

Homeopathy with Altitude; Conference Report, Colorado, October 2001

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For me, there is a huge amount of value in continually talking to people about homeopathy. In a profession where we work by ourselves, there is often a sense of loneliness and isolation (the constant feedback I hear from practitioners and students alike) and it is crucial to make as much contact as we can with each other. Some people might think that going for a flying visit to the US for just four days, given the distances involved and the current political climate, would be a waste of time and money, in fact close to abject stupidity. Nothing is further from the truth. In October, I decided to attend to the North American Society of Homeopaths conference in Copper Mountain, Colorado, and it's the best thing I have done in years. Presentations by Misha Norland, Jan Scholten, Will Taylor, Miranda Castro, Richard Pitt and others were the perfect stimulation to keep homeopathy fresh and sharp. It was a sensational, yet sometimes subdued conference. The bombing of Afghanistan began during Misha's lecture on antimatter – Positronium.

The specter of September 11 hung like a heavy cloud over proceedings. Many friends and colleagues didn't travel. A couple of holes appeared in the program. And yet there was the startling contrast of the spectacular Rockies, a stone's throw from the conference door. Homeopathy at a conference more than a mile high is a phenomenon. For starters no body drinks alcohol, it knocks you around a lot, and I had a constant bleeding nose; messy.

Of the speakers, Susanna Shelton from the Bay of Plenty College of Homeopathy in New Zealand gave a sensational presentation on the remedy Adamas. She highlighted, using her special strategy of mind maps, all of the information we need to describe Diamond confidently.

Misha Norland spoke of Positronium and the proving process; the way in which a substance is able to speak with one voice through healthy volunteers and brings out its hidden nature; the proving brings it out and amplifies it. Positronium is a new remedy made from anti-matter; a remedy hard to classify given its imponderableness yet its physicality. But the proving symptoms are real enough. Its similarity to the heaviness and destruction of Plutonium makes it a strikingly relevant remedy profile to know well and apply in the clinic. It seems very similar to Plutonium with issues of forefathers and sins and generations, imagery of slaves, violence and abuse. It is prior to Hydrogen.

Miranda Castro presented a fantastic workshop on the relationship between patient and practitioner. She highlighted the ways in which we lose our role and identity of healers in the quest to be great clinicians, forgetting how we interact with our patients and what prejudices we have towards them. For me this was the highlight of the conference, and to miss her upcoming presentation in Sydney in April would be a great loss in understanding the practice of Homeopathy.

Jan Scholten presented two sessions going over his groundbreaking work using the periodic table and his more recent work with the various plant families. He taught numerous cases, focusing on the Lithium's, Baryta's and Antimonium's highlighting how effective it can be to prescribe according to this method, focusing on issues in the patients life such as accidents, their life history and coincidences as well as the patient in the outside world; the profession and what is projected out into the world. And he reminded us that the organs and tissues were also important; the affinities, when we come to analyse the case. His position is that because of the inherent mistakes in our materia medica's he argued we needed to focus less on the polycrests. And he argued that the modern proving's of today are far better than in previous centuries.

There were other workshops by Will Taylor, Richard Pitt, Andrew Lange and others that I was unable to get to. All this in a couple of days.

Maintaining our contacts around the world fosters community, and community is what we need more than anything else in homeopathic medicine. Robust debate and argument are important, but an understanding and a celebration of our differences and definitely our similarities, is what we really need. It keeps us vital and interested, dynamic and potentised in the field in which we work and love.

For Australian homeopaths, it helps to be reminded what a fortunate position in which we find ourselves here. So startling at the NASH conference throughout the proceedings and in any dealings with the US delegates, was the degree of fear and atmosphere of persecution and an underlying sense of obstacle which practitioners of Homeopathy experience every day in the US. How different from the reality of practise here. We get up, we go to work, dispense our remedies, write our receipts, our patients claim their insurance, and then we go home, impeded by no one. We may need to fight for our patients, battle some prejudices about Naturopathy and educate the public, but we have no legal constraints. Our American friends practise in the constant dread of being prosecuted for practising medicine without a licence: a membrane away from trouble.

So thank the insurance companies which cover us. Support the associations that have encouraged this ease of practising Homeopathy and made it possible through the outstanding efforts of some tireless individuals. There is the Australian Homeopathic Medicine Conference coming up in Melbourne. Support it. The networks you build and the friends you make will enthuse and inspire you, not to mention the content of the presentations.

On a more somber note, our friends and colleagues in the homeopathic fraternity in North America need our support. Since September 11, two homeopathy schools in downtown Manhattan are closed indefinitely until their buildings are deemed safe, and the replacement of computer equipment and other infrastructure is high priority. To this end, the money I won by winning the conference raffle (a refund of the conference fee of \$400 US) I donated to the very necessary NASH legal fund (a legal fund set up for support and to fund defense for Homeopaths who have the misfortune to be charged with practising medicine without a licence), and the fund established to get these colleges back up and running. Keep our Homeopathic friends in the US and Canada in your thoughts and hearts in this difficult time.