

Book Reviews

Concordant Materia Medica. Frans Vermeulen. 2nd edition 1997. Haarlem: Emryss bv. £69. ISBN 90-76189-02-1.

Frans Vermeulen's second edition of the *Concordant Materia Medica* is an impressive book. The text has been extensively expanded and revised from the previous edition, whilst maintaining its ambition to contain 'the maximum number of reliable materia medica facts in the minimum space.' The inclusion of Hering's work in this edition has led to a considerable increase in the size of the book. With its dark green cover, one would be forgiven for mistaking it for Kent's *Repertory* at a distance.

Vermeulen has used Boericke's *Materia Medica* as his basis, and then has elaborated on it. He researched numerous texts, before deciding on a selection which complemented one another. Using the works of T. F. Allen, Boger, Clarke, Cowperthwaite, Kent, Lippe, Phatak and Pulford, he formulated the repetition-free symptoms contained within the book. He also added a few pertinent contemporary symptoms from his own *Synoptic Materia Medica*. Each entry is coded by author, hence one can rapidly trace the source.

In all, the book contains the detailed materia medica of more than 800 remedies, in almost 1,700 pages of extremely dense type. Most of the original texts did not use Kent's grading of symptoms, but Vermeulen has introduced a method of emphasizing the different grades. Each remedy commences with 'Characteristics', symptoms which typify the remedy and equivalent to Kent's grade three. The use of bold, italic and plain type in the syntax conveys the relative importance of the symptoms, as well as making it far easier to use in conjunction with Kent, and related repertories.

The materia medica is divided into sections as in Boericke's book, a format familiar to most homoeopaths. Slight modifications have been made to add clarity. Eyes becomes Eyes and Vision, Ears—divided into Ears and Hearing, and Food and Drink has been separated from Stomach.

Following the pathological symptoms are the Modalities, a brief note on conditions where the remedy may be considered and finally, concise words on related remedies. Guidelines on dosages have largely been omitted.

The symptoms are relayed in a 'telegram style', to quote the author, rather than prose. This, combined with the small print, does make it more difficult to read. Serious concentration is required to fully appreciate the text.

The authors selected by Vermeulen were all distinguished American homoeopaths of the last century, except for Phatak. His work, however, was based on that of Boger. This has profound implications on not only the selection of remedies included, but also the amount and type of source material available. Bearing in mind the time scale, it is obvious that newer remedies will be excluded. There is no mention of the Bowel Nosodes, for example, as these were introduced by Bach and Wheeler in the late 1920s.

Other remedies have a very incomplete picture. *Carcinosinum*, which was used by Clarke and others, albeit as *Scirrhinum*, is described in only a single page. The material differs little from that found in Vermeulen's *Synoptic*, and indeed the code confirms this as the source. This is a shame, considering the remedy's importance in contemporary prescribing. *Sanicula*, considered by some authorities as *Carcinosin*'s mineral analogue, by comparison has 6 pages devoted to it. They contain much which is not found in other comparable texts.

Vermeulen has preserved much of the original style and expressions. The quaint language may lead to a certain amount of difficulty in comprehension. I am still wondering about the modern day equivalent of the 'peasants' with gastralgia and chronic gastritis 'who subsisted mainly on heavy bread, sour small-beer and adulterated coffee.' (*Lycopodium*).

The entire book is simply crammed with symptoms. A balance has been achieved between the mind symptoms and those relating

to the physical body, unlike many recent publications, and there is considerably more emphasis on the physical. It is fascinating for those more used to the psychological profiles proposed today, to see the totality of the remedy as well as the origins of these remedy pictures.

There is a vast amount of highly-detailed and well-researched knowledge contained in the pages of this book. Although not cheap, it is certainly excellent value for money. It is certainly not a book for someone starting out in homeopathy; he or she would be totally overwhelmed by the quantity of the material. There is simply too much information for one to absorb without setting aside time for serious study.

