

“I NEED MY MOTHER”.....*Lac Humanum*

Patricia Hatherly BA DipEd IBCLC BHSc(Hom)

The theme of this conference is “That Homœopathy can adapt to today’s health needs” and, while that may be true, there are some things in Life that never change. I am referring here to the unsurpassed value of human milk and the pivotal role it has always played in the advancement of the human species. The bottom line is that if women world-wide had, throughout the centuries, denied their babies the breast to the extent that exists today, we wouldn’t be here participating in this conference. We can all say a silent “thank you” to the long line of mothers who have come before us.

Disinclination to breastfeed has, however, long been a social problem. Crude feeding implements have been unearthed in many ancient archaeological sites.<sup>1</sup> Hippocrates who is oft quoted by Naturopath’s for his famous dictum of “Let foods be your medicines” is similarly appreciated by Lactation Consultants for his stance on breastfeeding accorded by another dictum: “One’s own milk is beneficial, others’ harmful”. History records that Hammurabi’s Code (which dates from c1800 BC), contains regulations pertaining to the practice of wet nursing, and legislation was passed in Sparta to ensure that breastfeeding (of at the very least the eldest son), was provided by the mother. Plutarch reports that the second son of King Themistes inherited the kingdom of Sparta because his elder brother was not breastfed by their mother.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequent to that historical period, Emperor Augustus was reputed to have ridiculed mothers who hired wet nurses to suckle their infants.<sup>3</sup> Still, it was a practice, which abounded throughout the ages and wet nursing was always a popular option for those who could afford it, and provided a regular source of income for those who were resilient enough or desperate enough to endure it.<sup>4</sup> Infanticide and abandonment were widely practiced in parts of Europe by the bourgeois as well as the working classes in the C18th. Few women breastfed; their babies being sent out to wet nurses who became known as “the angle makers”.<sup>5</sup>

A review of infant feeding in Great Britain from 1500 to 1700 AD suggests that most wealthy English women did not breastfeed; and, although it was recognised as a reliable means of contraception even back then, they preferred to bear anything from 12 to 20 babies rather than breastfeed them.<sup>6</sup> The history of England may well have been vastly different had Catherine of Aragon breastfed her firstborn son who lived for 5 months under the care of the royal wet nurse and 4 royal rockers of the cradle! She, in fact gave birth to 10 children and only one (Mary) survived.

Working class mothers who were forced to leave their infants for varying periods throughout the day, resorted to pap gruels, which consisted of a very dilute mixture of milk mixed with bread, rice or flour. Those mothers, who were forced to take their infants with them to work, often resorted to a mixture of treacle and opium (called “Godfrey’s Cordial”) to keep their babies cooperative.<sup>7</sup> The majority of these infants died. Those who made it through to adulthood truly epitomised the notion of survival of the fittest”.

Little has changed. According to UNICEF as many as 1,000,000 babies die throughout the world each year due to denial of the breast and the inappropriate use of breastmilk substitutes. <sup>8</sup> This led, in 1981, to the development of a Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes to which Australia is a signatory.<sup>9</sup> This essentially means that no marketing of any kind may be entered into which would undermine the importance of breastfeeding.

This code was followed in 1990 by the Innocenti Declaration,<sup>10</sup> which arose from a meeting in Italy of Health Ministers from 30 nations who gathered to work on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This Declaration arose from recognition given to the vulnerable position faced by children worldwide and the need to formally construct a framework to protect them from all sorts of abuse. The horrors of physical and sexual child abuse, have, unfortunately, been much highlighted in this country in recent years. To my mind, however, there's no more subtle form of child abuse than the denial of a child's right to breastmilk. The infrastructure exists worldwide to provide both blood and semen to those in need. That an international effort to establish human milk banks throughout the world is lacking, is a sad reflection of humanity's priorities.

