

Centre for Integrative Medical Training  
In Association with London Integrated Medical Health Education



# Intermediate Course in Medical Homeopathy

A Blended Course in Homeopathic Medicine for Healthcare Professionals

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## Unit 38

Materia Medica Studies and Therapeutic Pointers for Week 6

## The Materia Medica of Asthma

The table below (figure 1.) contains a selection of rubrics linked to the clinical manifestations of asthma, and the main remedies which relate to the condition. The 'top 20' naturally comprise a considerable number of polychrests, particularly since this is a synthetic repertorisation which does not include the strange, rare and peculiar symptoms that you would find in a real case.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Polychrests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frequent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nosodes  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Psoric <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sycotic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Syphilitic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Apply weightings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stress significance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasise S.R.P. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasise small <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Totality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Miasmatic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eliminative	WinCARA Chart																										
		A	R	S	N	U	S	N	P	K	A	L	L	L	S	A	A	C	A	I	O	D	B	R	C	S	D	A
Rubrics Covered		9	9	8	7	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	
Grades score		24	14	14	20	15	13	12	15	10	9	8	10	9	8	9	7	6	6	7	7							
Weighted score		27	41	49	152	277	217	124	157	314	107	212	157	146	139	121	111	110	103	97	152	148						
DIFFICULT-AIR, IN COLD		2	1	1			1		3										2									
DIFFICULT-EXERTION, AFTER		3	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	3		2	2		2	3	1											
ASTHMATIC-CHANGE OF WEATHER		2																										
WHEEZING		3	1	1	3	2			3		2	2	2	3		2	2	2							1	2		
ASTHMA-HAY ASTHMA		3	2		3	2			3					2											2			
ASTHMA-HUMID		2		3		3										2	2											
ASTHMA-REMEDIES IN GENERAL		3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3					
ASTHMATIC-(Time) NIGHT		3	1	2	2		3	2		1				2					2	1	1					2		
ASTHMATIC-CHILDREN			1	1	3	3	3					3			2													
ASTHMATIC-EMOTIONS, AFTER			1												2					2								
ASTHMATIC-SPASMODIC		3	2	1	3		2	2	3	2	1											1		2	2			

Figure 1

The second table (figure 2) is a comparison of the five main polychrests associated with asthma. The differentiating symptoms which are unique to each material have been extracted and graphically displayed. Only bold and italic symptoms have been used in this search.

Book: Combined Chapter: Respiration																										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uniqueness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large Rubrics																										
Occurrences: Lowest occurrences																										
Types: Eliminative																										
WinCARA Compare		A	R	S	K	A	L	L	L	S	A	A	C	A	I	O	D	B	R	C	S	D	A	N	T	
ASTHMATIC-(Time) 2am TO 3am					3																					
ASTHMATIC-(Time) 3am					3																					
ASTHMATIC-(Time) MIDNIGHT, AFTER				3																						
ASTHMATIC-(Time) MIDNIGHT, SPRINGING FROM BED				3																						
ASTHMATIC-(Time) MORNING						3																				
ASTHMATIC-(Time) NIGHT, 2am				3																						
ASTHMATIC-ALTERNATING WITH ERUPTIONS																									2	
ASTHMATIC-ALTERNATING WITH GOUT																									2	
ASTHMATIC-ALTERNATING WITH NOCTURNAL DIARRH/A							2																			
ASTHMATIC-ANGER, AFTER			2																							
ASTHMATIC-CHANGE OF WEATHER			2																							
ASTHMATIC-COLD, AIR <													2													
ASTHMATIC-COLD, FROM TAKING																	2									
ASTHMATIC-COLD, SUMMER, IN			2																							
ASTHMATIC-MENSES, AFTER SUPPRESSION OF																							2			
ASTHMATIC-RASH, AFTER SUPPRESSION OF ACUTE																							2			
ASTHMATIC-WINTER, ATTACKS														2												

Figure 2

**SAQ 38.1** This is a good opportunity to examine the respiratory indications of five polychrests: *Arsenicum album*, *Nux vomica*, *Phosphorus*, *Pulsatilla* and *Sulphur*.

