

Centre for Integrative Medical Training  
In Association with the Centre for Integrative Care &  
The Academic Department, Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine



# Foundation Course in Medical Homeopathy

A Blended Course in Homeopathic Medicine for Healthcare Professionals

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Part 3.4

## Constitution and Typology in Homeopathy



Watch this presentation at <https://youtu.be/R5EvZicIoeo> in conjunction with the notes on the following pages.

Definition of the Terms: Constitution, Diathesis and Typology

Constitution	Mathias Dorsci defines the constitution (Latin - <i>constitutio</i> = condition, state) as the malleable reaction pattern of an individual, which evolves under the influence of environmental factors (and interventions: toxic or therapeutic).
Diathesis	He makes a distinction between <i>constitution</i> and <i>diathesis</i> (Greek - position), viewing the latter as inherited organ / system weaknesses that predispose to illness. These predispositions do not change naturally and are almost synonymous with our evolving understanding of the human genome. Modern thinking considers the phenotypical expression of genetic predisposition to be multifactorial: depending on corollary genetic information as well as life-modifying events and environment.
Typology	Typology comes from the Greek <i>typos</i> meaning blow, impression, model or image. This is considered to be the set of characteristics that are unique and personal to one human being, including: morphology; physiognomy; postural/habitual demeanour

### History of the Concept of Constitution and Typology

Hahnemann observed the existence of persons, who, in remedy provings developed more pathogenic symptoms than others who received the same material. When these materials were given for therapeutic reasons their clinical effects showed an affinity to people who were seemingly predisposed to particular illnesses.

Hahnemann described three ‘miasms’ which he used to explain the illness predispositions he had observed. The miasmatic theory was then extended to embrace his theory of chronic illnesses.

Later generations of homeopaths also sought information concerning the pre-morbid make-up of their patients and the treatment implications that arose out of their ‘constitution’. Contemporary descriptions of these disease-tendencies and their expression, tends to be rather idiomatic, depending on the preoccupations and medical knowledge of the times. Certain consistent patterns seemed to emerge, however, between certain kinds of patients, their illnesses and the remedies to which they responded homeopathically.

Even before Hahnemann, physicians and philosophers described different constitutions according to basic cosmic forms (Empedocles), humours of the body (Hippocrates) or according to the nature of the blood (Aristotle).

Empedocles	Hippocrates	Aristotle	Temperaments	Reactions
Fire	Yellow Bile	Warm-blooded	Choleric	Warm and dry
Earth	Black Bile	Thick-blooded	Melancholic	Cold and dry
Water	Mucous	Cold-blooded	Phlegmatic	Cold and wet
Air	Blood	Thin-blooded	Sanguine	Warm and damp

From Koehler

Since then, physicians have elaborated further on the concept of constitution. Paracelsus (Theophrastus von Hohenheim 1493-1541, Austrian physician) saw Sulphur, Mercury and Sal as the fundamental constituents of the physical body. An imbalance in any of these would lead to illness. Later Johann Gornried Rademacher (1772-1850) postulated that sodium nitrate, iron and copper were the interacting agents which determined the basic diseases of the total organism. He terms them universal remedies, remedies which cure a state that is not cured by an organ remedy.



Johann Rademacher

Grauvogel (1811-1877, homeopath) distinguished three biochemical states reflecting the influence of Hahnemann’s three miasms. He made his projections based on the current knowledge of biochemistry and the known body constituents of hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen. Grauvogel based his constitutions according to the excess or deficiency of certain elements. His constitutions can be seen as a yardstick for describing the global make-up of an individual and their overall predispositions:

We have included below summary descriptions of Grauvogel’s constitutional types, because some of the homeopathic literature

refers extensively to them and because, although not comprehensive, they can still be regarded as a general yardstick for describing the global make-up of an individual and his or her overall predispositions.

**Grauvogl’s Constitutional Types**

The Hydrogenoid constitution is one in which reductive metabolic processes lead to an excess of water, and the organism is aggravated by damp weather and water in any form. The concept of the Hydrogenoid constitution later came to embrace lymphatism and tetanoid types on the basis of the modalities which were implicit in Grauvogl’s basic type.



DR. VON GRAUVOGL.

The oxygenoid constitution stands in direct contrast: it is characterised by increased oxidation. The following predispositions correspond to the Oxygenoid type: Consumption, hyperaesthesia, over-energetic utilisation of oxidisable materials, catabolic states and the depletion of energy stores.

