



Vegetable Raw Materials and their Processing Methods

Statement by VKHD

(1) Selection of Vegetable Materials

In Classical homeopathy, decisions on the best appropriate subspecies of a plant group, or parts of a plant, cannot be based on biological or pharmacognostic criteria alone. The relevant factor for a prescription under the Law of Similars is identity of plant materials used in homeopathic remedy proving with the remedy prescribed by the therapist.

Example: Since for the relevant remedy provings *Bryonia alba* was used it must be secured that a patient presenting a prescription for *Bryonia* in fact receives *Bryonia alba*, and by no means *Bryonia cretica* ssp. *dioica* unless otherwise specified.

Therefore, a special emphasis should be placed on source investigation. Wherever the original material is clearly defined in the relevant primary sources it should be used accordingly.

(2) How to proceed when information given by source literature is not clear

Hahnemann himself sometimes modified his procedures in production of certain remedies, and there are cases where sources yield no clear account on the original materials used. Sometimes there are various remedy provings with different original materials which, in their turn, were subsumed in current *Materia medica* books. Some of the original materials were, in times past, only available in dehydrated form, and not fresh. Preference for a historically oriented procedure must be weighed against applying methods of today, for instance processing fresh products inclusive of exotic plants. A strictly historical orientation, furthermore, would appear inconsistent in so far as homeopaths of the first generation never hesitated to substitute existing raw materials by superior ones as soon as they were on hand.

In view of the complex situation, there will in many cases be more than one true answer. In the following example, the matter is still comparatively clear:

Example: A striking case of different original materials is delivered within the animal kingdom. For *Apis mellifica*, bee venom as well as ground bee (which is 99% non-venom) were proved, be venom in the first place. In his work *GUIDING SYMPTOMS* (vol. 1, appeared in 1879), Constantin Hering clearly pleaded for the bee venom: "It is ... foolish to take the whole bee with all the foreign matter and impurities which colour the tincture."

Not every therapist is aware that he must prescribe *Apisinum* so as to have the patient receiving the remedy best compatible with ancient and modern *Materia medica* textbooks.

Within Classical homeopathy itself different remedy variants can be justified. Such all the more as certain directions in homeopathy or other sections of CAM therapies tend to prefer different original materials, or processing methods.

Example: *Belladonna ex radice* in the anthroposophical medicine and other specialities there.

We suggest that justified production variants be allowed as long as well-defined nomenclature is secured (see points 6 and 7).

(3) How to obtain the Plant Materials

Remedy quality decisively depends on growth and collection methods, rapid processing after crop and, of course, crop or harvesting methods themselves. Since specific features of plants develop best in their natural locations (which in homeopathy is more important than agent contents and the like), **collection of wild plants** should be permissible as well.

Naturally, collection of wild plants cannot practically follow formal rules of "good agriculturing practice" which needs to be considered. Locations mostly unimpaired by environmental and agricultural pollution would be desirable. Existing standards of plant health should possibly undergo adjustments. Generic protection should be possibly as only a very small amount of plant material is needed, a small fraction of the material used in phytotherapy.

(4) Processing of Plant materials

The processing methods currently predominant are the following:

- (a) Tinctures according to HAB*, ordinances nos. 1 to 4a
- (b) Tincture according to French Pharmacopoeia
- (c) Trituration according to HAB*, ordinance no. 6

*HAB = Homöopathisches Arzneibuch, German pharmacopoeia

The small difference in potency resulting from different definitions of vegetable tinctures according to HAB and Ph. Fr. is, to our opinion, negligible. From a practical point of view, we hold the difference in homeopathic dynamics irrelevant.

Much more important effects are expected from degree of **freshness** of the plants, time lags between crop and processing, then chopping and transformation to ethanol or lactose trituration. In order to take into account the differentiated "sensitivity" rates of plant materials, appropriate groups may be established. Refrigeration or freezing of plants before processing should be avoided for use in Classical homeopathy. Another factor is the applied method of further processing, such as chopping or mincing, and prevailing conditions of maceration, to the stage of filtering the tincture or to trituration which should be continued at least to C3 without larger interruption.

We are now approaching the **options in trituration** of vegetable materials (and nearly all raw materials in general!) up to C3 which is so important in Classical homeopathy, as Samuel Hahnemann prescribes for C potencies in the fifth edition of his ORGANON, § 271. Since the sixth edition wholly refers to LM/Q potencies, the fifth ORGANON has to this day remained the leading primer for production and application of C potencies (plus the "Chronic Diseases").

Liquid remedies further potentised from a C3 trituration significantly differ, pharmacologically as well as in their homeopathic dynamism, from those derived from tinctures. Apart from the effects of the different extraction medium, vegetable contents will also differ. In the first place, however, the homeopathically relevant potentising effect ("dynamization") resulting from the 3 hours C3 trituration is considered to be much more intensive. Many therapists have confirmed that such remedies are "stronger" in their effects.