REMEDY	Respiratory symptoms	Modalities
Arsenicum album		
Nux vomica		
Phosphorus		
Pulsatilla		
Sulphur		

See pages 12-13 for summaries

**Other Important Asthma Remedies**

Several *remedy groups* contain materials which are sometimes indicated in the treatment of asthma. These include: 1. the *halogens*, 2. some of the *sea remedies* (the sea being a major reservoir of halogen ions) 3. the *nitrates* and 4. some *metals* (*Cuprum*, *Stannum*, *Zincum*)

Within each of these groups, the most important asthma remedies are shown in bold type below:

**Halogens:**

Flourine, some salts only  
*Chlorum* (Chlorine)  
***Bromium*** (Bromine)  
*Iodum* (Iodine)

**Sea remedies:**

*Calcarea carbonica* (oyster shell)  
***Sepia*** (cuttlefish)  
***Spongia tosta*** (sponge)  
*Squilla maritima* (sea onion)

The nitrates are more closely associated with cardiac asthma (but not exclusively so), being pharmacologically associated with vasomotor effects, and toxicologically with tachypnoea. Some alkaloids are also important to consider in the homoeopathic treatment of asthma. (They, of course, contain nitrogen as part of their ring molecular structure.)

**Nitrates:**

*Amylenum nitrosum*  
*Argentum nitricum*  
***Kali nitricum***  
(*Nitric acidum*)

**Alkaloids:**

**Atropine**, competes with acetylcholine, (***Belladonna***)  
**Caffeine** (***Coffea***)  
**Cocaine** (***Coca***)  
**Emetine/Cephaeline** (***Ipecacuanha***)  
Isoquinolone (*Carbo an*, *Ol an*, ***Carbo-v***, *Ipecacuanha*)  
**Mescaline** (***Cactus grandiflora***)  
Morphine (*Opium*)  
Nicotine (*Tabacum*)  
Picrotoxin (*Cocculus*)  
**Piperidines** (***Lobelia inflata***)  
Pyridine (*Conium maculatum*)  
Reserpine (*Rauwolfia serpentina*)  
**Strychnine** (***Nux vomica***, *Ignatia*)

Having briefly surveyed the scope of the materia medica of asthma, we will examine a few remedies in closer detail, starting with this week's main polychrest *Kali carbonica*.

If you look at the figure 1 again, you will note that there are several non-polychrest remedies closely associated with the clinical presentation of asthma. The following have been selected for further study later in this section.

- ***Ipecacuanha***
- ***Natrum sulph.***
- ***Lobelia inflata***
- ***Sambucus nigra*** (keynotes only)
- ***Cuprum metallicum*** (keynotes only)
- ***Stannum metallicum*** (keynotes only)
- ***Bromium*** (keynotes only)

## **Ipecacuanha** (*Cephaelis ipecacuanha*)

Spasmodic action on upper GI tract and respiratory tract.  
Its main action may be mediated by the effects of its principle alkaloids on vagal activity.  
Typically associated with nausea, vomiting, cough, and dyspnoea.

Active constituents: Isoquinoline alkaloids (2-3%) - mainly emetine, cephaeline also psychotrine, emetamine, protoemetine; tannins (ipecacuanhin, ipecacuanhic acid); glycosides (ipecoside) saponins



### **Mind**

Ailments from anger, critical disposition, restlessness

### **Eyes**

Ciliary spasm and disturbances of accommodation

### **Nose**

Sneezing and epistaxis

### **Face**

Facial pallor with circumoral blueness  
One side of the face is hot the other side cold

### **Mouth**

Moist clean tongue,  
Saliva increased, must swallow

### **Stomach**

Constant nausea and vomiting. Nausea not > by vomiting  
Thirstlessness

### **Respiratory**

Croup, hoarseness, spasms of vocal cords and glottis  
Dyspnoea, spasmodic cough, gasping for air at the window  
Constriction in the chest  
Asthma attacks from damp or sudden changes in the weather  
Coughing paroxysms with constriction and tickling, culminating in retching or vomiting.  
Rattling in chest without expectoration  
Bronchopneumonia with frothy sputum and haemoptysis