In addition to this huge mortality rate, many millions of babies suffer a range of morbidities which research has well documented as being associated with lack of breastfeeding. An up to date literature review can name some thirty studies that cover this issue. Perhaps the most alarming of these concerns the rise in diabetes, which is associated with higher levels of antibodies to cow's milk proteins, particularly b-lactoglobulin and bovine serum albumin.<sup>11</sup> These antibodies cross-react with beta cell membrane proteins, destroying them and thus the islet beta cells. (Interestingly both *Lac Defloratum* and *Lac Vaccinum* have diabetes within their clinical sphere of influence). It is cow's milk that is the most prevalent protein source used in the majority of breastmilk substitutes. Soy protein is another. And, while it may be difficult enough for bottle-fed babies to be forced to adapt to tolerating a protein source that is not species specific, the current research into genetic engineering and breastmilk substitutes reveals possible pitfalls for babies that we, as homœopaths would find appalling.<sup>12</sup>

Added to this is the fact that the packaging, distribution and reconstituting of breastmilk substitutes exposes babies to the possible inherent dangers associated with contamination and loss of nutrients. Water safety cannot be absolutely guaranteed even in western countries where clean water is taken for granted, and human error is always a factor when it comes to making up formula from instructions. Incorrect calorie density may result in an excessive renal solute load leading to hypernatraemia and possible brain damage, while over-dilution (which often occurs due to poverty constraints) can lead to failure to thrive.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally we must consider that research has indicated that some drinking water, infant formulas, bottles and teats may contain a range of xenoestrogens, including phthalates, alkylphenols, bisphenol A, organochlorine pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins. The effects of many of these chemicals are additive and appropriate risk assessment of these factors and their possible link to health problems has been urged.<sup>14</sup>

No doubt, it could be argued that mothers too may be inadvertent repositories of environmental pollutants, which are stored in fat reserves and bones. However, encouraging weight loss before a pregnancy can minimise harm from the former source.<sup>15</sup> Ensuring adequate intake of good quality fatty acids in the daily diet during lactation also helps to minimise risk, as this tends to keep depot fats immobilised. Mothers can, furthermore, be reassured that as the lactation progresses, the already minimal amount of toxins that may be present in the milk will diminish over time. The same guarantee cannot be given with respect to formula feeding. Preliminary evidence from an Australian study suggests that calcium supplementation can have a protective effect by slowing down the release of lead from skeletal stores.<sup>16</sup>

The notion abounds that in this scientifically modulated world of ours, bottle-feeding is OK, and its subliminal message prevails at every media opportunity.<sup>17</sup> However, while it is true that ongoing advances in developing infant formulas has reduced infant mortality with respect to feeding practices, it is a fallacy to believe that Science has somehow ensured that their contents absolutely mimic those of breastmilk. The bottom line is that being artificially fed by formula is always going to be a lesser option because human milk is species specific and both complex and dynamic in nature.

The fat profile of human milk forms between 2-5% of the total volume and the predominant proteins are  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, lactoferrin and secretory IgA. The main protein in cow's milk, however, is b-lactoglobulin; and, because its casein content is 80%, that milk is a distinctive white colour. Our milk is "thin and blue" because the casein is low (less than 40%), with 60% of the protein being comprised of a variety of whey proteins including immunological, enzymatic and anti-microbial factors, which afford the growing infant a level of protection against a range of morbidities (including allergies) that is just not available to bottle-fed babies. That each individual baby does best on his mother's milk is due to the fact that the immunoglobulin profile of her milk reflects her personal disease picture and therefore affords a subtlety not entirely matched by another's.<sup>18</sup>

However, human milk on a macro level has a biochemical profile that it is designed to ensure optimum growth of the individual neonate at each stage of development. Research has shown that the milk of all mothers across the planet is consistent.<sup>19</sup> Nature has designed it so that even in famine conditions mothers (while they may struggle to produce sufficient volume) provide milk that is almost identical in quality to that of mothers in affluent situations.<sup>20,21</sup>

It is this unique quality of human milk that helps to link all babies to the human experience as its mineral and vitamin content is synonymous with that of planet Earth's profile. Human milk, therefore, helps to ground the incoming soul and prepares it for the group experience of belonging to the Community of Man. That the *Lac Humanum* type dreams of cousins is significant in this regard as the extended family represents the infant's primary sense of community. As Sankaran points out the essence of this remedy picture lies in achieving a sense of balance between surviving in a group without losing one's sense of identity and focus on the process of individuation.

