

*The Homœopathic Physician's Guide to Lactation* is a work of scholarship and keen experience. Ms Hatherly, a homeopath and lactation consultant, has penned a book essential for all practitioners who deal with breastfeeding issues; it is likewise a valuable work for primary care practitioners who treat infants and their lactating mothers; and finally, for all homeopaths, this book offers valuable information about three milk remedies – *Lac caninum*, *Lac humanum* and new information on *Lac maternum*.

The author begins with a very scientific and well-written presentation of pretty much every aspect of lactation and human breast milk, inclusive of anatomy, embryology, physiology, endocrinology, nutrition and hormonal composition of breast milk, and immunology. She then proceeds to detail every conceivable aspect of breastfeeding and the myriad problems that can be associated with the practice. Contained within these pages are numerous pearls of wisdom on how to help mothers initiate and perpetuate breastfeeding, everything from nipple care and diet to positions for feeding, supplemental feedings, and promoting infant breast attachment to suckling patterns and constitutional remedies for difficulties therein, to the prevention and treatment of breast engorgement, and that's just chapter 5!

Chapter 6 discusses the maintenance of lactation – problems with under and over-supply of milk and the maintenance of lactation in the face of infant colic, gastroesophageal reflux, lactose intolerance, breast refusal, mastitis and breast abscess, galactocele, thrush, plugged ducts, etc. For each presenting difficulty or challenge, precise advice about the best method of breastfeeding is given, as well as a homeopathic differential. A simple example: for colic prone infants, breastfeeding babies in the upright or primate position can prove very helpful.

Chapter 7 covers mothers and babies with special needs; largely a primer on the pathophysiology of a host of such concerns (eg. Caesarian sections, postmaturity, jaundice, pyloric stenosis, Down's syndrome, cleft lip/palate, herpes etc.); where appropriate the author describes the nutritional needs of such children, the contributions that breastmilk can provide, and offers a few cursory comments about the efficacy of homeopathy in addressing some of the problems.

Chapter 8, the last dealing with breast feeding addresses practical issues – contraception while breastfeeding, drug contamination of breast milk, twins, expressing and storing breast milk, and weaning.

My only criticisms of the book to this point are two. The first is a superficial one – the author's choice of chapter and heading font is puzzling; the font in this case is both difficult to read and quite unappealing (the same is used on the cover and detracts considerably from the esthetic appeal of the book; hopefully given the value of the interior of the book, shoppers will adhere to the dictum of refraining from judging a book by its cover!)

The second relates to the manner in which materia medica for specific conditions is addressed – remedies and their symptomatology appear rather randomly within the text, making it difficult to consider this book a ready reference to materia medica for specific breastfeeding associated problems. Also, the remedy descriptions are rather spotty and the number of remedies considered sparse. If a second edition is ever considered, I should think a more complete and encompassing materia medica differential, presented in reader-friendly bulleted/listed format, would be highly appreciated. In a similar vein, the table of contents would benefit from a listing of subheadings so readers can rapidly locate information relevant to their immediate concerns.

Chapter 9 provides the most useful homeopathic information in the book – an impressive exposition of three milk remedies – *Lac caninum*, *Lac humanum* and *Lac maternum* (offering Ms Hatherly’s own personal perspective). Though at times a bit too esoteric for this reviewer, the information provided here is invaluable. For each of the three remedies a thorough outline of symptomatology is provided, making this section of the book a ready reference tool when considering one of these *Lac* remedies for a patient. A careful comparison of the listed characteristics of *Lac humanum* and *Lac maternum*, which are strikingly similar, should enable the student to dissect out some of the contrasting or individualizing characteristics. *Lac humanum* was collected from the breast of a mother who was well bonded with her baby; *Lac maternum* was made from the milk of 9 mothers in various stages of breastfeeding from day 3 to month 10. Thus, one critical difference between the two remedies is that *Lac maternum* contains the imprint of colostrum while the *humanum* variety does not. A resultant effect is that *Lac maternum* displays a greater affinity for pathology of the gastrointestinal tract. Another distinction between the two remedies, one based on the earlier collection of the milk, is that *Lac maternum* seems to address the issue of “lack of incarnation” which *Lac humanum* doesn’t. This term “lack of incarnation” in practical terms refers to a pattern of avoidance of the pain and demands of this life on earth as reflected in varied forms and expressions of escapism – drug abuse and addiction, detachment, confusion, avoidance, alienation, etc.

The final part of the book consists of a number of appendices that can be used as helpful handouts for patients containing useful tips for managing many breastfeeding issues, an index is included.

Reviewed by George Guess, MD, DHt

*American Journal of Homeopathic Medicine* volume 100 Number 4 Winter 2007