The publication of such a large number of *Materia Medica* books in recent years reflects the fact that none is perfect. Homeopaths are as individual as their patients, and their choice of books demonstrates this. Some will prefer keynote style books, others favour more detailed accounts of the remedies. There are classical works and contemporary concepts. It is impossible to achieve a balance of authoritative classical works, and some of the recent and at times speculative, modern ideas. Vermeulen has very wisely chosen to separate the two, by producing the *Concordant* and *Synoptic Materia Medicas*, which complement one another. *Synoptic* contains the basics of the remedies, salient features, but no details. It is excellent for the beginner, and to give an overview of a remedy. It provides the skeleton on which the flesh and blood of the remedies can be hung. *Concordant* is that flesh and blood.

A good knowledge of the *Materia Medica* is fundamental to us as homeopathic practitioners, and as we are constantly reminded there are short cuts or easy methods. Modern work assists us in this task by providing a framework. *Concordant*, however, contains the distilled wisdom and experience of previous generations of dedicated homeopaths. It demands serious study.

Although designed to be a portable *Materia Medica*, *Concordant* is really too large and too detailed for use in a busy clinic. As a reference book, it should have a place in every good academic, or better still personal, library.

Frans Vermeulen closes his introduction with the hope that 'this book enables homeopaths to clarify the fundamental drug picture,

and accurately analyse their patient's symptoms.' I think his hopes have been realised, and would thoroughly recommend this book to any serious student of homeopathy.

MARYSIA KRATIMENOS

Homeopathic Method. Jeremy Swayne. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone 1997. ISBN 0-443-05926-8. £22.50.

In this book aptly entitled *Homeopathic Method*, Jeremy Swayne provides an in depth analysis of an approach to understanding the meaning of symptoms in the larger context of an individual life. For this process he uses the phrase 'clinical method' as distinct from 'therapeutic method' with its emphasis on the therapeutic technique or agent used in treatment. Thus the focus here is on relationship rather than *materia medica*. This work is an attempt to examine the multifaceted dynamics that exist between doctor, patient, and illness and to elucidate and clarify them so that they may be clinically useful to a wide range of practitioners. It is a meritorious venture into difficult territory and reflects both the breadth of the author's experience and the depth of his insight into the currents which flow just below the surface of the daily experience of a practising homeopath.

The book begins with an overview of clinical method, emphasizing that the art of history-taking, which was once the foundation stone of medicine, has been preserved and refined in the tradition of homeopathy. This skill is in danger of terminal atrophy in the hands of technological medicine. The idea is put forward that the ennui increasingly prevalent among doctors is an expression of this atrophy.

The chapter on Basic Principles is a good summary of the underlying principles of homeopathic practice written in a way that makes them understandable to doctors who might be reading about this method for the first time. This is followed by a section entitled General Issues of Management. The information presented here deals in depth with issues related to quality of patient contact, both in terms of time spent, the scope of investigation and the 'attentiveness' required of the practitioner. The experience of the author is clearly evident in this section and

study of the principles he lays out will be of benefit even to the experienced doctor. 'Having let the patient tell the tale in their own words, the process of enquiry ranges widely over the issues raised by the patient and also over many other facets of their life. This approach helps patients to see themselves more as a whole, and their symptoms or problems less as some separate and hostile entity. It allows sensitive and difficult matters, often psychological, to be approached gently and within the balanced context of the whole. This obviates the uneasiness that can accompany discussion of what is and what is not psychosomatic. It avoids the unhelpful duality of mind and body, and the temptation to take a one sided organic or psychological view of the illness.' Helpful handout type information on "What Is Homeopathy" and "The Course of Treatment" as well as advice on how to introduce the topic of homeopathy to your patients and what sorts of illnesses are good candidates for treatment are included here.

Case Taking naturally merits quite a bit of discussion ranging from the 'small but significant shift in the way we see our work' which underlies the difference between homeopathic and conventional case taking, through an exposition on 'Language and Meaning' to advice on how to take notes and keep electronic records.