The production of vegetable remedies from tinctures can be historically justified just as well as trituration to C3 with subsequent liquid potentising, Hahnemann's ultimate stance indicates preference for trituration. On the other hand, there may be cases where a

desirable conformity of a prescribed remedy with the originally proved substance indicate a "liquid processing" from the beginning to the end product. To be free in his professional orientation, a therapist should have his option to prescribe remedies produced with one of the two processing methods.

Such liberty of option would of course be under the condition that remedies of both processing methods can be registered, and trituration is not limited to solid or dry materials. The problem here is that trituration of fresh organic materials is nowhere referred to in the HAB.

Conclusion: HAB ordinance no. 6 (or corresponding ordinations in Ph.Eur.) must be so formulated, extended or commented as to definitely include **trituration of fresh raw material of organic origin**.

Tincture derivatives according to HAB ordinance no. 7 cannot replace fresh materials trituration! For the production of Q-potencies according to Hahnemann such is true anyway.

Corresponding adjustments within the HAB would no doubt enhance its reputation among therapists (including the addition to HAB ordinances no. 10 and 17 of 'globuli size 0', in conformity with Hahnemann's recommendations). These points for action should be given attention on a European level, in order to foster agreement between authorities and therapists.

(5) Increased Quality Consciousness of Therapists

For a long time, quality standards for remedies were but a stepchild in the consciousness of classical homeopaths. This has consistently changed during the past years. Spreading from qualified homeopaths, we watch an **increasing interest in quality** and performance of manufactures. Current comments in therapists magazines sensitize for the subject. Education Guidelines for non-physician homeopaths of the ECCH (Europe Council for Classical homeopathy, www.homeopathy-ecch.org) and SHZ (Stiftung Homöopathie Zertifikat/ Homeopathy Certificate Foundation, www.homoeopathie-zertifikat.de) include basics of homeopathic pharmacology. New compendiums exhibit relevant chapters.

Quality concepts on the part of therapists may partly coincide with administrative guidelines, but our focus sometimes is different. Therapists tend to be less interested in GMP standards developed for the chemical-pharmaceutical industry than in questions like those discussed above. In our point of view, not every detail would require administrative regulation: a cost-intensive over-regulation would cause further reductions in product variety, and thus cannot be the interest of therapists. Therefore, a certain liberty range is important. The decisive factor for us is trust in the manufacturer and his methods which, however, ought to be supported by transparency.

(6) Justifiable Variances in Production Methods

We are representing an association of therapists working by the method of classical homeopathy, but we do abstain from judging over various directions in homeopathy. We furthermore believe that such judgement might ill become German as well as other European authorities or expert commissions.

High quality of medicines plus availability of all homeopathic remedies are among our primary aims and, likewise, of the ECCH/European Council for Classical homeopathy, being the umbrella Organization of non-physician homeopaths in Europe. However, in view of differentiated philosophies and methods on the part of manufacturers and therapists alike, a total agreement on the best possible original substances and processing methods will not always be possible. Therefore, we believe that **justifiable variances in production** - if well considered as a certain methodical pluralism - will remain indispensable. In order for this pluralism not to become too excessive, variances in production methods should require a founded argumentation, conclusive within the method in question. Guidelines widely accepted by therapists - classical homeopaths

and others - would be a desirable aim. Classical homeopathy is especially important here since it works nearest to the roots of homeopathic methodology.

On a European level, some **balance** will have to be found between desirable pluralism and necessary harmonization, between flexible rules and practical simplicity, in order to obviate tendencies toward hypertrophy of regulation and bureaucracy.

The VKHD represents the interests of homeopathic practitioners (Heilpraktiker), and, therefore, Hahnemann's legacy as well. However, in so doing we refrain from methodical disputes. We endeavour to contribute to retain and develop the jurisdictional and political range of action for CAM therapies - as an indispensable part of a medicine worthy to man.

(7) Distinct Remedy Nomenclature

Our endeavour in supporting production variances implies a necessity of distinct definition of the outcome, to safeguard indispensable transparency. The customary Latin nomenclature will contribute to a distinct analysis of the varying original substances. Designations in homeopathy differing by tradition from the present-day botanic nomenclature should be allowed. Production variances could be additionally outlined on labels or packing slips. In some countries remedy terms as for instance *ARNICA CH30* for the 30th centesimal potency in multiglass method are already commonplace, or *CK* for Korsakov (one-glass) method respectively. This may alternatively be practiced by keeping the letter describing the dilution rate, annexing a low-positioned figure or combination of letters-figures (such as *ARNICA C 30_{xy1}*, for example) which could be explained in detail on the package slip.

Carl Classen, February 24th, 2005

VKHD board

Sections Pharmacy and Freedom of Therapy

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