



The Current Epidemic October/November/December 2004 Update 2

December 4th, 2004

Dear Friends, I have only now recovered some of my hard disk drive, after my computer crashed. As a result this update is late, but not out of date.

November 1st, 2004

Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying this wonderful Fall. Red Sox Won; Incredible. While there seems to be only one race left--the presidency--I would say there is a more important race, that of how we as a community will deal with epidemics. Before I go in depth into this important point, let me start with a quick note. There is a new upper respiratory tract infection going around the Northeast of the USA. While it is not as widespread as the previous *Gelsemium* one, it does seem to me that I should mention it, as the symptoms become severe. The predominant problem is that of a typical cough, but then it drops rapidly into the lower chest, leading to a bad bronchitis or pneumonia. The most common remedy that has helped this epidemic has been *Phosphorus*. As I mentioned it is not that it is widespread. There are other minor respiratory tract infections about, which I am not commenting on. However, if you are attending an elderly patient or someone who is in a weakened state, the pneumonia may ensue. It is because of that point that I write this update. Some of the other presentations of this viral infection which correspond to *Phosphorus* include either vomiting or diarrhea, both of which may be severe. The typical *Phosphorus* emotional picture is sometimes present, but if it is missing do not hesitate to give the remedy, if other symptoms fit.

Hiatus From the Epidemic Updates

The second reason I am sending this Update is to alert you that I will be taking a pause from these Updates. If and when a pandemic is announced or when a severe epidemic strikes us, be assured that I will make comments at that time. However, for the average epidemics I will have to stop for now.

I have been doing this work, as part of other works in homeopathy. After taking care of my family and my patients, after teaching, after writing, instead of going to sleep I have been keeping track of these developing situations. I feel very bad about this but at the moment, I feel like I am running myself down. I have to take care of my own health as well as my family's and have been spending too much of my energies on this most important topic. This is not to say that it is unimportant to me. As you know, I see this gathering storm on the one hand, but also see that I will be hurting myself if I go on in this vein.

In short, while our efforts have been great, the work that is in front of us is still so large, I need to figure out how to make it happen, without wasting time or resources. I would like to make a couple of predictions below, but I think that for most people they will be so far-fetched that the mind will not accept them. As a result, let me list some of my work in this field, to establish the track record that may make the prediction have a bit more weight.

1. In 1991, I wrote and focused on the topic of epidemics, stating that this will be a big problem for us in the near future, and I focused on the specific steps that the homeopathic community needed to undertake to fulfill its potential. Part of that work was printed in **Letter 57**.
2. In 1997 I wrote and lectured extensively about the 1997 avian flu in Hong Kong and its implications to our future. Again, I listed the steps that our community should undertake to have in place, mechanisms that would help if and when a pandemic arose. The

point I made over and over was that this is one of my major nightmares in healthcare, the coming pandemic.

3. In 1997 I began to lecture and write on the topic in earnest, laying out a foundation of how classical homeopaths could look at epidemics, at how they make sense, and describing a process by which we could enter the public health care system once more.
4. I began to teach this foundation in different countries, culminating with the closing lecture at the Swiss National Conference in St. Gallen in 2001. Not only had I described the process, but also spoke of the problems that lie ahead.
5. In 1999-2000 I spoke about public health and wrote about the dangers of epidemics due to the world turning into more of a global village, as well as the additional threat of bioterrorism.
6. During the Anthrax scare of 2001, I described the process that we homeopaths should be taking, as well as the government. As you read, the government in fact would undertake all of the suggestions that I wrote about, from 1 week to 3 months later.
7. Likewise, with SARS, I wrote on the topic, stating several years in advance where this type of illness would occur, the symptoms, the causes, and what the government would have to do to stop the progression. During the actual time, we discussed homeopathic treatment options.
8. Lastly, we described the influenza seasons of 2001, 2002, 2003, describing the common symptoms, the remedies, the likely peaking of the illnesses and what the government would be doing. We were on target each time, with many Updates throughout the seasons, each time stating what would happen, from one week to months ahead of what actually occurred. While many panicked, the readers of these **Letters** did not, as there was a clear sense of what was happening and the fact that the government would later say the same thing, made many comfortable with the correct assessments.

Why am I listing all this? What are the predictions?

I am hoping to lay out the history so that all the past correct assessments will allow me to make the following points and have you keep an open mind.

First, the point I have been making over and over again, is that in our lifetimes there will be a pandemic that not only makes millions sick, but will kill countless as well. I *hope* that this does not happen, but logic tells me that it will. While I have been writing about this for years, I think you have all by now been reading and hearing about this in the media. It is now becoming an accepted possibility and probability.

Second, we as a homeopathic community are wholly unprepared for this calamity. Just looking at the last few years of scares should let any objective observer see that. With each epidemic and with each threat, confusion reigned. To think that this will magically be different when a pandemic lands on our shores is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Third, as has been the history of our profession, I have no doubt that in the near future, as the rest of the world is waking up to this danger, homeopaths will begin to write all sorts of books on the topic. The books will focus on the past, on past literature and what happened in previous epidemics. Based on the results I listed above, allow me the right to state that the past is not going to be helpful to us this time and that it will be a massive community delusion to think that we would be prepared by focusing on past epidemics. Believe me when I say that we are not even remotely prepared.

Fourth, the fear of pandemics and epidemics will lead to an ever accelerating role of vaccines in peoples lives, with an increasing number of *mandatory* vaccinations for children and adults in order to be able to go to school, to work, to use public transportation, etc. We as a community are wholly unprepared for that.

