

Centre for Integrative Medical Training
In Association with the Centre for Integrative Care &
The Academic Department, Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine



Foundation Course in Medical Homeopathy

A Blended Course in Homeopathic Medicine for Healthcare Professionals

Materia Medica Studies : *Sepia*

Part 4.4

Sepia officinalis

Introduction

Homeopathic *Sepia* is prepared from the ink of the cuttlefish. The material itself is a solid, which is released by the animal as a colloid into suspension in the sea water. This provides better protection to the cuttlefish, because it disperses less quickly than a watery fluid would.

The raw material is provided to the homeopathic pharmacist as a hard, friable solid. It is required to be prepared by trituration in the first stages of potentisation.



Animal Remedies

If we discount *Calcareo carbonica*, this is the first polychrest animal remedy we have encountered. The central character of animal remedies are more controversial and more difficult to describe than remedies from the plant and mineral realm. Some animal remedies are very toxic (snake and spider toxins for example). Many of these have a useful acute picture.

Some animal remedies are prepared from non-toxic secretions. The milk remedies, for example (eg *Lac caninum*), these do not have a strongly pathological or physiological picture, but their mind symptoms are well characterised (dreams, emotions, relationships, behaviour).

Some animal remedies are prepared from morbid tissues or infective discharges. *Medorrhinum*, for example is made from human gonorrhoeal discharge. These materials often have affinities to disturbed surface immunity, in addition to a well defined mind picture.

In broad terms, the animal remedies are 'biological' in their remedy pictures. Their symptoms are reactive and changeable. Physical symptoms are often expressed cyclically, in synchronicity with sleep patterns, menstrual cycles or sexual activity. The mind picture of animal remedies is often subtle and phasic. It is broadly characterised by competitive behaviour, sexuality, eating, drinking and sensorial activity. Some patients requiring animal remedies can be innately irrational, exploitative or aggressive.

The Animal Remedy 'Signature' of *Sepia officinalis*

When we discuss a remedy like *Sepia*, there are a number of different commentaries on the materia medica. The remedy has a long history of use in homeopathic medicine. It was introduced by Hahnemann who observed certain symptoms in artists who used *Sepia* in their work. These artists licked the tips of their paint brushes into points for finely detailed work, and developed *Sepia* symptoms over time (from chronic low-grade ingestion of the ink). *Sepia* has also been subjected to proving experiments, which have elucidated many of the physical and physiological features.

Additionally many years of clinical experience have given us a lot of additional detail concerning the mind symptoms. Materia medica writers like James Tyler Kent, Margaret Tyler, Marjory Blackie and Catherine Coulter, have written extensively on the constitutional picture of patients who respond well to this remedy.

It is important not to extrapolate the remedy picture too much from the nature of its source. However, in the case of *Sepia*, there are a number of aspects to the cuttlefish which appear to be signatures for the remedy.



Activity



View the video presentation on *Sepia* by Russell Malcolm.

<https://youtu.be/wMG-hSNXg8s>



The Cuttlefish and the Sepia Remedy Picture

This marine creature is relatively solitary in its habit. It is also very territorial. The female cuttlefish will map out an area of the sea bed as its territory, and will often show considerable aggression towards other individuals who enter this territory. For much of the time she lies in a passive state on a sandy area of the seabed. In this state she is largely camouflaged, both by her colouring and the sand that she flicks over her back. She can, however, move like lightening if threatened by a predator, or in the event of an intruder.

The female cuttlefish will accept a solitary male into the territory for the sole purpose of breeding.

The maintenance and protection of the territory requires constant vigilance and energy.

In homeopathic practise, *Sepia* can be indicated in both men and women. However, the constitutional indications in men are less easy to recognise. This is because the *Sepia* picture is greatly exaggerated in women as a result of the menstrual cycle.

Sepia is characterised by a loss of tone and energy, in those who are struggling to maintain their role and their **territory**. In modern western society, it takes a lot of energy to maintain a home, earn an income and nurture a family. Typically the *Sepia* individual places a lot of emphasis on the home and family, but may also be holding down a job and 'juggling' a variety of needs. These needs often centre around those of others.

The self-esteem of different constitutions appears to be based on different things. Sulphur base their self esteem on their collected knowledge. Calc carb bases their self esteem on their reliability, or their practicality and work-ethic. *Sepia* appears to base the self esteem on the maintenance of a lovely living space and the nurture of the family within it.

However, fatigue from washing, cleaning, cooking and repetitive domestic activity can reduce the patient's enjoyment of their home and family. The sheer unremitting nature of domestic work can make them flat in mood, irritable, and tired to the point of indifference. In this role there are few real holidays in which to recuperate.