The Carbonitrogenoid constitution is characterised by the accumulation of carbohydrates and nitrogen, and insufficient oxidation. This causes air hunger, and the patient feels better in the open air. The retention process manifests as dilute urine with a low specific gravity and reduced chloride and phosphate elimination, giving rise to a gouty arthritic predisposition.

Schussler applied a different interpretation to the cellular role of key ions. In 1873 he advocated a group of 12 ‘tissue salts’

	<b>Hydrogenoid</b>	<b>Oxygenoid</b>	<b>Carbo-nitrogenoid</b>
Metabolism	hydration exaggerated,  water retention    torpor	oxidation exaggerated  breakdown of hydro-carbons and ultimately catabolic states involving protein    burn out	inhibited protein metabolism  inefficient enzymatic breakdown of foods. Tendency to retain metabolic waste products; gouty disposition  toxaemia /air hunger
General features	sensitive to humidity/moisture	sensitivity to changes of temperature	food intolerances
Remedies	eg. Nat-s, Calc-c, Thuja, Puls.	eg. Graph, Petr, Ars-a.	eg. Phos, Sulph, Hep-s.
Miasm	Sycosis	Syphilis	Psora

based on the ash analyses of body constituents that were available at the time.

#### Mendelejeff and Meyer

In 1869-70 Mendelejeff and Meyer arranged the known elements by atomic weights. They demonstrated that the series could be ordered into a periodic system in which elements could be aligned into one of seven groups with similar electrochemical properties. This series has since provided a rationale for the grouping of mineral remedies in terms of their homeopathic pictures.

#### Dr Otto Leeser

In 1925 Dr Otto Leeser presented a perspective on the homeopathic minerals based on group analysis of their constituent ions. The idea that individual ions embody a unique constitutional identity within these groups has evolved considerably over the years, and now a number of contemporary authors teach the *materia medica* of the minerals with reference to the character of their constituent ions. You will be acquainted further with the concept of combination remedies later in this course.

#### Late 19th-century Thinking

In the last decades of the nineteenth century a schism was appearing in homeopathic thinking. By this time it was widely recognised that certain kinds of individual were predisposed to certain illnesses (and correspondingly responded to certain remedies). As data from provings and clinical experience became rationalised into increasingly ordered forms, the concept of constitutional sensitivity gradually came into play. These ideas became prevalent in the writings of James Tyler Kent (1849-1916), who ascribed remedy sensitivities to aspects of the patient's psychological profile and physical appearance, as well as the known toxicological affinities of the remedies. These concepts were taken to further extremes by Vannier who described remedy indications based on a person's stature and various stereotypes of personality and demeanour.

**20th-century Developments**

In the early years of the twentieth century, the English homeopathic doctor, Margaret Tyler sponsored the travel of doctors to America to study with Kent. She collated repertory and clinical data into various constitutional types to a considerable level of detail. These descriptions were later published in the *British Homeopathic Journal*, and in booklet form (*Homeopathic Drug Pictures*).



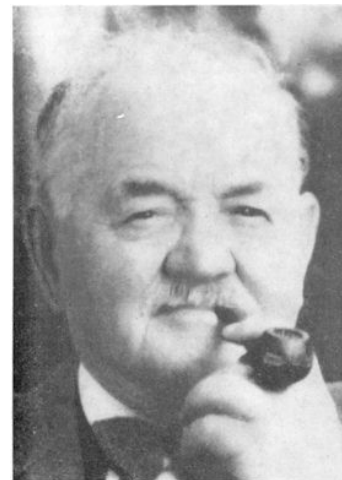
**Kretschmer's Types**

Kretschmer(1888-1964, psychiatrist) differentiated 4 types according to soma and psyche:

	<b>Asthenic</b>	<b>Athletic</b>	<b>Pyknic</b>	<b>Dysplastic</b>
<b>Build</b>	Slender, tall, narrow shoulders. Long and narrow thorax and head.	Broad shoulders, coarse high head. stately thorax, taunt abdomen. Trunk narrows downwards. Prominent muscles, coarse skeleton.	Medium stout figure. Soft wide face. Short neck. Obese abdomen Deep thorax.	Dysharmonic development
<b>Psychopathology</b>	schizoid	epileptoid	cyclic	
<b>Homeopathic</b>	phosphoric	sulphuric	carbonic	fluoric

**Nebel's Types**

At the beginning of this century Antoine Nebel (homeopath) devised a triad dividing people into three categories which was expanded by Leon Vannier (1880-1963, homeopath):



Antoine NEBEL  
1870 1954

Vannier took the concept of typology and constitution to further extremes describing eight prototypes which he named after the gods and goddesses of antiquity and correlated to a number of important homeopathic remedies. He then creates several subgroups which he called metatypes: containing characteristics of two or more prototypes. He associated these metatypes with a number of possible remedy sensitivities of a less exclusive nature.