It is interesting that the theme of groundedness (or rather a lack of it) recurs in several of the milk remedies. It is there in the depression and desire for death seen in *Lac Defloratum*. In *Lac Caninum* it is present in the fear of falling and in the delusion of floating in the air.<sup>22</sup> However, it is in the human milk remedies that this theme abounds. In *Lac Humanum* rubrics such as "indifference"; "restless"; "self control, loss of"; "spaced out"; "stupefaction"; "unconsciousness, conduct automatic" and "lack of feeling in soles of feet" give approbation to this notion.<sup>23</sup> In *Lac Maternum* Tinus Smits reports "sensation of floating"; "out of body sensation"; "vertigo, feeling as if having no legs"; "feeling of absence"; "lack of awareness of one's own identity"; "lack of awareness of one's own surroundings [everything looks strange]" and "unaware of one's own boundaries [feels unprotected]".<sup>24</sup>

This idea of loss of boundaries is also applicable to *Lac Humanum* which dreams of disasters and war, such issues being synonymous with the popularly held notion that dealing with cancer is seen as going to battle. *Lac Humanum* is, according to Sankaran, a medicine that belongs to the Cancer miasm. Its aetiology lies, in my opinion, in having been denied a satisfactory breastfeeding relationship. It has, therefore, vast clinical application in the C21st as cancer rates rise and breastfeeding rates drop.

While almost all Australian babies leave hospital being breastfed, this rate drops quickly to 50% by 3 months and to 30% by 6 months; a situation that is similar in other developed countries, despite initiatives instigated by WHO in 1989 to make all hospitals Baby Friendly in the hope that breastfeeding rates would rise worldwide.<sup>25</sup>

Very few women are still breastfeeding at 3 years, considered the time by which the infant's brain differentiation is basically completed. It is deemed that availability of human milk up until that age potentiates maximal development. At the very least all babies should ideally be at the breast until 9 months, thereby mirroring ex-utero, the period of development, which occurred during gestation. Like many marsupials, humans are born quite "underdone" and need completion at the breast.

Milk strengthens the physical body, which, as suggested in aphorism # 9, is but a vehicle for growth of the spirit. On a physiological level the main areas it targets in order to maximise development are the brain and central nervous system and the gut. Breastfed babies are smarter,<sup>26, 27, 28, 29</sup> less likely to be obese and suffer heart disease in adulthood,<sup>30, 31</sup> develop fewer allergies (especially of a respiratory nature)<sup>32</sup> and are much less likely to suffer from such diseases as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly, many rubrics from the proving support this connection to the CNS and gut, and include (in the usual polarity profile we have come to expect from provings):<sup>34</sup>

## **MIND**

ABSENTMINDED	2
ALERT	3
ANXIETY	1
CONCENTRATION, difficult	3
CONFIDENCE, lack of	2
CONFUSION, of mind	1
INDIFFERENCE	3
IRRESOLUTION	2
MEMORY, weak, read, for what he has	1
MISTAKES, calculations, in	1
MISTAKES, reading	1
MISTAKES, space & time	1
MISTAKES, spellings	1
THOUGHTS, disconnected	2
THOUGHTS, vanishing	1
WORK, mental, averse to	1

## **ABDOMEN**

DISTENTION	1
FLATULENCE	1
PAIN, stitching, hypochondria, right to left	1
PAIN, stitching, hypochondria, morning, waking	1

## STOMACH

DISTENTION, air, as if full	1
ERUCTATIONS, constant	2
HEARTBURN	2
LUMP, sensation of, after eating	1
NAUSEA, eating >	2

## STOOL

BALLS, like	1
FLOATING	1
HARD, first then soft (NB: Lyc)	1
OFFENSIVE	1
SOFT	1

On the other hand, the act of breastfeeding also helps to ensure balanced psychological development, especially if the baby is still fed beyond 9 months. This was first noted in the 1970s<sup>35</sup> and is consistent with the observations made by Erickson who, as a psychologist, identified 2 distinct stages in a child's development.<sup>36</sup> Stage 1 lasts from birth to 18 months and is labelled: ***Trust vs Mistrust***. During this developmental stage, the infant who has his needs met and feels physically safe, grows in confidence and comes to trust his environment. As he begins to become ambulatory, he then comes and goes from his mother with confidence and a sense of being in charge which helps to minimise separation anxiety.

As homœopaths we all recognise the *Pulsatilla* picture, which tends to present itself as the infant is placed in childcare or the mother returns to work. Erickson believed that those infants, who have continued access to their mothers, come to trust their environment and therefore move more easily into the next stage. He described this stage as lasting from 18 months to 3 years and labelled it: ***Autonomy vs Shame***. During this stage the breastfed toddler further grows in reassurance and confidence as he begins to explore his exciting new world with his newly acquired motor and verbal skills. Breastfeeding during this stage is, as much for emotional as well as nutritional needs, as the toddler's process of individuation gradually unfolds and he grows in the realisation that he is a separate individual who has control over his environment.

