses, or *predispositions*, arise the exciting causes. With heart problems our family is very sensitive to bad news. All people may ultimately be affected by bad news but our family is so sensitive it becomes an exciting cause. After all, few are struck dumb as our Jeannie was on hearing her son had a terrible accident. And John, he has never recovered from the shock of being made redundant. He still has nightmares, five years later. The family with bowel problems may speak of sensitivity to wheat or milk, or individuals within it may not be able to wait for food. One may develop headaches if they do not eat on time. Another may become very aggressive and violent if kept waiting in a restaurant for more than five minutes.

The exciting cause links the headache to the underlying constitution. Usually we are aware that *our* headache always follows the same pattern of symptoms and has a recognised trigger.

EXERCISES FOR TENSION RELEASE

1. It is not easy to let go of tensed muscles. Massage helps. However, we could draw our attention to it by further contracting then releasing the muscles.
2. Lift the shoulders very very slowly, pull the head down into the shoulders and tighten then release just as slowly. Do this three times at least.
3. If pain is in the shoulders, you could add another exercise after 2. Rotate the shoulders slowly one at a time forwards three times then backwards three times.
4. Rest.
5. Where do you feel tense now? Pay attention.
6. If still tense in the neck muscles, bend the head forward slowly then back, then to the left then to the right side. Slowly. Then rotate the neck three times one way then the other way.
7. Rest.

In the Repertory you will find over 100 pages with different headache symptoms. Below are a few symptoms of Individuality that may lead you more quickly to a remedy. Remember, we never go on one symptom alone but put it into the Total Symptom Picture.

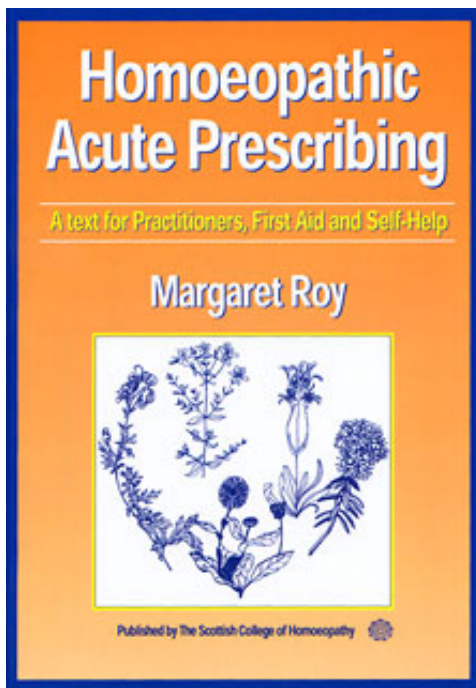
Some Exciting Causes

Time - what happened at the start that put the Vital Force off key? Here is a list of exciting causes that you will easily come across and that feature many of the remedies we are studying. It will give you an idea of what the Homoeopath looks for in a symptom picture, that golden Strange, Rare and Peculiar symptom that leads us swiftly to the remedy.

Hot bathing	<i>Belladonna, Calcarea carbonica</i>
After a blow to the head	<i>Arnica, Hypericum</i>
Catarrh suppressed	<i>Belladonna, Lachesis</i>
Constipation	<i>Bryonia, Nux vomica</i>
Damp room, sleeping in excitement	<i>Bryonia, Belladonna, Lycopodium, Natrum muriaticum, Nux vomica, Phosphorus, Pulsatilla, Staphisagria</i>
After exposure to cold winds	<i>Aconite, Nux vomica, Rhus toxicodendron, Silicea</i>
Straining the eyes	<i>Calcarea carbonica, Lycopodium, Natrum muriaticum, Phosphorus, Ruta graveoleus, Silicea</i>
Worse fasting	<i>Lycopodium, Phosphorus, Silicea, Sulphur</i>
Worse after fright	<i>Aconite, Ignatia, Nux vomica, Rhus toxicodendron</i>
Since grief	<i>Ignatia, Natrum muriaticum, Pulsatilla, Staphisagria</i>
After a haircut	<i>Belladonna</i>
After ironing	<i>Bryonia, Sepia</i>
After lifting	<i>Calcarea carbonica</i>
Worse strong light	<i>Gelsemium</i>
Worse menstruation	<i>Bryonia, Calcarea carbonica, Lachesis, Natrum muriaticum, Pulsatilla, Sepia</i>
Worse menopause	<i>Bryonia, Calcarea carbonica, Lachesis, Sepia</i>
Nervous exhaustion	<i>Gelsemium, Ignatia, Nux vomica, Silicea</i>
Worse running	<i>Bryonia, Ignatia, Natrum muriaticum, Nux vomica, Pulsatilla</i>
Comes with sea sickness	<i>Cocculus</i>
After sexual intercourse	<i>Calcarea carbonica, Lycopodium, Phosphorus, Sepia, Silicea</i>
Sleep loss	<i>Cocculus, Nux vomica</i>
After getting soaked	<i>Belladonna (head), Dulcamara, Pulsatilla (feet), Rhu toxicodendron</i>
After exposure to the sun	<i>Belladonna, Natrum muriaticum, Pulsatilla</i>
After exposure to tobacco	<i>Gelsemium, Ignatia, Nux vomica</i>

Some Food Causes

Time or Modality - these are not necessarily 'allergies'. In Homoeopathy, it is accepted that each person will have *susceptibility*. Each individual will have their own trigger points. This is not the same as the hyperactive state today called *allergic*. Similarly, because each of us has different metabolism and life style, we each have modalities to which we respond. The difference between Time and Modality is quite subtle. The first causes an acute symptom picture because it disturbs the Vital Force. Once in force it has to run through to the crisis that resolves the disturbance. A Modality affects the vitality so there is slower build up, like a maintaining cause, and any lessening of the modality will bring relief.



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