Henri Bernard proposed an embryological hypothesis in the 1930s which became integral to the teaching of homeopathy in France. Bernard explained constitutional differences in hypothetical terms which centred on the development of primary embryological tissues. Bernard postulated that equal development of the three primary layers led to perfect harmony of shape, function and psychology. A situation which is rarely (or never) encountered in reality. In addition to the three fundamental layers he presented a fourth constitution which combined features of the three and which could be compared to the dystrophic presentation of the fluoric constitution.

	<b>Endoderm</b>	<b>Mesoderm</b>	<b>Ectoderm</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Typology	carbonic, brevi lineal	sulphuric, normolineal	phosphoric, longolineal	fluoric
Locality	digestive, respiratory	connective tissue	skin, nervous system	
Dental Morphology	teeth smooth, occlusion good tendency to root cavity	teeth square and strong, neat occlusion	teeth long, may jut, imperfect occlusion	teeth irregular, exostoses, impaired enamel, poor occlusion
Acute state	slow onset	dramatic acute	rapid response	erratic response
Corrective response	physiological inertia.  under-compensation	strong acute reaction  over-compensation	slight resources, corrects quickly or succumbs to a longstanding weakened state	unpredictable acute responses,  inappropriate local inflammation
Chronic sequelae	slow resolution insidious progression	congestive sequelae	recuperation after acutes may be rapid or lead to chronic debility	induration or sclerotic sequelae, architectural disorganisation
Disease patterns	stasis / torpor, metabolic and eliminative disturbances	congestion hypertension haemorrhoids exanthemata	wasting chronic fatigue	functional disturbances, subluxation, chronic pain
Disposition	passivity methodical stubborn	interactive engaging over-reaction	hypersensitive ingenious creative	paradoxical idiosyncratic unstable
Materia medica	Calc-c and other carbons	Sulphur, Iodine & salts	Phosphorus & its salts, acids	Fluorine salts Heavy metals

These simple sketches give us a broad hint of the remedy affinities in different people. They are over-simplified by necessity and you will find accounts of these constitutional tendencies in a wide variety of different contexts in the homeopathic literature. Some consensus has been found within the homeopathic community and we will present the arguments, as they currently stand, in the lecture that follows.

## Constitutional Types

Our modern understanding of constitutional types has evolved over the last two centuries. You will see from the preceding section that this process has been the subject of much controversy and contradiction. The tendency has often been to generalise or oversimplify the issue. At different stages, the constitutional pictures have been so general as to make them useless in the differentiating process.

Leon Vannier described a number of typologies, each of which he related to a group of remedies. His eight main typological groups (prototypes) were each linked to one major polychrest and given a number of secondary associations to other important remedies. Vannier also described a number of typological subgroups (metatypes) which comprise the key features of two or more prototypes. This seems to have been something of an intellectual exercise since no remedy associations are given for the metatypes.

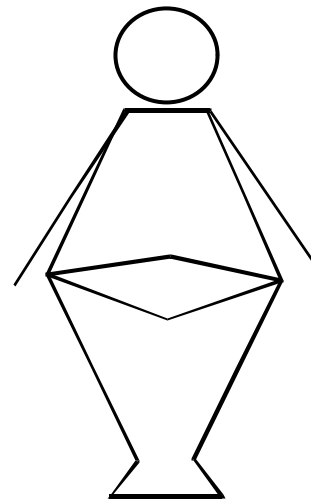
Vannier's system has the advantage that it does not dogmatically link a remedy to a single typology and he alludes to many possible 'variations on each theme'. Vannier named each type after a figure from classical mythology. Unfortunately, his astrological and mystical theories tend to undermine what are otherwise very interesting and possibly useful observations.

