

The Human Disease—Animal Disease Connection: A Homeopathic Perspective

by Richard H. Pitcairn, DVM, PhD

Introduction

To understand and practice homeopathic medicine gives us a quite different perspective of health and disease than that entertained by the conventional allopathic doctor. We understand that disease originates on the dynamic level and that germs are secondary manifestations of a process that starts prior to the material level. However, it is quite apparent that it is not only human beings that suffer from disease. The animals and plants in our world also get sick and die from illness that, in many ways, is similar to what we experience. This paper specifically explores the question of animal disease and its relation to the illness that we human beings also suffer from.

My Experience as a Veterinarian

Let me start with describing a little of my experience as a veterinarian. I was trained in conventional allopathic medicine and practiced this way for the first 13 years of my professional life. When I began to study and apply homeopathic ideas to the treatment of animals, there were naturally certain issues for me to resolve:

- *Could I use the same books (materia medica, repertory), as developed for human use, for the treatment of animals?*
- *Were the provings in human beings applicable to animal disease?*

Did animals suffer from the same miasms that people did or do they have their own unique types?

After 18 years of homeopathic veterinary practice, I can now venture to supply some answers to these questions. My experience tells me that:

- *The same books apply to animals as to people.*
- *The provings in human beings indeed are applicable to people. Not only are they accurate, but they also point the way to a more human and ethical approach in medicine. Instead of using animals to study human diseases, causing additional suffering for them, we can*

use the information gained from human experimentation (e.g., the provings) to relieve the suffering of animals.

- *Animals do suffer from the same chronic miasms that do people. Most likely, they have acquired them from human beings.*

This last topic is the one I want to talk with you about for the time we have remaining.

Disease in Animals

As with human beings, animal disease can be divided into two classes—diseases that are acute and diseases that are chronic.

The acute diseases are the ones most likely familiar to you—canine distemper, rabies, parvo-virus, feline panleukopenia, upper respiratory infections, etc. Some of these acute diseases are also transmissible to people, for example influenza, psittacosis (parrot fever), tuberculosis, and rabies.

The chronic diseases of animals are not so familiar to you if you have not specifically worked with animals. They are much like the diseases that human beings suffer from—allergies, immune disorders, thyroid dysfunction, liver disease, heart disease, arthritis, bowel disease, chronic constipation, etc.

What is most distinctive in animals, however, is the preponderance of skin problems. More than any other complaint, we veterinarians are asked to help with continuous, incessant, itching. Skin disease is the most common and frustrating problem that veterinarians face.

The common manifestation of skin disease in animals suggests that we are dealing with Psora. The other important evidence for this is that it requires the antipsoric remedies to cure these diseases.

Hahnemann's Description of Psora

At this point, let's look at what Hahnemann discovered about chronic disease—primarily Psora.

Psora is by far the most important chronic disease that affects human beings and animals. Most of Hahnemann's writings in *The Chronic Diseases* are about this condition. Through careful study of patients, how their chronic disease first began (e.g., the first symptoms) and also a detailed survey of the history of diseases, Hahnemann was able to say that Psora starts as an itching eruption of the skin.

He describes Psora as “that most ancient, most universal, most destructive, and yet most misapprehended chronic miasmatic disease which for many thousands of years has disfigured and tortured mankind and which during the last centuries has become the mother of all the thousands of incredibly various chronic diseases, by which the whole civilized human race of the inhabited globe is being more and more afflicted.”¹

Hahnemann was able to trace the evolution of this condition from the earliest times (its origin is before our written records) and show that it was the same disease that has also been called leprosy in the bible. In contrast to what we think now of leprosy, the leprosy of that time is described as “similar to an inveterate itch with violent itching”.² It was terrible in appearance because of the sores and scabs and discoloration of the skin—much like we see now in dogs and cats with skin disease.

