



## excerpts from ... Herscu Letter No. 57

### The current epidemic:

Since the middle of October, and even into the middle of November of the year 2002, we have been in the midst of a viral-mostly respiratory tract-infection epidemic. Now the interesting aspect of this epidemic, like the one we experienced last year, is that it is presenting with a variety of symptoms or syndromes. I want to describe them in broad strokes so you can see the common features. Each individual, though, will have more symptoms.

Many, many people began this epidemic with a cold that then develops into a sinus infection. For the most part, the prominent features were chilliness, even with the fever, and a headache in the frontal or maxillary sinuses. The mucus began by a watery clear discharge, but it soon became thick and stringy and whitish gray in color. Soon after, people would develop a cough which was worse at night, when lying down. Their respiratory tract symptoms felt better in a hot bath and by drinking warm drinks.

Another group of people began with a sore throat beginning near the vocal chords, as if they had overstrained their voices. Soon after they developed pain high up in the larynx, on both sides, though more so on the right side. The inflammation in the throat eventually led to a hoarseness of voice and a tickle, again high up, in the larynx. The tickle caused an incessant dry cough to develop on inspiration. By the time the cough began, they patient would also develop a 100-102 Fahrenheit fever, with aches in different parts of the body. Again the pain was better in a hot bath, and better drinking hot water.

Another group suffered from gastroenteritis. This group experienced stomachaches in some, and nausea, vomiting or diarrhea in others. This group also experienced a fair amount of abdominal distention. This group also had many of the sufferers feel better by drinking tea or any warm drink, settling the stomach.

Now if we go back to the discussions from **Letters #32** onward, we can see that with the chills, the right sided complaints, the gastrointestinal complaints and with the desire for warm drinks, *Lycopodium* could very well be a remedy that would help many of these people. In fact, it was and is one of the most prominent remedies to help many people during this time. As you recall from the discussions, any remedy is possible during an epidemic, even different remedies for different people. However, what is interesting about this epidemic is that due to the specific environmental factors, climate changes, and most specifically our individual predispositions, we find that a group of people became ill and many needed the same remedy. Mind you, the

diseases are different. From the traditional medical model, we are talking about different diseases. From our point of view, though we can look at this time differently.

Using our understanding of epidemics, PLUS our understanding of individual susceptibilities and the concepts that were built on in the proving discussions, we can formulate a more elegant model of what is happening at this time. The way I would describe it follows: The difficult environment that exists right now, with the differing stresses are impacting certain people more than others. Some of the people who are stressed have a predisposing aspect to them that makes them susceptible to different bacteria or viruses. The fact that there are a set group of people who share a predisposition makes it reasonable that they will produce similar enough symptoms.

Now when you look at the people who are getting sick, you find that some of the constitutional types will produce the gastrointestinal symptoms because of where their weaknesses are, whereas other constitutional types, will produce symptoms in the respiratory tract. As I mentioned last year, the key for me in how to deal with the different epidemics was to lump all of the ones that share the same symptoms together, to make it in fact one epidemic, showing different symptoms in different constitutional types. That led to the *Arsenicum album* prescription. It did not matter what the offending organism was. What mattered was the response of the person to the *Stress*. For the past month it has been mostly *Lycopodium*.

As I write this, I can say that the epidemic is again changing. Some of the people are beginning to develop *Sulphur* symptoms and to respond well to that remedy, whereas others are developing *Gelsemium* symptoms. *Sulphur* is being used for the people who, amongst other reasons, are having the respiratory tract infections, with extremely red lips, and the thirst is for a great deal of cold water. *Gelsemium* is indicated for those where weakness is the prominent feature, as well as any attending neurological symptoms.

Until next time,

Paul Herscu ND, DHANP

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