This loss of energy and the mental indifference that accompanies it, are accentuated prior to periods in *Sepia* women. In these phases they can become irritable and resentful, to the extent that they experience an irrational hatred for those to whom they profess the greatest love. The partner who arrives home late for a meal that has taken hours to prepare, will experience the consequences of this highly paradoxical reaction.

The premenstrual syndrome of *Sepia*, can include weepiness; a **dragging down** sensation in the pelvic organs, flatness of mood or irritability and

an aggravation of co-existent ailments at this time of the month. There is usually a recognisable improvement when the menstrual flow has started.

Sexual desire and bowel habit can show marked **cyclical changes** in these patients. Dancing, with abandon, to rhythmical music, is something which is found to consistently raise the mood and energy of patients in a *Sepia* state.

Now read the summary of *Sepia* overleaf and study the remedy in your materia medica.

Sepia (Cuttlefish ink)

Outline Summary

Stasis on all levels – indifference, isolation, loss of libido

Energised by physical activity especially dancing

Affinities for the female hormonal cycle

Typology

Thin, lax-fibred, sallow complexion with brownish spots in the face.



Mentals

- Indifference to everything, dullness, incommunicative
- Desire to be alone, < consolation
- Loss of libido
- Fault-finding, irritable particularly before menses

Generals

- > physical exertion
- Chilly, < stuffy rooms
- Bearing down sensation

Desire for:

Vinegar, pickles

Averse to:

Fats, rich food

Aggravated by:

Cold air

Stuffy rooms

Menses

Pregnancy

Ameliorated by:

Vigorous motion, sitting with legs crossed

Clinical Indications

- Constipation
- Haemorrhoids
- Uterine prolapse
- Menstrual disorders, PMT
- Never well since pregnancy or birth control pill
- Depression

Activity:

View the materia medica description of *Sepia* by Dr Todd Rowe.

<https://youtu.be/9r20ojMb7-0>



The Essence of *Sepia*

Usually, but not exclusively, a female remedy

Laxity

Variable motivation

Often indifferent (to duty, family and business)

Loss of motivation when pathological 'flatness' of emotional expression

Isolation

Loss of Libido

Energised and invigorated by exertion and exercise especially dancing (ameliorates)

Menstrual problem including premenstrual tension

Pelvic disorders: characterised by loss of tone, and a sensation as though everything is falling out



Sepia Clinical Case:

N.B. age 15 <http://youtu.be/MUmn-Tr0JB0>



After you have read the following summary watch NBs case on the video. How many features of *Sepia* can you identify?



Case Summary:

Asthma since early childhood. Mother brought her for homoeopathic treatment because her asthma became increasingly unstable, and difficult to control with inhalers. Requiring courses of oral steroids, and losing a lot of time from school.

Chilly Cold damp air aggravates

Worse in the morning

Difficulty motivating herself to get out of bed

Doesn't want to meet her friends, and yet upset because her best friend has found new liaisons

Catarrhal

Constipated prior to menses, and asthma tends to be unstable prior to menses

Irritable with her family

Wants to be left alone when feeling unwell

At her best in the evening

On examination:

Flat affect

Mumbles answers

Can't really be bothered Seems to be here under duress

Dry cough

A few scattered rhonchi across both lung fields
Peak flow averaging 400-420

Treatment:

Sepia 30c three single doses

Outcome:

Much better. Fewer acute attacks. No oral steroids in last months.
Peak flow typically 450-460. Moods improved. Still rather flat
and withdrawn, but mother reports that her motivation is much
better. Pre-menstrual symptoms improved.

Observations: N B

Follow-up

Doctor: It was October I saw you last, how have things been going?
Mother: Very well really, she's been a lot healthier.....you know as concerns infections and things.
Doctor: Did she have a reaction to the remedy?.....Did it produce any flare up or aggravation or disturbance?
Patient: No.
Doctor: And how are you feeling in yourself just now?
Patient: At the moment I've got a bit of a cold.....since the last time I saw you.
Doctor: How has your energy been in general?
Patient: A lot better.
Doctor: [to Mother] What would you say is the main thing that you have noticed?
Mother: The main thing is her being able to get into school more or less on a daily basis. She has had so few lapses as compared with before. I mean in the term leading up to October, I think more than 50% she'd been off. This time, since she's been here she has been off 4/5 days altogether.
Doctor: [to patient] Is that right?
Patient: Yes.
Mother:She's had more energy.
Doctor: What about your mood? How do you think things are there?
Patient: I'm a lot happier.
Doctor: Do you think you're getting along better with other people?
Patient: Yes.

Further Relevant Reading

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SAQ 4.4



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

Mind

General, environmental and constitutional features

Local

Frequent pathological indications

At home read *Sepia* in your *materia medica* :

Page 871 Vermeulen

Page 1158 Clarke

Page 586 Boericke (2nd British ed)

Page 825 Neatby and Stonham

Page 535 Phatak

Page 369 Jouanny

Page 141 Boyd