### **Modalities**

< warmth and damp, < moist warm winds, chill < warm room  
< overeating  
> rest  
cough > cold water

### **Clinical indications**

Croup, asthma, pneumonias, whooping cough, enuresis, uterine haemorrhage, relapsing fevers  
Terminal care of patients with vagal irritation, cough and dyspnoea in bronchial carcinoma,  
Cough or bronchospasm after anger, suppressed eruptions or drug abuse

## Journals & periodicals

- Tyler ML  
Ipecacuanha  
Homeopathie 1988 Mar-Apr;5(2):39-47
- Hubbard EW  
Asthma in a child of four  
ipecacuanha, cuprum  
J Am Inst Homeopath 1979 Mar;72(1): 26
- Weinstein C  
Haughty, contempt and egotism: a study of comparative materia medica  
rubrics, ipecacuanha, lycopodium, platinum, lachesis, nux vomica, ferrum, cicuta virosa, ignatia, causticum  
J Am Inst Homeopath 1981 Mar;74(1): 29-38
- Tyler M  
Pneumonias  
aconite, ferrum phosphoricum, pnneumonia, belladonna, ipecacuanha  
J Am Inst Homeopath 1978 Dec;71(4): 196-216
- Austin AE  
Wanted: a homoeopath  
ipecacuanha  
Homeotherapy 1981 7(5): 137-139
- Anon  
Ipecacuanha  
Homoeopathic World 1919 Jan;54(1): 13-19
- Day JR  
Clinical cases - derelict and otherwise  
ipecacuanha, pulsatilla, tuberculinum, calcarea fluorata  
VOMITING, ENURESIS, TUBERCULOSIS  
Homoeopathic World 1908 Jan;43(1): 10-16
- Clarke JH  
A case of Indian fever  
ipecacuanha, capsicum  
MALARIA, FEVER  
Homoeopathic World 1908 Feb;43(2): 55-58
- Tomhagen JA  
Haemorrhage following abortion readily controlled by the indicated remedy  
abortion, hemorrhage postpartum, ipecacuanha pulsatilla  
Homoeopathy 1935 Sep;4(9): 303-304
- Tyler ML  
Ipecacuanha. Drug pictures 70  
Homoeopathy 1937 Oct;6(10): 319-328
- Haynes JR  
Ipecacuanha in uterine haemorrhages  
Homoeopathy 1937 Dec;6(12): 376-378
- M'Donough A  
Notes on ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):84-5
- Barthel H  
Characteristics of ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):81-3
- Allen HC  
Ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):83-4
- Barthel M  
A case of pertussis  
ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):104
- Rabe RF  
Malaria  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):115
- Rabe RF  
Bronchitis  
ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):112
- Von Sonnenberg D  
Suffocating cough  
ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):112-3
- Zinkhan M  
Influenza  
ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):113-4
- Henderson SJ  
Intermittent fever  
ipecacuanha  
Ger J Homeopath 1989;1(2):114-5
- Bodman F  
Asthma  
ipecacuanha, phosphorus, pulsatilla  
Hahnemannian Gleanings 1974 Dec;41(12): 533-540, 545
- Gibson DM  
Ipecacuanha - source and significance  
Homoeopathy 1976 26: 41-46
- Gibson DM  
Remedies compared  
drosera, ipecacuanha, spongia, drug relationships  
Homoeopathy 1971 Jan;21(1): 4-8

Without looking at the text, how many of the keynotes of *Ipecacuanha* can you remember ?

Mind

General or environmental

Local

Frequent Pathological Indications

Now read *Ipecacuanha* in your materia medica:

Page 517 Vermeulen

Page 37 Clarke (3rd edition)

Page 352 Boericke (2nd British ed)

Page 535 Neatby & Stonham

Page 306 Phatak

Page 190 Jouanny

## ***Lobelia inflata*** (Indian tobacco)

Active constituents: Piperidine alkaloids, mainly lobeline, with lobelanidine. Lobelanine and small quantities of norlobelanine; chelidonic acid; miscellaneous resins, gums etc

Highly regarded as a herbal treatment for bronchiolitis and asthma. Pharmacologically it acts as a respiratory stimulant, expectorant, emetic and diaphoretic.

