

The Lacs

A Materia Medica & Repertory

Patricia Hatherly
2010

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patriciahatherly.com
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Reviewed by Lesley Lee

For such instinctively obvious medicines, it is surprising that it has taken so long for the milk medicines to become popular in the homœopathic pharmacopœia and Patricia Hatherly has done us great service in completing a comprehensive documentation of 20 medicines from this fascinating homœopathic medicine group. While there are 19 straight milk medicines, there is one proving summary of 'Sus,' a synthesis of the blood, milk, saliva and semen of the pig bred for xenotransplantation and xenografting.

The layout of the book makes both the materia medica and the repertory easily accessible. The usual headings in the materia medica, such as Generalities, Mind etc, are supported by subheadings that summarise the main traits in a tabular arrangement that is easy to reference. In addition, Patricia Hatherly has included valuable notes throughout the materia medica, ranging from mythological themes and historical references to biochemical information. These make interesting reading and are a wonderful supplement to the usual dry format of most materia medicas.

The repertory forms about half the volume and is presented in the usual style, with some notable and useful additions. These include a small chapter on homœopathic medicine affinities, a short summary of the miasms each homœopathic medicine is believed to fit into and a longer section on themes. "Sensations as if" has been separated into a section on its own under the usual Materia Medica and Repertory headings, making it easy to consult.

Patricia Hatherly notes in the Acknowledgements that this is a foray into making the milk medicines more accessible. She also states that this is a work in progress. For example, she does not list homœopathic medicine strengths for each rubric in the repertory and notes that this anthology is only a preliminary venture into the extensive subject of mammalian milks.

While milk would seem to be a very obvious candidate for homœopathic research, several provings of mammalian milks have only recently indicated a surge of interest in this area. It always seemed strange to me that *Lac caninum* was the only notable milk medicine in the old materia medicas. Dr John Henry Clarke in *A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica* gives *Lac felinum*, *Lac vaccinum* and *Lac vaccinum defloratum* relatively little space compared to *Lac caninum*, which has had polycrest status. This homœopathic medicine, however, was probably made popular largely because of its dramatic curative effect on some cases of diphtheria, in an era when

this was a dangerous, often fatal, illness. In the late 1800's between 32 and 50% of those diagnosed with this disease died when treated using conventional medicines. Homœopathic treatment, by contrast, was remarkably successful. In the winter of 1860, Lippe, Hering and Reichhelm treated 240 confirmed cases of this condition and all were cured. In 1911, Dr Dewey compiled the treatment results from 28 European and American Homœopathic physicians for diphtheria occurring between 1883 and 1891 and reported a mortality rate of 4%¹.

Dr Finke (1821 – 1906) included this homœopathic medicine as part of a small gift pack of 20 medicines, all in the 900th potency, that he sent to his patents. *Lac caninum* was included for the prevention of diphtheria for which he recommended one dose three nights in succession².

Swan, one of the first provers of *Lac caninum*, also proved a variety of unusual substances. His adventurous and enquiring mind has given us medicines that are both valuable and open new vistas of possibilities for exploration and treatment. Julian Winston states, "[He was] especially interested in both pharmacy and the use of moribific products as medicines..." While he was the first to prove *Medorrhinum*, *Syphilinum* and *Tuberculinum* he also proved a variety of secretions, including *Coagulum lac vaccinum*, *Colostrum*, *Lachryma filia* – tears of a young girl in great grief and suffering, *Sal cerebri* – salt secreted profusely from a gentlemen's scalp with the perspiration, and *Verucca menstruo* – menstrual blood from a woman who had warts³.

Along with Dr Morgan, Dr Swan also gave us *Lac felinum* and *Lac vaccinum defloratum* in 1883 and around the same time, the homœopathic medicine *Lac vaccinum*, again made by Dr Swan, was proved by Dr J.C. Boardman.

This homœopathic heritage, along with the successful treatment of diphtheria using *Lac caninum*, has perhaps opened the chink, whereby the other milk medicines have been latterly considered. But it took over 100 years for more interest to be shown in this fruitful area of research. Of course this was an era of dormancy in homœopathy, which had been under attack, almost forgotten and was struggling to maintain any sort of a foothold.

The late 20th century heralded a new era of fecundity in our profession and with it, an interest in possible new medicines. It is fitting that *Lac humanum* was first proved in this period (between 1991 and 1993) and the researchers have been vindicated in their choice, in that the application of this homœopathic medicine would seem to be vast. This is a polychrest of the first order. Patricia Hatherly calls it 'the universal medicine.'

Patricia Hatherly also proved *Lac maternum* in 2002; her medicine being made from human milk plus colostrum and Tinus Smits described *Lac maternum* as one of his seven universal medicines. This homœopathic medicine was made in 1994 from the milk of nine women, from three days to ten months post-partum.

Patricia Hatherly's *Materia Medica and Repertory of the Lacs* is a colossal contribution to our repertoire of treatment options, bringing, as it does, so many of the milks into

one volume. In summarising the proving data, she has listed salient features of each homœopathic medicine as well as the polarities that were elicited. Common features of the Lacs emerge too in the provings. *Lac caninum*, for example, is not the only Lac to have the rubric "alternating sides". This also features in *Lac asinum* (Ass), *Lac equinum* (horse), *Lac felinum* (cat), *Lac humanum*, *Lac maternum*, *Lac macropi gigantei* (eastern grey kangaroo), *Lac oryctolagus cuniculus* (white rabbit) and *Lac suillinum* (pig).

It seems fitting at this time of terrible world conflicts, pollution and disasters, that the nurturing aspect of the female principle should be celebrated so purposefully in this excellent anthology of the milks. Perhaps too, the advent of the milks as valuable homœopathic medicines can nurture our own profession as it battles with the opportunities and dangers of our time. Conventional medicine is clearly struggling at present. Waiting lists are getting longer in hospitals; in many places it is difficult to access a GP; health costs are escalating; more and more resistant bacteria are causing increasing concerns amongst both the public and practitioners and chronic disease is becoming increasingly prevalent. A number of drugs have been removed from the market because of the serious side effects they have elicited and the strategies of some drug companies are being questioned. However, the juggernaut that is modern medicine is not easily slowed and homœopathy, whilst having so much to offer, will not be readily accepted into the fold of public health providers after so many decades of derision. So thank you, Patricia, for this extensive work and may the milks give us all respite, encouragement and nourishment, as we move with our profession into the challenges offered by 21st century medicine.

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Organotherapy, Drainage & Detoxification

by Dr Joe Rozencwajg NMD

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This book sets out to uncloak the mystique of the 'French School of Homœopathy' where there is a long tradition of therapeutics using drainage, detoxification and Organotherapy. Think of famous French homœopaths such as Vannier, and of those peculiar complexes called 'Drainols' and the 'Gemmotherapy' medicines and that puts you in the picture.