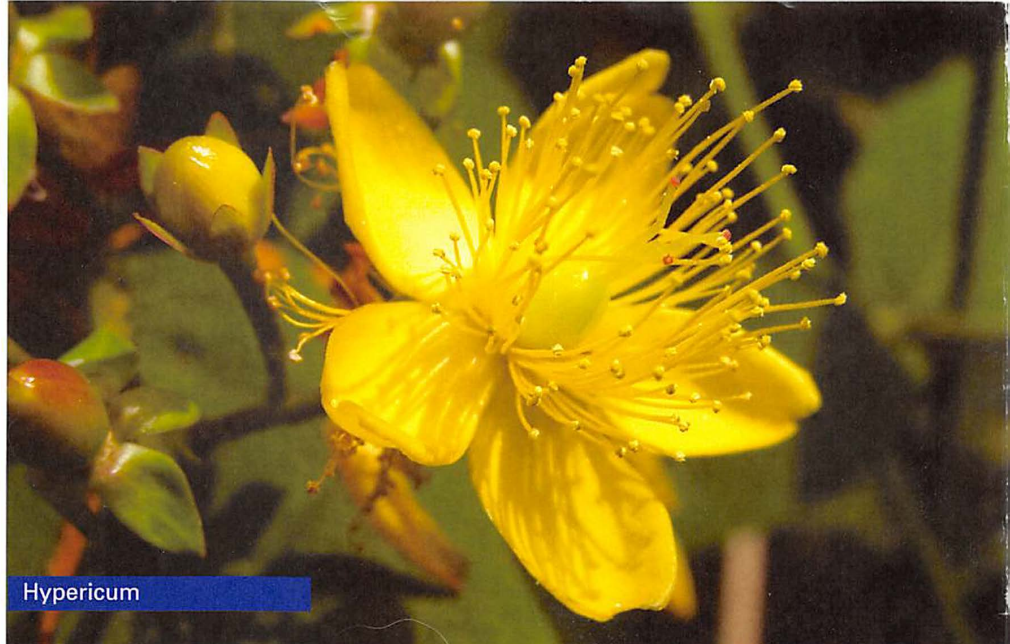


The Faculty's first member from the osteopathy profession, Catherine Tiphanie, provides an insight into her use of homeopathy.



How homeopathy is used in osteopathic practice

One rarely has two days the same in an osteopathic practice. While a large proportion of the public considers that we see back after back, and possibly the odd neck spasm, our scope is typically much wider than this.

Even if I were to consider my last 100 patients with non-specific low back pain, the variables would be vast: the aetiology of the condition; the age, morphology and general health of the patient; and the patient's emotional response to the presenting pain and mobility restrictions. Osteopathy is a holistic discipline, considering more than just the biomechanics of injury. It is therefore very compatible with the homeopathic approach and the emphasis on the patient narrative.

As a snapshot of my use of homeopathy, I will recall some cases from a single day in my practice. I have chosen a day a few months ago (December 2011) so I can also include follow-up outcomes to date.

Peter

My third patient on this particular morning is a two-year-old boy, referred to me by my colleague for cranial osteopathy. The toddler's parents are both patients of my colleague, and have been extremely sleep-deprived since the birth of their son.

Peter* has been a poor sleeper since birth, very restless and waking frequently. He usually resettles with company, but sometimes can be screaming for extended periods during the night. He

is very active during the day, generally playing well with a variety of toys and is very good-natured. He settles easily for a nap before his lunch but in the evening he is entirely different, fighting sleep rather than going to bed.

At 17-months-old Peter suffered febrile convulsions, which aggravated his poor sleep pattern further. His parents could no longer leave the bedroom if he was still awake, once again resulting in sleep deprivation for the entire family. The only other noteworthy symptom was the tendency for him to suffer with recurrent low-grade ear infections since very young, but he had never been prescribed medication for these.

Following a physical examination, I suggested to Peter's parents that while I could attempt to treat him with cranial osteopathy, experience has demonstrated that toddlers are rarely compliant patients. This may mean several appointments to achieve any significant progress. However, it would also be worth trying Peter with a homeopathic remedy – to see how his symptoms may respond to this. Peter's parents were receptive to trying "anything which may help", as they watched him wriggle away from my attempts at gentle osteopathic treatment. They left the appointment with a prescription for Belladonna 30C.

Ten days after the appointment I received a call from Peter's mother. She reported that Peter had slept for 14 hours on the evening of his first treatment, and had subsequently slept

a continuous ten hours for three or four nights. Although this was followed by a broken night of sleep, with him up one or two times, he quickly resettled himself. The following three to four nights he enjoyed continuous sleep.