The title of the next chapter is 'Symptoms'. Emphasis is placed on the difference in attitude between homeopathic and conventional medicine. 'Symptoms are taken seriously in homeopathy whether or not they are recognized features of a previously known condition or of the known materia medica of any homeopathic medicines. In fact the greatest contrast between the conventional and homeopathic use of symptoms is that in homeopathy the most valuable symptoms are those that are not typical of the underlying pathology. In conventional medicine the reverse is true.' The latter is most certainly true, but of the former experience demonstrates that symptoms which cannot be understood in terms of one or another remedy are much less helpful than those which can. The discussion on types of symptoms, while covering the essential material, leaves one with a feeling of irresolution. The distinction between particulars and generals could have been more simply stated to emphasize the fact that whatever affects the whole is clearly of more import than that which merely touches on some peripheral part.

This section illustrates one of my fundamental critiques of this work. Clarity is sometimes sacrificed to an attempt at presenting an intellectually objective viewpoint. Too much thought and too little feeling leave one with a sense of confusion about what is really important and what is not. On the other hand when the author writes from his own direct experience the message is clear and helpful.

The difficulties and pitfalls of evaluating symptoms are nicely illustrated by a case of lymphoma in which the prescription turned on the presenting symptom of splenomegaly. This case grounds the discussion and serves as a springboard for further clarification of what does or does not serve as a really useful symptom. 'The most valuable symptoms for the differential diagnosis of the homeopathic medicine are those that are most complete in their description and that most vividly express the individual character of the illness.'

The experience of recurring themes in the history is a most important observation. The idea that "Recurring themes within the materia medica of a particular medicine or a patient's history are sometimes described as their 'essence'" is an interesting one. Whether one agrees with this as a definition of 'essence' does not minimize the significance and utility of the existence of themes. In any chronic case no effort directed towards the elucidation of the 'theme' or 'story' which underlies the individual life will go wasted. Although it is not easy to say more on this topic I wish the author had given more prominence to this method of case analysis.

Symptoms From The Past touches on one of homeopathy's great strengths. The ability to see and discriminate a movement towards health in the unfolding of the case. The return of old symptoms as a movement towards health must be understood to avoid untimely intervention and derailing of the healing process.

An entire chapter is devoted to the concept of 'Constitution'. Although in a work such as this it is necessary to address this topic in some detail, my personal view is that the concept of constitution and all its attendant associations serve to confuse, to add a further intellectual barrier between practitioner and patient. Notwithstanding this view, the distinction made between clinical and constitutional pictures is a useful one and the topic is intelligently and clearly covered.

Aetiology is an important factor in understanding a case and is rightfully given prominence. It is my personal experience that even in cases where aetiology does not enter directly into the prescription, if the causative factors for the illness are truly hidden from view, the case will be extremely difficult to solve. The concept of aetiology is taken rather broadly in this chapter and includes such diverse headings as family history, personal history and diathesis, miasms, infection, immunization, allergies and physical and psychological trauma.

The section on When To Use Homeopathy appears to be aimed mostly at General Practitioners who will use remedies on some occasions and addresses many concerns of immediate relevance in the UK. While I agree with the author when he states "There is a tendency to elitism among some practitioners of homeopathy who regard its in-depth study as the only proper course and its off-the-cuff use in general practice as a travesty. This is a grave mistake.", the perceptions underlying this elitism have some merit. A clear differentiation should be made between the practice of homeopathy and the dispensing of homeopathic remedies. The failure to recognize the vast gap between the results of mediocre practice and the full possibilities of the homeopathic system of medicine is in itself a grave mistake. Even the author himself, a homeopath of significant experience and merit, steers dangerously close to this error. "The question is often asked 'would you treat acute appendicitis with homeopathy?' or 'Would you treat a heart attack?' The answer is 'Yes and no'. We might ask 'Would you treat a heart attack with Aspirin?' The answer is 'Yes and no' for the same reason. Aspirin has an important contribution to make. We would now be negligent not to give it. But it is not by itself the proper management. This is the way to regard the role of homeopathy in many acute situations that require emergency care." I understand that a point is being made, but to compare the potential benefits of the correct homeopathic remedy in an acute, potentially fatal situation to that of Aspirin is just the attitude which I am sure pushes the 'elitists' over the edge. Of course one would treat acute appendicitis with homeopathy. A single dose of high potency on the way to the hospital might resolve the issue before surgery. To compare the potential action of the correct remedy in

acute myocardial infarction to Aspirin implies to the uninitiated that there is no difference in battle between a firecracker and a hand grenade.

