Module 3

In this module you will:

Receive the answers to the Quiz in Module 2

Learn the difference between acute and chronic illness

Get helpful hints on taking an acute case

Use a repertorising chart to find the most similar homeopathic medicine

Do a short quiz to review what you have learnt

Answers to Quiz/ Module 2

1. Which two homeopathic first aid medicines are said to help prevent tetanus?

   *Hypericum* and *Ledum*.

2. Which homeopathic medicine is considered to be the *Arnica* of the nerves?

   *Hypericum*.

3. What aspects of shock are similar to the symptom picture of *Arnica*?

   People say they are alright when they very obviously aren't. They don't want to be touched. They may also be chilly.
4. If you were treating a painless, pus-filled wound what homeopathic medicine might be most similar?

*Silica.*

5. Apart from *Arnica* what other homeopathic medicine could be used to treat a black eye?

*Ledum. Sympytum* is also good for injuries to the eyeball itself.

6. If a wound needed *Ledum* what would it look like?

Often a puncture wound or a black eye. The area would be cold, bluish and swollen. Despite this the sufferer would feel heat in the wound and want cold applications.

7. Which homeopathic medicine can be used to force out splinters?

*Silica.*

8. Why is it O.K. to give more than one homeopathic medicine at a time when treating a first aid case?

In the case of external injuries many homeopathic medicines may be needed to cover different aspects such as bruising, nerve damage, flesh wounds, sepsis. Whereas if symptoms are coming from an internal 'dis-ease', as in an acute illness, it is better to find one homeopathic medicine that covers the whole picture.

9. What homeopathic medicines may be helpful in treating sunburn?

*Cantharis, Belladonna* and *Urtica urens.*

10. What homeopathic medicine can ease the pain of fractures and broken bones?

*Bryonia.* Once the bone has been set *Symphytum* (also known as Comfrey or Knitbone) and *Calc phos* can help the bone to heal more quickly.
Acute or chronic? To treat or not to treat...?

Both our kits and our website aim to promote the safe and effective use of self-prescribed homeopathic medicines. To be a safe prescriber you need to know your limits. In the last module we studied first aid and first of all looked at certain warning signs that mean you must seek professional medical advice, please always bear these in mind.

An important distinction also needs to be made between chronic and acute illness. Chronic illness should not be treated by the home prescriber. A qualified, experienced homeopath is much better able to prescribe for these conditions because they will take into account factors such as medical history, susceptibility, family tendencies, past traumas, dreams, mental or emotional disturbance and any conventional medication being taken. They will also be working with a much larger selection of homeopathic medicines than are usually available to the home prescriber and with a more in-depth knowledge understanding of them.

Having said that, as with first aid prescribing, the home prescriber can get fantastic results when treating acute illnesses. The definition of an acute illness is one where you have:

i) a prodromal (or warning) period where you just don't feel right and know that you are coming down with something, then

ii) intensified and clear symptoms develop

iii) you recover (or die!)

These stages take place over a matter of days.

Examples of typical acute illnesses are:

the common cold; coughs; flu; food poisoning; cystitis; infectious childhood illnesses (mumps, measles, chicken pox etc).

Acute illnesses over and over?

If acute illnesses recur frequently, this points to an underlying susceptibility that could develop into a more chronic pattern and means you should seek constitutional treatment with a professional homeopath. Think of these episodes as helpful and friendly red warning lights. Nipping things in the bud by treating the underlying dis-ease can save a lot of unnecessary
suffering later. To find a professional homeopath near you just go to our home page and click on 'Finding a practitioner'.

Treating acute illnesses

If you, or a friend or family member, has an acute illness then by working on developing your powers of observation and case-taking skills you will greatly increase you chances of finding 'the simillimum' (a Latin word that means the most similar homeopathic medicine). So let's look at:

THE SECRETS OF TAKING A GOOD CASE

*What do you need to ask in order to prescribe accurately for an injury or acute illness?*

The first rule is **not** to ask leading questions (i.e. those that can be answered with a straight 'yes' or 'no'). Try to leave your questions as open as possible. Use 'Wh - ' questions beginning with  What? Where? Why? When? How? as these always have to be answered with information and will also avoid the risk of you 'leading the witness'.

The second rule is to observe carefully any changes you notice from the person's normal state. This is especial important when treating children or animals, as they are usually less forthcoming.