These stages, during which the toddler grows into the mental capacity to recognise that objects have permanency when out of sight (and, therefore, to accept the notion of separateness), have also been identified by Piaget and labelled: ***Object Constancy***.<sup>37</sup>

The polarity, with respect to each stage as described by Erickson, is governed by Psora. Hahnemann (§ 80-81)<sup>38</sup> would have us believe that Psora constitutes the basic miasm; an idea that is further developed in the wider homœopathic literature where it is often referred to as "Original Sin". He, and others since have highlighted the negative influence that Psora has on the human economy. It is said to "govern functional disorders"; it is "hypersensitive" and promotes "hypofunction". On the mental level it is "full of fear, timidity and inhibition".<sup>39</sup>

Lately I have begun to question this specific notion of Psora as being too restrictive. In fact, the totality of the human condition, with its myriad of complexities is, in my opinion, not well served by the limited perspective afforded by the miasmatic theory in general. We perhaps need to consider that the growth and differentiation of Sycosis can serve a potentiating as well as a destructive purpose; and, without the death and destruction afforded by the Syphilitic miasm, there would be no regeneration or re-birth.

To my mind, then, Sycosis and Syphilis are both moderated by Psora, which, in a positive light concerns our propensity as humans to struggle within the limitations of the human condition. Psora is our gift of Free Will that encourages us to “do or do not”. Its issues concern “fight or flight”. If used wisely, can assist us in positively negotiating all 8 stages as described by Erickson. Stage 8 is labelled: *Ego Integrity vs Despair, Disgust* and epitomises the possibility of Self Actualisation, the goal outlined so well by Hahnemann in § 9.

So, in order to acquire a body which will become the vehicle through which the souls steers itself through the Planet Earth Experience, reproduction has to take place. Kahlil Gibran invites us to consider that “children are Life’s longing for itself”, and Psora is perhaps activated in the moment that the baby begins to experience the contractions associated with the birthing process, when adrenalin begins to course through his veins. At that moment he has 2 choices. Either he tucks his head on his chin and burrows down into the nether regions of the uterus thus forming a good presenting part and goes with the flow as the positive aspects of Psora (such as hopefulness and curiosity) would have him do, or he gives in to the negative aspects and has to be assisted through the process by forceps or Caesarean.

The baby who successfully endures his “expulsion from Paradise” as described by van der Zee in his most excellent book *Miasms in Labour*,<sup>40</sup> then uses the positive attributes of Psora associated with the willingness to struggle, to then make his way up his mother’s abdomen to her breast. During the period immediately following birth, the baby’s senses are heightened due to adrenalin rush associated with the whole birth process. All of the infant’s reflexes, especially that of the rooting reflex, are designed to allow him to crawl up the mother’s abdomen in search of the nipple. With the physical process of attaching to the nipple, the baby stretches the nipple tissue with his tongue and compresses it so that its tip lies adjacent to the junction of the soft and hard palate. Rubrics from the proving associated with this process include: “difficulty to connect with tongue”; “tongue sore”; s/lf: “jaw dislocating” and “corner of mouth sore and cracked”.

It is at this point, just below the pituitary that the functional and governor channels meet. By stimulating this point, the baby’s Chi is truly activated and The Grand Macrocosmic Orbit is initiated. This pathway is recognised by Taoists as being representative of a return to the womb.<sup>41</sup> This crucial time delineates the period of attachment (both physical as the baby attaches to the nipple and psychological as the process of imprinting occurs). The baby who successfully completes this struggle works then with Psora as his ally and is therefore well placed to negotiate each of Erikson’s 8 stages in a positive manner.

In the *Lac Humanum* type, however, this process is either denied or disturbed, so issues of attachment ensue resulting in a sense of detachment from a perceived sense of rejection and abandonment. In fact it is this aspect of Psora, which epitomises its negative profile. “My God! My God! Why have You abandoned me?” was the cry of the one who reputedly came to save Mankind from the ravages of “Original Sin”. He died on a crucifix, his arms outspread in the sleeping pattern adopted by *Sulphur*. At the top end *Sulphur* is curious and energetic and helps, as its Doctrine of Signatures would imply, to shape the Earth. At the bottom end it is associated with all the negative psoric attributes denoting “lack”.