The chapter ends with the question of Difficult Cases and Difficult Patients, with the author's own experience providing a solid foundation in the differentiation between pathology and patient. The key points summary at the conclusion is a useful device and might have been employed more freely throughout the text. Treatment Strategy includes a discussion of strategies for acute and chronic illness as well as prevention and prophylaxis. The most important section for a practising homeopath deals with intercurrent acute illness during chronic illness. This area (like failure to recognize the Law of Cure in the return of old symptoms) is one in which the healing process is easily disrupted. The advice given is solid. "Changes arising from a previous prescription that indicate a favorable response should not be interfered with if at all possible. If they do require intervention palliative conventional treatment may be preferable to homeopathy." This last point is very important. There is nothing that interferes with the action of a homeopathic remedy as effectively as another homeopathic remedy. Conventional palliative treatment is much more superficial and consequently much less disruptive. A useful device employed here (and well used throughout the book) is to end the chapter with a discussion relating the deeper psychological dynamics involved in doctor-patient interaction and their integration into the treatment strategy. The author quotes Kafka who has an old country doctor say "To write prescriptions is easy but to come to an understanding with people is hard."

The penultimate chapter, The Response To The Prescription, is straightforward, concise and packed with practical information on what to do after you have given a remedy. Arriving at a prescription is just the first step of many subtle therapeutic decisions. The book ends with a section entitled Implications which serves to summarize what has been stated in the body of the text, to indicate directions for future research and to highlight certain areas where the results obtained for the use of homeopathic medicines tear rents in the tightly woven fabric of the conventional medical world view. Emphasis is placed on the current and potential benefits to medical science from

the disciplines of 'pathography' and 'holography'. 'Pathography is drawing or writing the disease process; telling the story of the disease, depicting the disease. Holography is a term we might coin from hologram and holograph for the act of describing the process of making whole or healing.' It can be justly claimed that in these areas the practice of homoeopathic medicine has and will continue to make great contributions to the art of healing.

As a venture into difficult territory the expedition must be applauded. The exploration, however, is far from complete and I hope a revised edition will be published. The attempt on the part of the author to address such a wide audience results in a little bit for everyone all mixed in with a little bit for everyone else. The book should really be in two sections. The first a simple laying out of the basic theory and facts of experience, the diagrams replaced by clear point form summaries, and this information referenced in the second to the well rounded in depth descriptions. Despite the author's skill and insight in these descriptions there are places where the writing is overly intellectual and produces complexity where simplicity is needed. Many of the diagrams may have been useful for the author in sorting out his own ideas but they added nothing to my understanding of the material.

Overall this is a book which needed to be written and will serve well those who are able to study it carefully. It is an unusual work in that it deals almost exclusively with what might be termed 'practical theory'. The detailed information presented here was previously unavailable in a form which could be digested by those for whom this work is intended. It is not merely a restatement of previously written books but a genuine contribution from the life and work experience of a senior practitioner.

JONATHON SHORE

Complementary Therapies in Dental

Practice. Edited by Peter Varley. Wright (an imprint of Butterworth-Heinemann). Oxford. Price £25.00. ISBN 0-7236-1033-9.

This is quite inspirational book which will appeal to everyone with an interest in complementary therapies, be they dentist, specialist therapist or patient. Dentists espousing complementary therapies as part of their approach to practice have for too long had an

uphill struggle gaining professional acceptance from peers and governing bodies and also in locating therapists for referral where the treatment required is outside their own field of expertise. In fact many holistic practices have evolved because the dentist has had no option but to learn how to provide the relevant treatments him/herself. 'Complementary Therapies in Dental Practice' fills the void and will almost certainly become a standard text.

The foreword is contributed by Lord Colwyn, CBE, DBS, LDSRCS, who makes the valuable point that dentists are in a unique position in health care because they see their patients at regular intervals when they are apparently healthy, and they should therefore be at the forefront of the holistic approach to health care, directing patients to other suitable practitioners when necessary.