Psora also later manifested as “St. Anthony's Fire”, a form of erysipelas or cellulitis characterized by redness, swelling and inflammation of the skin. This was a severe disease from which many suffered and died during the Middle Ages.

Psora as an Infectious Disease.

Through his work with patients, Hahnemann was able to determine how Psora spread from one person to another—or to an animal. When Psora has an external manifestation (e.g., skin lesions) it is highly contagious. It takes only a single touch or contact with clothing or bandages from the patient to contract the disease. Upon touch it is

¹ *The Chronic Diseases* by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, second enlarged German edition of 1835, p. 35.

² *Ibid*, footnote, p. 36.

immediately transmitted via the nervous system throughout the entire body. For most individuals, there is a period of 6-14 days during which Psora is coming to full development. The whole organism feels that it is being changed by the presence of the disease and tries to eliminate it through the skin. At the end of this developmental period, there is this manifestation:³

- *A slight chill in the evening and a general feeling of heat or fever.*
- *The second night there is some perspiring during the night.*
- *Following is the skin eruption of small vesicles usually first in the region where Psora was first contacted.*
- *This eruption is accompanied by “a voluptuously tickling itching....which compels the patient so irresistibly to rub and to scratch the vesicles of itch, that, if a person restrains himself forcibly from rubbing or scratching, a shudder passes over the skin of the whole body. This rubbing and scratching, indeed, satisfies somewhat for a few moments, but there then follows immediately a long-continued burning of the part affected. Late in the evening and before midnight this itching is most frequent and most unbearable.”*

It is the External Form Psora that is Infectious.

- *The itching not only compels the patient to rub, but on account of its violence, as mentioned before, to rub and scratch open the vesicles; and the fluid pressed out provides abundant material for infecting the surroundings of the patient and also other persons not yet infected.*
- *Only this skin symptom of the Psora which has permeated the whole organism, only this eruption, as well as the sores which later arise from it are attended on their borders with the itching peculiar to Psora, as also the herpes which has this peculiar itching and which becomes humid when rubbed, as also the tinea capitis—these alone can propagate this disease to other persons, because they alone contain the communicable miasma of Psora.*

³ Ibid, p. 81.

- *The remaining secondary symptoms of Psora, which in time manifest themselves after the disappearance or the artificial expulsion of the eruption, cannot at all communicate this disease to others..*

Psora in Animals

With this background, let us consider what Psora looks like in animals. As said before, it is skin disease that veterinarians see most often in practice. Here are some examples:

- *Slide presentation showing Psora in animals.*

This skin condition of animals is Psora as it was centuries ago in human beings. In other words, Psora in animals is a more recent condition than it is in human beings. Because of this, it has not evolved to the suppressed form that is seen in human practice. However, it is heading that way. Just as in human practice, there is an aggressive attempt at suppression by allopathic practitioners. Use of new powerful drugs and sophisticated surgery allows suppression at a more significant level than ever encountered by Hahnemann, Kent or other homeopaths. Especially over the last 10-20 years we are seeing developed internal Psora that was not seen before in animals.

Susceptibility

If animals are suffering from the same diseases that we human beings are, then it is not surprising that we can be susceptible to getting them back.

In paragraph 31 of the Organon, Hahnemann gives the clue to why we would contract disease at all. This paragraph is entitled “The power of natural diseases to make us sick depends on our susceptibility and on our exposure to them” and details that we are not always made sick simply from exposure to disease influence. Hahnemann says that the power of “inimical potences” that cause disease “do not possess an absolute power” but depend on our susceptibility to disease in general.⁴

It Is The Presence Of Psora That Creates Susceptibility

Of course, the most important factor affecting our susceptibility is the presence of Psora. Kent puts it like this:

⁴ *Organon of the Medical Art* by Samuel Hahnemann, edited and annotated by Wenda Brewster O'Reilly, Ph.D., pp. 78-79.