Lobeline stimulates respiration by CNS stimulation of the respiratory centre.

However, In toxic doses, vagal overstimulation causes vomiting, increased vasomotor tone and weakness of striated muscle (giving rise to languor, impeded respiration and disturbances of gastric motility).



### **Mind**

Depression, sadness

A look at the botany of Lobelia inflata:

<https://youtu.be/ucrC5EFKUgw>

### **Head**

Vertigo, sick headache < tobacco

George Vithoulkas' angle on Lobelia

<https://youtu.be/vpwoUo5bpzo>

### **Mouth & Throat**

Hypersalivation, acrid taste, waterbrash

Sensation of a lump in the throat

### **Stomach**

Morning sickness, nausea and vomiting, > small snack or drink

Desire for coffee, aversion to tobacco or the smell of tobacco

Breaking out in perspiration after vomiting, sometimes with prickling in the skin

### **Respiratory**

Constriction in the chest

Breathlessness < exertion

Asthma attacks preceded by weak feeling in the stomach

Expiratory obstruction, hyperinflation of the chest, hyperresonant, ringing cough

Fine rattling in the chest, but no expectoration

### **Modalities**

< cold bath

< suppressed eruptions or discharges

< after sleep

< tobacco

< tea

> eating a little

> as afternoon goes on

> warmth

### **Main clinical indications**

Asthma

Emphysema

Hypersalivation of pregnancy, Hyperemesis



**Journal & Periodical References**

Schmidt P

Thorny tale of splinters, slivers and nails  
lobelia inflata, hepar sulphuris calcareum  
J Am Inst Homeopath 1976 Sep;69(3): 159-161

Anon

British Homoeopathic Society Meeting  
tuberculosis peritoneal, scrophularia nodosa, lobelia, carnosinum  
Homoeopathic World 1908 Feb;43(2): 83-86

Kopp F

Materia medica keynotes - 8  
petalea trifoliata, lobelia inflata, oenothera biennis  
Homoeopathic World 1908 Mar;43(3): 118-121

Without looking at the text, how many of the keynote of *Lobelia inflata* can you remember ?

Mind

General or environmental

Local

Frequent Pathological Indications

Now read *Lobelia* in your materia medica:

- Page 601 Vermeulen
- Page 302 Clarke (3rd edition)
- Page 405 Boericke (2nd British ed)
- Page 361 Phatak
- Page 611 Allen (vol5)
- Page 608 Hering (condensed)

**Keynotes to some secondary asthma remedies:**

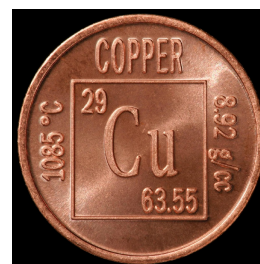
**Bromium** (Bromine)

Asthma, dry spasmodic cough  
Obstruction of both inspiration and expiration  
Laryngeal stridor, croup  
Tracheal irritation on inspiration causing cough,  
hoarseness > at the seaside,  
but worse in sailors coming ashore, < damp weather



**Cuprum metallicum** (Copper)

Acute, violent onset of bronchospasm  
> cold drinks  
nausea ++, metallic taste in mouth  
Correlates: cramp  
(review what you learned about this remedy in week1)



**Stannum metallicum** (Tin)

Profuse sputum, often non-purulent  
Sputum may taste sweet  
Voice weak, can't talk for long, painless hoarseness  
Weak sensation in throat and chest  
Night sweats



**Sambucus nigra** (European Elder)

Bronchospasm arising as a physiological response to fever (also whooping cough)  
Especially in young children with precipitous viral fevers at night  
Dyspnoea, tachypnoea and wheeze  
Cough < at or soon after midnight, lying in bed, or with the head low  
Deep, hoarse, hollow cough with agitation and thirst  
Cough and choked cry as from a pain in the gullet.  
Agitation and tears.



<https://youtu.be/HT5AvnMau3M>

<https://youtu.be/mCJ4Mr3kN4s>

### ***Asthma and the Miasms***

Asthmatics often display broad features of the Sycotic or Psoric miasm, or sometimes a combination (Tuberculinic miasm)

When you repertorise your asthmatic patient on the most important constitutional features, symptoms and modalities, you may also come to recognise the miasm. In this event you can often apply a miasmatic filter to the analysis to help you home in on the most likely prescription.