If at the time of giving birth, the mother (and her carers) are not positively aligned with stage #7 (*Generativity vs Stagnation*), the *Lac Humanum* state may awaken in her and stir deeply unacknowledged feelings of anger at not having been properly nourished at the breast. At the time when she is putting all her energies into mothering, it focuses her own sense of abandonment and rejection from not having been most appropriately nurtured. For the lactating mother, breastfeeding therefore may provide a type of Simillimum and I have observed that the state often focuses at this time. Alternatively individuals who are *Lac Humanum* often choose careers where, caring for mothers and babies is a primary focus.

Interestingly, “nesting” behaviour was elicited during the proving and *Lac Humanum* dreams about babies! However, cursing and swearing (emotional expressions of anger) are also part of the *Lac Humanum* picture. The marked stiffness in the knees and the aching pain in the wrists and ankles remarked on by Timmermann, can perhaps be seen as a more physiological expression of anger, as also are the rubrics “sour risings, belchings, heartburn...< eating.” These digestive symptoms may be a physical expression of anger and they can often predominate during the pregnancy or the lactation with a strong *Nux vomica* picture. This gut disturbance is perhaps why there is marked desire for ginger, considering its moderating effect on digestion.

This need for the mother, then, is a catch-22 situation. For those women who were denied appropriate nurturing as infants themselves and perhaps appropriate modelling during their formative years, the struggle to mother appropriately themselves, can often become too much for them and they abandon the process. The state then becomes self-perpetuating! However, the woman who has her act together and sits comfortably at stage #7 before embarking on mothering is perhaps best placed to work with the positive attributes of *Psora* and birth well thereby giving her baby an excellent start for this process to be then repeated. She is the quintessential nurturer, the giver of unconditional love. The Latin verb “to love” is “amare” which encompasses the very essence of this noble sentiment. I am/You are implies a balanced perspective which acknowledges each individual’s need to attain stage #8.

It would seem then, that Life has dealt us a difficult hand to play. Probably most of us can identify with not having been appropriately nurtured and with then failing somewhat in our attempts to do likewise. The *Lac Humanum* state, then is reflective of the individual’s attempt to restore a perceived lack of integrity to a Vital force denied the solid foundation upon which can be grafted the Soul’s fulsome journey through Life to a point of Self-Realisation.

*Lac Humanum* is, therefore, a remedy very much for our times, and rubrics from the proving associated with isolation and detachment, conjure up notions of loneliness much experienced by those who negotiate Life in the 21st. However, they are, in another sense, also reflective of the search for self-mastery, which emphasises the “I am”, which is also very much a growing area of focus. The alchemists of old focused unerringly on the search for the Philosopher’s Stone with its supposed promise of being able to turn base metals into gold, while modern biochemists are relentless in their pursuit of the ideal combination of genes which will result in the production of the flawless human being just right for cloning!

Perfection is idealised on all levels and aspects of society; a notion which underlies the seemingly exponential growth of the Cancer miasm in modern times. In our erroneous belief that the answer to the sublimation of the human body and spirit lies beyond our grasp, we have ignored the obvious. Human milk, with its unique dynamic combination of nutrients designed to maximise the physical and psychological potential of each individual, is the white gold long sought after by those who would embrace immortality.

It is the true Elixir of Life

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## Erik Erikson's 8 EPIGENETIC STAGES of MAN

**VIII Maturity  
Old Age  
(WISDOM)**

**Ego Integrity vs  
Despair, Disgust**

**VII Middle  
Adulthood  
(CARE)**

**Generativity vs  
Stagnation**

**VI Young  
Adulthood  
(LOVE)**

**Intimacy vs  
Isolation**

**V Puberty &  
Adolescence  
(FIDELITY)**

**Ego Identity vs  
Role Confusion**

**IV School age:  
Latency  
(COMPETENCY)**

**Industry vs  
Inferiority**

**III Play age:  
Locomotor/Genital  
(PURPOSE)**

**Initiative vs  
Guilt**

**II Early childhood:  
Muscular/Anal  
(WILL POWER)**

**Autonomy vs  
Shame, Doubt**

**I Infancy:  
Oral/Sensory  
(HOPE)**

**Basic trust vs  
Mistrust**

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Adapted from *Childhood and Society* Erik H Erikson, 1963 in *Personality Theories (2<sup>nd</sup> edn)*; Huelle LA and Ziegler DJ  
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