“Psora is the beginning of all physical sickness. Had Psora never been established as a miasm upon the human race, the other two chronic diseases would have been impossible, and the susceptibility to acute diseases would have been impossible. All the diseases of man are built upon Psora; hence it is the foundation of sickness; all other sickness came afterwards.”⁵

Thus, from the homeopathic perspective, we see that human and animal disease are of the same essence and that, at root, it is the sharing of Psora and its many manifestations which is the critical factor.

Transmission Of Disease Between Humans And Animals With Modern Methods

In modern times, we have other ways, unknown to Hahnemann, that Psora can be transmitted between individuals. Hahnemann said that only the external skin phase of Psora is contagious and that markedly so. The internal form of Psora was not contagious.

However, if tissues from a person (or animal) with internal Psora were transferred physically from one to another, could Psora be established in the recipient? It seems to me to be a likely outcome and I think this is what is happening in recent times.

There are several ways that this could happen:

Vaccinations

Use of vaccination material prepared in animals and given to people has been a common practice for several decades. It is now known, for instance, that the original Salk vaccine, made from monkey spinal cords, contained many monkey viruses, possibly as many as 26, including the simian counterpart of human adenoviruses, coxsackie, echo, herpes, Epstein-Barr, and cytomegalovirus.⁶

Other studies have revealed that the Salk vaccine contained live Simian Virus 40 (SV-40), a virus that is known to cause cancer in laboratory animals.⁷ Children were dying of brain cancers after receiving the vaccine and SV-40 virus was cultured out their brain tissue. By the time this was recognized, 98 million Americans had already been administered the contaminated vaccines.

⁵ *Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy* by James Tyler Kent, M.D.; p. 126.

⁶ *American Journal of Hygiene*, Vol. 68, 1958; pp. 31-44.

⁷ *Human Exposure to SV-40* in the *Journal of Epidemiology*, 1976.

The total impact of just this *one* vaccine on human health has not been seriously evaluated. Think of the many other vaccines and anti-sera that people receive that have their origin in animals and this mode of transmission of disease becomes an important consideration.

Surgical implants/transplants

Increasingly, surgeons are attempting to transplant tissue between animals and people. A recent controversy in the U.S. was about a human AIDS patient that was having his whole body irradiated and then transferring bone marrow from a baboon. Experts were concerned about the possibility of the spread of ebola virus or an unknown monkey virus and advised against the procedure. However, the doctors were not ultimately in control and the experiment was done anyway. Another example: in July 1995, it was reported that scientists were planning clinical trials to transplant hearts from pigs into humans. The article suggests “This may ultimately prove the solution to the organ shortage” and states that there “is a potential \$6 billion market for animal heart transplants alone”.⁸

A more recent concern is Mad Cow disease. Many are aware of the possible transmission through meat. However, few know that cow tissue is used in surgical procedures, for growth hormone injections and for corneal transplants.

Genetic alternations

An example of genetic alteration comes from a recent article entitled “Designer Animals Used As Guinea Pigs” and describes the development of a rat, called HLA-B27, created at the University of Texas and marketed by a California biotechnology firm, GenPharm International Inc. These rats have been deliberately changed to include human genetic material and to express “human diseases” like arthritis, psoriasis, and colitis.

To quote this article: “This emerging ‘transgenic’ technology already has spawned a massive, worldwide academic and commercial enterprise, with investments perhaps topping one billion. Hundreds of laboratories are mixing the DNA of humans and animals, and probably at least 5,000 strains of mutant creatures have been produced in the

⁸ *Possibility Of Experimental Pig-To-Human Heart Transplants Sparks Debate*, DVM Magazine, July 1995; p. 27.