However, as delighted as she was with this change, there had been another less welcome change, for by about day eight Peter had suddenly become very naughty during the day. He had emptied out the contents of many packets of food on the kitchen floor "the behaviour of a little devil". This was entirely out of character from his usual daytime good-natured play. When I enquired as to how often he was receiving the Belladonna, I found it was still being given each evening. We had initially discussed giving Peter a dose for five consecutive evenings, then spacing out the use of the remedy. This proving showed it was definitely time for a break.

At a follow-up appointment three weeks after the initial appointment, and ten days after stopping the daily dose of Belladonna 30C, Peter was described as "having an excellent sleep routine", sleeping for almost ten hours each evening, and resettling within 15 minutes should he wake up during the night. He was still happy to have his late morning nap, and his behaviour was back in character again.

A follow-up appointment two months later confirmed that Peter had continued to sleep well at home; had stayed at his grandparents' house for a few nights; and had been abroad on holiday – with

neither of these different sleeping arrangements re-aggravating his previous anxiety and sleep disruption at night, nor requiring further doses of Belladonna.

Joanne

Returning to my clinical list on the same December day last year, my fifth patient is Joanne, who is in training for a 90 mile walk she intends to do in April 2012. She has had a history of lumbar and pelvic musculoskeletal problems, and is concerned these may recur over the five consecutive days she will need to be walking. We discuss her training routine and her osteopathic management programme, and I suggest she gets Arnica 6C, Rhus toxicodendron 6C and Ruta graveolens 6C, to take morning and evening on the days of training walks, and on each day of the event itself.

Feedback from Joanne the month after her 90 mile walk was entirely positive. She had been comfortable and symptom-free each day of the event, "without even any aching muscles".

Margaret receives osteopathic treatment for her back and shoulder symptoms and agrees she "might as well try some homeopathy if it will help her sleep". We agree she will take some Causticum 30C in the early evening, and then take Causticum 6C every 20-30 minutes, if she awakes with the pain at night.

Two weeks later Margaret reports improvements in her sleep pattern. The first few nights she needed to take two to three doses of the Causticum 6C during the night, but this allowed the burning pain to subside sufficiently for her to get back to sleep. She has surprised herself by sleeping through the entire night on several nights, but the recent wet weather has had her up for about an hour the last two nights, reaching for doses of the Causticum 6C. Overall, Margaret is feeling much more confident she has something which helps the burning pain when she needs it, and is feeling much better "for finally getting some sleep at all".

work on improving the musculoskeletal alignment and function of her pelvis and lumbar area, she can help desensitise the nerve-rich coccyx area, which has been symptomatic for months.

Angela received four sessions of osteopathic treatment and acupuncture over the following seven weeks, with advice to gradually increase her levels of activity and walking – beyond the current demands of caring for a very big and active nine-month-old baby.

Initially she used the Hypericum three times a day, reducing to twice daily as a result of forgetfulness. However, she latterly found that she was not even thinking she needed the evening dose, so was down to one dose in the mornings. At her final review Angela reported she was able to stand for considerable periods of time; was managing three to four hours of shopping; and was much more confident she would be able to manage a four hour shift upon her imminent return to work.



Rhus toxicodendron



Ruta graveolens

Meanwhile, her husband and his friend, who had refused her offer of sharing the homeopathic medicines, "were hobbling like lame horses" for the final two days of the event.

Margaret

The final patient on that December morning was Margaret. She is a grandmother in her late 50s, who had been child-minding her "very heavy" granddaughter for a few weeks until she contracted shingles seven weeks ago. She knows the childminding has been very hard on her long-term back problems, but it is the pain around her ribs that is stopping her from sleeping. "I am up walking around all night to try and get rid of the burning pain," she says. All the lesions have now gone, and she has tried various analgesics from her GP, but with no success.

Angela

In the afternoon session I see a new patient, referred to me by her GP for coccyx pain following a difficult labour and forceps delivery of her son. Angela is a 29-years-old health professional who has been in constant pain with her coccyx symptoms since the delivery of her son nine months ago. Symptoms are worse with standing, even for periods of 45 minutes, and Angela is concerned that she will not be able to return to her very busy and active job in three months time. She has tried Arnica 30C over the last few months, but has had no change in the symptoms.

Following a physical examination, I advise Angela that while there are structural features of her case which I would like to address with osteopathic treatment and acupuncture, I would also recommend Hypericum 30C. While I can

I do not use homeopathy with all of my cases, but have found that it works in a very complementary way within an osteopathic practice. It provides a useful tool to address cases with many complex emotional facets, and can help patients to understand that emotions and states of anxiety may be sufficient to re-aggravate some of their physical symptoms. But it also empowers patients. By having a homeopathic medicine at hand, which they have found to be useful in a particular instance, allows the individual to manage their symptoms between treatment sessions.

**All patients' names have been changed*

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