Thirdly, some homoeopaths use the word **CLAMS** to help them remember to ask all the important questions:

**C** is for **concomitants**.

This means any symptoms they have in addition to the main complaint.

*Example questions:*

"What other changes have you noticed in yourself since you got the flu?"

For example a terrible thirst (or any other changes in temperature, appetite, mood etc) since the onset of the complaint.

"What else can you tell me about the headache?"

For example headache (main problem) with blurred vision (additional symptom).
**L** is for location.

*Example questions:*

"Where exactly is the pain?"

"Does it go from there to anywhere else?"

(For example sore throat on the right-hand side with pain extending up into the ear.)

**A** is for aetiology.

Quite simply: the cause. In the case of an injury this may be obvious, but in acute illnesses you may need to prompt a little to find out if anything out of the ordinary happened before the symptoms set in.

*Example questions:*

"What was going on immediately before you got ill?"

"Can you think of any reason why you may have got ill?"

For example they may have received some bad news or got their feet wet; these are all clues that will lead you to the right remedy.

**M** is for modalities.

*Example questions:*

"What makes you feel better or worse?"

For example a person my feel better for fresh air or having a warm drink.

"What makes your complaint feel better or worse?"

For example a person's dizziness can be worse for lying down or their stomach pain may be better for firm pressure.

**S** is for sensations.

These can relate to the pain, or to any other sensations, they have with the complaint.
Example questions:

"What is the pain like exactly?"

Remember people are not used to describing pain in specific terms, so if they get stuck offer a wide range of adjectives to choose from (e.g. throbbing, shooting, piercing, aching, stabbing etc).

"What else are you feeling?"

People may have other sensations besides pain, such as weakness, tingling etc.

A commercial break

Many, many years ago when I first became interested in Homeopathy I was introduced to a wonderful book called:


This book encourages the home prescriber to work as a homeopath works. Once you have taken the case it asks you to find the symptoms in the 'Repertory' section of the book. A 'Repertory' is a book that lists symptoms with their location, aetiology, concomitants, modalities and sensations (see above) and then lists any homeopathic medicines that are capable of producing 'similar suffering' in a healthy person.

Once you have found the symptoms, the book provides you with a 'repertorisation chart'. You write the symptoms to the left of the chart and then tick off any homeopathic medicines listed for that particular symptom in a grid to the right. Once you have completed the chart certain homeopathic medicines will usually have more ticks than other. The book then directs you to the 'Materia Medica' section of the book. 'Materia Medica' means, very simply a description of the medicines in detail. You then read up any medicines that scored a lot of ticks and compare the descriptions to find the one that has the most similar suffering picture to the person you are treating.

The book outlines 90 frequently-needed homeopathic medicines and covers a huge range of first aid situations and acute illnesses. I think I am right in saying that, to this day, it is still the only book aimed at the home prescriber to take such an authentic approach. Many self help books over-simplify Homeopathy by saying: "If you are suffering from condition 'x' then take homeopathic medicine 'y'." Knowing what you now know about the Law of
Similars, you can see why this approach often brings disappointing results. Homeopathy is founded on a natural law that always works. If a particular prescription doesn't work it is because it was not truly homeopathic i.e. capable of producing similar suffering in a healthy person.

*If you want to get the most from Homeopathy as a home prescriber then I really can't recommend this book highly enough.*

You can purchase "The Complete Homeopathy Handbook" by Miranda Castro from the HomeopathyWorld shop.

**Printing our Basic 36 Repertory Chart.**

The information in our kits is also laid out to encourage you to work as a homeopath would. You look firstly at the 'Complaints' section of our leaflet with your particular symptom picture in mind and then check possible medicines in the 'Mini Materia Medica' section. If you would like to tick off possible medicines using our Basic 36 Repertorisation chart just download this PDF file and print off some charts to keep with your kit. This is particularly helpful in cases where a lot of possible medicines are listed, as it really helps you to keep track of which seem to be the most similar. Remember to always consult the Materia Medica before making your final choice.

You can of course use any reliable additional information sources with the kit leaflet to fill in your chart, but Miranda's Handbook is particularly good and all 36 medicines in our Basic 36 kit are written up in great detail in her Materia Medica section.

**Using our Basic 36 Repertory Chart.**

Let's see how you would use the chart in a typical acute case.