⁹ *Prion Diseases* by Dr. Shaun Heaphy, 1996.

last few years. Four genetically altered mice and one rabbit have been patented, giving their creators exclusive marketing rights. There are patent applications for an estimated 140 other animals pending with the U.S. government.”¹⁰

Forced cannibalism in animals

The last example comes close to home—as close as the dinner plate. This is the use of ground up cows and sheep to feed to livestock. This has contributed to the spread of one of the strangest diseases ever encountered—bovine spongiform encephalopathy or “mad cow disease”. This is one of a group of diseases affecting both animals and people that results in the brain tissue deteriorating until it looks like a sponge (thus the name spongiform). Of course, grinding up cow flesh and forcing other cows to eat it is highly unnatural and it is no surprise that it causes disease. What was unexpected was the type of disease that emerged.

“Mad cow disease” is similar to another disease affecting sheep and goats, called “scrapie”. This name comes from the symptoms the affected animals show “an intense itch that leads them to scrape off their wool or hair”.¹¹ It is not so difficult to see that we are once again seeing an expression of Psora.

There are several other diseases of this type including:

- TME (transmissible mink encephalopathy): mink
- CWD (chronic wasting disease): muledeer, elk

Humans are also susceptible to several prion diseases:

- CJD: Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease
- GSS: Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome
- FFI: Fatal familial Insomnia
- Kuru
- Alpers Syndrome

What is most extraordinary about this class of diseases is that they are caused, apparently, only by a protein. It is easy, on hearing this, to miss the significance of the statement. To give it some context, let’s remember that all known infectious diseases are caused by micro-

¹⁰ *Designer Animals Used as Guinea Pigs*, Register-Guard, Eugene, Oregon; May 10, 1993.

¹¹ *The Prion Diseases* by Stanley B. Prusiner, Scientific American, January 1995; pp. 48-57.

organisms, e.g., bacteria, fungi, amoebae, and similar creatures. All of these are single cells, but otherwise similar to our body tissue—having a nucleus, containing genetic code, within a cell.

The smallest unit of life that can cause illness has been thought to be the virus which is simply the genetic code surrounded by a coat of protein. The virus, once inside the living cell and using its genetic material, takes over the machinery and makes many copies of itself.

What is different about Scrapie and Mad Cow Disease is that they are caused by a protein that does not contain any genetic material whatsoever. This is not a large and complex protein; it is a simple protein found normally in nervous tissue, milk, blood and other places in the body. Furthermore, there is no difference in the amino acid makeup of the normal “healthy” protein found in the body and the harmful infectious protein that causes mad cow. The only difference found so far is that the bad protein is folded into a different shape.

How can something as simple as this cause disease? The current viewpoint is that this protein, once eaten, somehow escapes digestion, and gets into the brain. Once there, it causes normal protein to change its shape *simply by being next to it*. This new shape which the healthy protein now assumes cannot be broken down by the usual enzymes and accumulates in the cells eventually causing the disease we know as mad cow, scrapie or the other prion diseases.

The Homeopathic Perspective.

How can we understand this odd situation from a homeopathic perspective? At this point, I am going to share with you the idea that this is, once again, a form of Psora, a form which is barely emerging into physical manifestation. Let me give you the background to my thinking about this:

First of all, similar slow and chronic disease in animals such as Feline Leukemia or Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (so called “Feline Aids”) in my experience are not acute diseases. They seem to be expressions of an underlying chronic condition—the Psoric miasm. In contrast to treatment of acute infections, these diseases are only responsive to the anti-psoric remedies. If these diseases are treated as acute illness, the result is failure or palliation, but if treated as chronic disease, these animals can be cured. This, I think, is highly significant. Secondly, if we consider Hahnemann’s conception of what a *disease* is, we can think about this differently than the conventional, allopathic,

way. In paragraph 45, Hahnemann refers to disease: “it was never anything material, but rather only a dynamic spirit-like affection”.¹² In the introduction to the *Organon*, Hahnemann also writes “Since most diseases (indeed the vast majority of them) are of a dynamic (spirit-like) origin and of a dynamic (spirit-like) nature, their cause is not discernible to the senses”.¹³

The way that I understand this definition is that disease agents are living things just like plants, animals or people. That is, they have a life force and a physical body. If this is so, a natural question follows: Is it possible for a life force to exist *only* on the dynamic level without a physical form? Could a life force have just a minimal physical expression? Finally, is it possible that a disease life force may be, at present, taking form in our physical world?