Fifth, I know that homeopathy has a very important place in the healthcare of individuals and has a very important place in public health care. However that work is not happening to the point where it can actualize the benefits.

Putting all of these points together, I think the time is crucial to have homeopathy step up to the plate. This is a wake-up call for us. At present, as in the past, homeopaths have sought a kind of recognition from the greater community, a kind of sign of acceptance. That vision is currently too small, too held back. Homeopathy at this time has to step up to the fore, to lead in some of the discussions of how we are going to prepare for these epidemics. What is at balance is how we view health and disease. What is at stake is that the fear of these epidemics will push the prevalent medical model further into a direction that will make many individuals chronically ill, and make it almost impossible to practice homeopathy.

There is a list of steps that need to be taken, to be implemented, to change the direction of healthcare. This is not only a scary time for me, but I also see it as an opportunity for homeopathy, to solidly break out from sidelines. Steps need to be taken now. I know in future years, if steps are not taken, that this time period from the early 1990's until the pandemic hits will be seen as the folly of our community where we could have done something but did not.

It is for this reason that I need to stop these Updates to gather the resources together, both financial and people-wise, to take up this major undertaking. To be specific, we need a better set of tools for treatment of the patient, a better set of tools for education of the homeopath, a working structure for communicating between each other and another structure for communicating with public health authorities. To put it another way, we need homeopaths who are prepared for this work to have a network that works well rather than confuses the situation, have books and lecture materials that adequately prepare homeopaths for this work, and we need the funding to make this happen.

If you are interested in supporting these broad efforts in any way, feel free to contact us at nesh@nesh.com.

(Below is a reprint of the October 2004 Update, for your convenience.)

**The Current Epidemic September/October/ 2004
Update 1**

October 1st, 2004

Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying this wonderful autumn weekend. I am writing a short note to comment on the first epidemic that has hit the East Coast of the USA. We have been in the midst of an upper respiratory tract infection epidemic for about three weeks. It has been very stable, and very contagious. There is a good chance that as you are reading this note, you, someone in your family, or some friend, is either recovering from this cold, in the midst of it, or coming down with it. I know, after weeks of having people sneeze all over me, I fell with it last week, as did several in my family.

While the cold seems to last ten days or so, with many of the days being extremely uncomfortable, homeopathic remedies can shorten the misery considerably, though we have not seen it shorten the total duration.

Interestingly enough, there has been a stable picture for this epidemic, which has led to a clear *Genus epidemicus*, thus far. The remedy is and has been *Gelsemium*.

The ideas and symptoms that brought us to *Gelsemium* follow:

1. First the weather has been perfect *Gelsemium* weather. Many times the remedy is called for when the weather has been sultry, warm, and wet. With copious rain that has made so many of the farmers happy in the northeast, it has also been the perfect weather when the *Gelsemium* state arises. (Talk about feeling under the weather!)

2. The first symptoms that show up are often chills, a slight disequilibrium, slight tension in the body, and a runny nose, discharging clear, warm, watery mucus.
3. What follows is a stuffy nose, with congested sinuses, leading to a thick, full sensation in the head, as if it is full of mucus that is hardening. It feels as if the brain is expanding, as if a mild meningial irritation is taking place, which may explain the next symptoms.
4. The body begins to ache in earnest, with the feeling that it has been beaten. The paraspinal muscles ache, the extremities feel bruised as if the patient had taken a bad fall or as if they had run a great distance.
5. Most importantly, it feels as if all your energy has been spent. It seems too hard to move your body. It seems too hard to sit up straight. keep your head up, keep your eyes open, You want to lie down, not move, and sleep.
6. There is a kind of warm sensation with a slight perspiration covering his body.

There are other particular symptoms, but the ones mentioned above seem to be the common ones. *Gelsemium*, 30C or 200c, makes it possible to go through this acute illness without the severe symptoms, and without developing new problems such as bronchitis or pharyngitis. This is especially useful if the patient is elderly and can not afford to go through a bad illness.

I know this sounds miserable, so let me end with something amusing. As I mentioned at the beginning of this note, both Amy and I have this cold. After working on some projects in the house, we decided we needed to get out and get something accomplished. After the chores we wanted to rest. A friend of ours has a houseboat on a wide river, and it seemed like a great place to nap. We met up with him, asked permission, and found out that the canoe that we take out to the houseboat was elsewhere, that we could take the kayak with the two holes at the bottom of the boat. The distance wasn't great and we knew we could get to the houseboat before the kayak filled completely.

We got there, took a nap, but when we woke up, the kayak was three quarters full of water. I jumped in the river to help lift the boat up to get rid empty it (Think Woody Allen here). Amy stood at the edge of the houseboat's deck. When I lifted, the boat moved somewhat, Newton's Laws of Thermodynamics kicked in and the next thing I knew the house boat went this way and the kayak went that way, now taking on water in earnest. We both looked at the kayak floating away, begin to sink and sink completely. Neither of us moved. I think I said something like, "Oh...Hem...Err..." Amy, usually incredibly quick and articulate stood there, pointed at the sinking kayak, as it drifted that way and she drifted the other way in the houseboat. It was so hard for either of us to truly react.

It took a while to find a long rope, tie it to the end of the kayak and lift the boat up, empty it, and ride it back. That led to another nap.

This vignette illustrates the dream-like quality of our patients' experience, of time moving in a blur of slowness, as if moving through *Jello*. That is the feeling one has when in a *Gelsemium* state.

I will send another email in a short period of time, with a discussion on the 2004-2005 influenza outlook.

Until next time,

Paul Herscu, ND, DHANP

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