**Case 1**

Your friend calls to ask if you have anything in your kit for flu. You go over and take his case. You are able to get a lot of clues just by observing. You find him in bed, he is weak with chills and shivering. You ask if he can think of anything that could have made him ill and he tells you he got caught in a rain shower the day before and got quite cold. You notice he is not moving much and has hardly touched the glass of water by his bedside. His eyelids seem heavy. You ask what else he is feeling. He says he can feel a sore throat coming on too, but he can't tell you much about it. You check his tongue, but it seems normal.
Your repertorisation chart looks something like this:

Symptoms:

Flu (all possible choices): Ars, Bry, Gels, Nux, Rhus, Ipecac

Flu with chills/shivering: Ars, Gels, Nux

Flu, lying still: Bry, Gels

Sore throat: Aco, Apis, Arg nit, Bell, Bry, Gels, Hepar sulph, Kali bich, Lach, Lyc Merc, Sil

So when you count up your ticks Bryonia and Gelsemium come top with 3 and 4 ticks respectively. You turn to the Mini Materia Medica and read the descriptions for both medicines.

Bryonia you note tends to lie still, which fits, but they also tend to be thirsty and irritable, which doesn't. Gelsemium also lies still, because of weakness, and has heavy drooping eyelids. It also has sore throat and shivering with flu symptoms.

You decide to double check in another homeopathic book and find Gelsemium also has problems that come on after getting wet and can be thirstless. You go ahead and prescribe Gelsemium as it seems capable of producing the most similar suffering.

Case 2

Your child has chickenpox and is quite distressed with it. You read somewhere in a book that Rhus tox is the remedy for chickenpox, but you want to be sure it is really the most similar thing, so you work on the case. You notice she is more anxious and clingy than usual and gets upset, almost scared, if you leave the room. She has a bit of a fever and seem restless, but doesn't like you mopping her brow. You are pleased to see she is drinking and refuses lemonade in favour of cold water. You try to ask her some questions but she can't or won't answer you. There is nothing really remarkable about the spots, they are just itchy and uncomfortable. Her tongue seems normal, maybe a bit white.

Your repertorisation chart looks something like this:

Chickenpox (all possible choices): Aco, Ant tart, Bell, Merc, Puls, Rhus

Chickenpox, with fever and fearful: Aco
Chickenpox, with clinginess: Puls

Chickenpox, with itchy rash, restlessness: Rhus

Anxiety, with fever: Aco, Ars

You decide to read up Aconite (3 ticks) and Rhus tox (2 ticks) and choose the most similar. Aconite looks good because it has restlessness, fear, fever, desire for cold water and is worse for being touched. Rhus tox also has itching and restlessness and is supposed to be great for chickenpox, but a couple of things don't fit. It isn't fearful and craves cold milk rather than water. Also your child doesn't have a red triangular tip to her tongue. So you opt to give Aconite first and will only give Rhus tox if the Aconite fails to do anything.

**Case 3**

Try filling out a repertorisation chart for this case on your own. Then go to the Mini Materia Medica and choose what you think would be the most similar homeopathic medicine.

Your son has had a cough for a week or so and up until now it hasn't bothered him much. Tonight is much worse though. It might be your imagination but he seems a bit blue in the face and he asked you to open his window even thought it is quite chilly outside. Not only that but every time he coughs he vomits and although at first you thought this was a good thing as it seemed to bring up some mucus, he has vomited several times now and just doesn't seem to be getting any better and still feels nauseous even after vomiting. You decide to just try one homeopathic medicine and if that doesn't help to get professional help immediately.

What would your repertorisation chart look like?

From the results of the chart what medicines would you study?

Which would you choose and why do you prefer it to the other possible choices?

**My answer is just before the Quiz section.**
Waiting for a response

Once you have found the most similar medicine to the case, give one dose and wait to see what the response is. As a general rule the more intense the symptoms are, the quicker the medicine tends to act. I have seen acute illnesses respond in literally seconds. However, unless the situation is very extreme I suggest you wait between 15-30 minutes to assess if there has been any improvement.

Possible responses to your prescription

1. The remedy works

If there has been a distinct improvement, even if it is slight, do nothing until the symptoms start to worsen again. Provided the symptom picture hasn't changed you can give the same medicine again as soon as there is a relapse or any improvement comes to a complete standstill. If in any doubt remember the Law of the Minimum Dose and wait.