Thuja is one of the most important 'anti-sycotic' remedies

#### **Thuja**

A fundamental prescription for some asthmatic children.

Effective for the constitutionally sensitive Thuja child, but difficult to spot.

(Thuja cases can be confused with Sepia, Baryta salts, and Lycopodium)

Typically the onset of asthma occurs after immunization.

< wet conditions

The patient can predict the attack (compare with *Natrum sulph.*)

Warty excrescences

Occasionally:

Strange pains and sensations, unexplained neuralgias, something moving in abdomen

Delusions: somebody just behind them looking over shoulder, dreams of falling.

Secretive

The related nosode is *Sycotic co* (a mixed aerobic coccal nosode).

This nosode is often helpful in those asthmatics who are prone to repeated respiratory infection and who have post-infective catarrh.

These tend to be patients for whom antibiotics have been over-prescribed in the medium to long term.

Key to SAQ 37.1 Asthma keynotes of the polychrests from notes by Dr Peter Fisher

**Arsenicum album**

Most commonly indicated acute and chronic  
During attack: anxious, frightened, ill ++ chilly ++.  
Disproportionately ill, utterly exhausted  
< middle of night, wakes in panic, fear of death  
Frothy, scanty sputum  
Burning pain in trachea > warm drink  
Regular periodicity

Anxious +++, uptight, worrier, neat, fastidious, houseproud  
Planner, panics if forgets inhaler.

*Correlates: Associated eczema with desquamation ++, or generally dry, flaky skin.*

**Kalium carbonicum**

Commonly indicated, less acute than *Ars*  
Tired, worn out, chilly +  
Flabby, fleshy, pale  
< 3-4 AM  
Sweat ++ generalised  
Often infective element

Can be very difficult, whingey, hypochondriacal,  
Thinks any medicine is going to have adverse effects  
'Wants company but treats them outrageously'

Correlates: Low back pain, OA knees

**Nux vomica**

Bronchospasm in irritable, oversensitive, overdriven people  
Shallow respiration, oppressed breathing  
Asthma and fullness of the stomach after eating or abuse of stimulants  
Dry spasmodic cough < cold air  
Constriction across chest worse for walking or singing  
Rough, scraped feeling in the throat

Correlates: Insomnia, neuralgias, hypersensitivity

### **Sulphur**

'Constitutional' medicine-prescribed mostly on mentals and generals

Oppressed, burning sensation in chest > cool air

< heat, < in bed < winter, > warmish, dry weather

Perennial dry rhinitis

Typical mentals: strong-willed, argumentative, opinionated, enjoys debate, not afraid of rows. Disorderly/untidy.

May be scruffy, dishevelled or smelly, or flamboyantly dressed. Hot, hot feet

Correlates: Alternation or association with other complaints esp dermatitis, typical appearance large dry, excoriated patches, non-flexor distribution, itchy +++ voluptuous, burns after scratching

Food: fat, spice, alcohol

### **Pulsatilla**

Yielding, changeable people

Emotions close to the surface

Asthma from suppressions (notably suppressed urticaria)

Pressure and soreness in the chest

Short cough < warm, closed rooms. < after sleeping

< evening, eating

< lying (smothering sensation)

> sitting up

Loose cough and expectoration in the morning

Palpitation < lying on the left side

### **Phosphorus**

Asthma often precipitated by bronchitis/URTI

Sensitive to many influences (psychic and physical)

< oppressive atmosphere, physical (< before storm), or psychic

> morning > short nap

Burning and oppression in chest

Frequent small haemoptyses

Chronic dry rhinitis with small nose bleeds

Painful laryngitis

Mentals and Generals: Sympathetic, likeable, attractive, bright-eyed

Hot temper, quickly forgotten

Rarely, flat, indifferent

Slim, narrow chest

'Grown up too fast', had children young, chaotic life, travel ++

High libido, many partners

Food: salt ++, cold refreshing things - iced drinks