It is equally unfortunate that a number of rather rigid stereotypes have tended to prevail in the homeopathic *materia medica*. The four 'universally' recognised prototypes are:

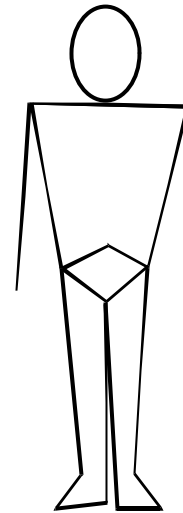
- Carbonic
- Phosphoric
- Fluoric
- Sulphuric

### The Fluoric Typology

The Fluoric typology is associated with skeletal assymetry or deformity. Patients with fluoric features may have cranial or facial assymetry or pelvic tilt. They may also have disproportion in terms of their trunk:limb ratios. The *Carbonic*, Phosphoric and *Sulphuric* typologies will be discussed in this week's *Materia Medica* section in the context of the principle remedies to which they relate. A brief outline of the Fluoric typology follows. This will be illustrated with clinical cases later in the course.



The Carbonic physique



The Sulphuric physique

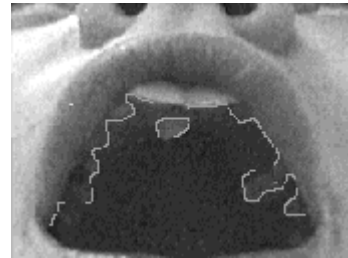
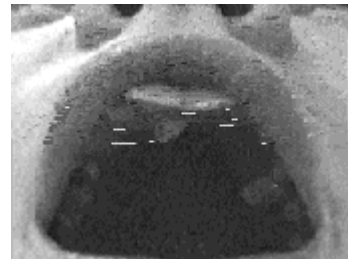


The Phosphoric physique



**Pointers to fluoric typology**

- bony dysplasia
- dental dysplasia
- exostosis periostitis of lower jaw
- deficient dental enamel
- indurations of stony hardness
- tumours – scirrous/calcified
- ulcers
- fistula
- catarract
- vascular dilatation
- asymmetry
- brachiocephaly
- puny
- weak
- catarrhal

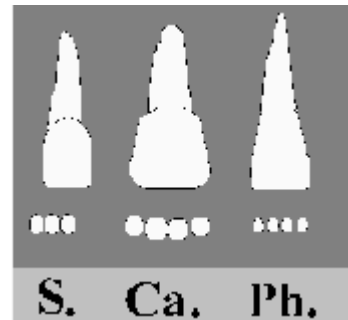


Dental assymetry and ectopic tooth in the hard palate of a boy with fluoric typology.

**Dental morphology in four constitutions**

**Compare with:**

- Strong broad teeth – *Sulphur*
- Small sharp, well spaced teeth – *Phosphorus*
- Chalky, soft teeth with rounded edges – *Calcarea carbonica*
- Brittle milk teeth, with faulty dentition of front incisors – *Thuja*



### The Constitutional Remedy

In the course of the twentieth century the idea of constitutional sensitivity in homeopathy has become very popular. Constitutional prescribing is widely used today and often yields very convincing results. However, some homeopaths (including many within the European schools), are justified in their criticism that constitutional descriptions have, in many cases, been taken too far.

The term constitutional remedy is something of a misnomer. These remedies present the same 'package' of information whenever they are given. It is the individual patient who defines whether the material is constitutional for them. We sometimes talk in terms of patient-remedy sensitivities ie. a typical "Natrum muriaticum", or "Calcaria carbonica". This is OK as long as it is used as a shorthand for the concept of Natrum muriaticum or Calcaria carbonica-sensitive types, but we should avoid talking of individual patients in these terms.

A material with a clear constitutional affinity should:

1. have a general sphere of action
2. have discernable local physiological effects with characteristic symptom modalities
3. reproducibly accentuate certain tendencies when given to healthy subjects (proving)
4. consistently demonstrate these effects more strongly in groups of people with comparable characteristics
5. reduce the expression of pathological traits and diatheses in these individuals

In recent years a number of detailed psycho-physical profiles have emerged in the homeopathic literature, sometimes based on small clinical samples, and on the projections of one or two influential homeopaths. These attractive concepts tend to be adopted by the homeopathic community with great alacrity. Nevertheless, it is probably wise to approach these new 'drug pictures' with healthy scepticism, until such time as they are verified through wide clinical experience or substantial clinical provings. In the course of your work this week we will describe a number of constitutional types, which have been reliably substantiated by clinical experience over the last 100 years.

### Bibliography

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