2. The remedy doesn't work

Do not keep repeating a particular homeopathic medicine if it has not helped at all. By giving repeated doses of a medicine that is not homeopathic (i.e. is incapable of causing similar suffering) it is possible to bring on new symptoms. If there is absolutely no improvement, or symptoms worsen, you will need to check that your case-taking was adequate and then represcribe.

3. The symptom picture changes

If symptoms change dramatically, and this can often happen in acute episodes, you will also need to retake the case and represcribe.

Last word

Last but not least, keep calm and don't be too hurried, either in taking the case or selecting the homeopathic medicine. If you jump in too fast and give the wrong medicine it will have no effect at all. This is a reassuring thought, but you will still have to allow time to see if it does work and it will really be a case of more haste less speed if you don't take the time to make the very best selection you can at the outset.
Answer to Case 3

My Repertorisation Chart looked like this:

Coughs all possible choices): Aco, Ant tart, Bry, Dros, Hepar, Ipecac, Kali bich, Puls

Coughs, with vomiting: Ant tart, Dros, Ipecac

Coughs, with vomiting mucus: Dros

Coughs with blueness: Dros, Ipecac

Vomiting with coughs: Ant tart, Dros, Ipecac

Vomiting with unrelieved nausea: Ipecac

Ant tart got 3 ticks and Drosera and Ipecac both got five. So I read up on these two. Drosera covers a lot of the symptoms well. It has cough with vomiting (with mucus in the vomit). It has blueness too. It likes warmth though and your son specifically wanted the window open. Ipecac covers desire for open air and also covers the vomiting and blueness. The other thing in its favour is that your son has nausea that is not relieved by vomiting. This is a keynote of Ipecac. So that was my first choice.

Quiz/ Module 3

All the answers can be found in the text, but see how much you can remember (or guess). Good Luck! The answers are on the next page.

1. Describe the three distinct stages of a typical acute illness.

2. How long do these stages take to unfold:
   a) days       b) weeks or months       c) years

3. Give three examples of acute illnesses.

4. In case-taking why is it helpful to ask questions beginning with "Why?" "Where?" "What?" "How?".

5. What does the mnemonic C-L-A-M-S stand for?
6. If the homeopathic medicine you selected worked, would you give a second dose and if so when?

7. If the homeopathic medicine you selected definitely didn't work why would it be inadvisable to repeat it?

8. What would you do if the symptom picture you had been treating radically altered?

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Answers to Quiz/ Module 3

1. Describe the three distinct stages of a typical acute illness.

Firstly there is a prodromal (or warning) stage, where you don't feel quite right, secondly there is stage with clearly defined symptoms and thirdly there is a recovery stage.

2. How long do these stages take to unfold:

a) days

3. Give three examples of acute illnesses.

Any of the following provided they have the three phases mentioned above (warning period, clear symptoms, recovery within days). For example coughs, colds, flu, ear infections, chest infections, croup, cystitis, gastric flu, food poisoning, sinusitus, sore throats. If someone frequently suffers from acute illnesses they will greatly benefit from constitutional treatment with a professional homeopath.

4. In case-taking why is it helpful to ask questions beginning with "Why?" "Where?" "What?" "How?".

They have to be answered with information, not just a straight 'yes' or 'no' answer. This information can then be used to accurately match the symptom picture to the most similar remedy.

5. What does the mnemonic C-L-A-M-S stand for?

Concomitants - symptoms that come with the main complaint

Location - the area affected

Aetiology - the cause of the illness

Modalities - anything that makes either the sufferer or the symptom feel better or worse

Sensations - the type of pain experienced (throbbing, aching, burning, stinging, shooting etc.) and any sensations other than painful ones (such as itching, tickling, crawling, butterflies in the stomach etc.)

6. If the homeopathic medicine you selected worked, would you give a second dose and if so when?

Not necessarily, only if and when the same symptoms returned. This is in accordance with the Law of the Minimum Dose.
7. If the homeopathic medicine you selected definitely didn't work why would it be inadvisable to repeat it?

It is possible this would cause a 'proving' where the person you were trying to treat might begin to get symptoms from the medicine.

8. What would you do if the symptom picture you had been treating radically altered?

Retake the case and prescribe a homeopathic medicine that was similar to the new situation.