Hahnemann never really clearly addresses this question, but implies something like this. For example, in *Chronic Diseases*, he refers to Psora as being latent, e.g., not expressing itself but existing on the dynamic level. In paragraph 16 of the *Organon*, he says “Our life force, as spirit-like dynamis, cannot be seized and affected by damaging impingements on the healthy organism.....other than in a spirit-like, dynamic way”¹⁴ suggesting that disease starts at that level without the necessity of the presence on an infectious agent. In paragraph 73, Hahnemann says a “sporadic” disease will arise in several different places at the same time (e.g., not from direct contagion) implying that the disease influence is flowing in from the dynamic level to the physical in several geographic locations at once and presumably taking physical form at that time.

In his *Lesser Writings*, Hahnemann discusses cholera as if it is an invisible field of contagion immediately and instantaneously transmitted to the approaching physician. This contagion is then carried around the body of the physician as he makes his rounds and exposes more people to the disease.¹⁵ There is no way that this means of transmission can be met by the germ theory, yet we know that there is a cholera germ involved.

¹² *Organon of the Medical Art* by Samuel Hahnemann, edited and annotated by Wenda Brewster O’Reilly, Ph.D., p. 90.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 69.

¹⁵ Appeal to Thinking Philanthropists Respecting the Mode of Propagation of the Asiatic Cholera, *The Lesser Writings of Samuel Hahnemann* edited by R. E. Dudgeon, M. D.; pp. 756-763.

Kent addressed this issue of germs at a time when the germ theory was developed. It was his opinion that germs were secondary formations which occurred after the disease was established.¹⁶ He saw them as secondary invaders called into the diseased area to scavenge the lesion. This is not a new idea. Scientists such as Wilhelm Reich have published similar research findings. Naturopaths and healers have often suggested that secondary role that germs play in the development of disease.

Hahnemann thought that disease was a “mistuning” of the life force in the presence of the inimical disease influence. It makes sense to me that with the prion diseases, we are seeing an expression of Psora as it “mistunes” the life force in just the way that Hahnemann describes. The body begins to organize itself in a new way—a way that eventually destroys itself.

It is almost ridiculous to think of a disease caused by the mere presence of a protein that has no genetic code and no ability to reproduce itself, a protein that causes disease simply by its presence. However, as homeopaths, it is not so difficult for us to accept that Psora can act by distorting the life force and using this protein as a physical expression to alter and reorganize the brain cells.

Conclusion

Psora As The Connecting Link

In conclusion, I am suggesting that the chronic miasms, especially Psora, are the common thread between human and animal disease. We see that animals have the same problem with Psora that we human beings do, but at an earlier stage in its evolution. We also see that there are now many more ways that Psora can be communicated between people and animals than in Hahnemann’s time. Instead of just the external skin manifestation being the source of contagion, we now have the transfer of genetic material, tissues, blood, vaccines and many other substances as another vehicle.

¹⁶ *Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy* by James Tyler Kent, M.D.; p. 52.

What Can Be Done To Prevent Susceptibility To Animal Diseases?

What can we do to minimize the chance of contracting an animal disease? There are no surprises here. To prevent susceptibility to animal diseases requires the same action as preventing susceptibility to disease of any type—the elimination of chronic disease from our patients.

When chronic disease is removed, the acute diseases do not easily find a way to disturb our vital force. In addition, avoidance of the *new* ways that Psora can be transmitted between animals and people is the best protection that we can possibly achieve.

There are other secondary factors as Hahnemann pointed out—food quality, living conditions, emotional serenity—that are all important for the maintenance of well-being. However, as homeopaths, the primary service that we can provide is the removal of the burden of chronic disease—as Hahnemann directed in the first paragraph of the Organon, to cure our patients.