Peter Varley himself writes an eloquent introduction emphasising that health is a state of homeostasis where there is a balance of the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical aspects of the body. Holistic practice, by definition, requires the time to take a comprehensive patient history, and to make a thorough examination, and the ability to listen. Sadly, these are all attributes which have often fallen by the wayside in the busy practice. The purpose of the book is to provide an insight into ways in which complementary therapies can improve the dentists' ability to care for the patient by imparting the knowledge necessary to make appropriate referrals. The book is divided into ten chapters contributed by an impressive array of renowned dentists and experts in their chosen fields.

Richard Fischer, DDS, is a well-respected general dental practitioner in Washington, DC, and past President of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology. His chapter is a very readable explanation of the principles of homoeopathy, how homoeopathy can be introduced into the dental environment with guidance on potency selection, remedy selection, and includes a section devoted to specific conditions in dental practice. Being an American, he is more vulnerable than dentists in the United Kingdom to the criticism of 'practising medicine without a licence' because appropriate dental treatment results in an improvement in what is considered to be a medical condition. As he so aptly states, homoeopathic remedies are not organ specific and, just as allopathic drugs, they affect the

entire person. He makes the point that penicillin prescribed for a dental infection will also treat the patient's infected toenail, which does not imply that the dentist has been practising medicine or podiatry. 'It is the individual's vital force that directs the evolution of cure, not the doctor'. As will all the chapters in the book, there are extensive references and bibliography for further study and useful contact addresses for societies within the UK and overseas, a feature of the book that I found refreshingly helpful.

The chapter on nutrition is contributed by Ron Ehrlich, BDS, who has lectured internationally on nutrition and holistic dentistry who also includes in his opening paragraphs the comment that dentists are in an ideal position to provide nutritional advice because of their regular contact with their patients. He lists the many factors which make nutrition such a complex subject which is still so poorly understood by the majority of health care professionals. These include soil degradation, fertilizers and pesticides, air and water quality, food processing, commercialism, widespread use of antibiotics and hormone treatments and use and abuse of prescription and recreational drugs including alcohol. He defines nutritional content for optimal health and outlines use of nutritional support for ill health, including a section on nutritional elements in supporting and detoxifying patients undergoing removal of mercury amalgam fillings. This is a chapter worthy of reading and re-reading for all health care professionals.

In similar vein, Jack Levenson's chapter deals with the vexed problem of the continuing use of mercury amalgam fillings. Jack is the pioneer on this side of the Atlantic in bringing the fact that even so-called silver fillings contain 50% mercury to the attention of a surprised general public. His sterling work in accumulating scientific information about the hazards to health to both patients and dentists alike of mercury amalgam as a dental filling material is encapsulated in this excellent and informative contribution to the book.

Other chapters are perhaps of less relevance to homoeopathy; for instance 'Chiropractic' by Jonathan Howat, DC, DICS, FICS, internationally renowned particularly for his work in Sacro-Occipital Technique as a means of relieving patients of symptoms resulting from skeletal imbalance and disturbances including the cranio-facial problems of such importance

to the dentist treating headaches, neck and shoulder pain and occlusally-related disease. Many dentists now work in close conjunction with chiropractors, and for them in particular this chapter is invaluable in understanding how the two disciplines interact.

Similarly, Richard Holding, who practises a blend of cranial osteopathy, kinesiology and traditional Chinese medicine, approaches the treatment of imbalances and disharmonies in the cranial bones as they are relevant to the treatment of temporo-mandibular joint (TMJ) and occlusal dysfunction from a slightly different perspective. Joseph Shafer writes on Applied Kinesiology and its applications in dentistry, Simon Hayhoe on Acupuncture, Geoff Graham on Hypnosis, Angela Caine on the dental implications in voice therapy, and, finally, Stuart Ferraris rounds the book off with an overview of holistic dental practice.

At the beginning of this review, I remarked that Complementary Therapies in Dental Practice is an inspirational book. All those associated with producing this book should be congratulated.

CATHERINE PRICE

The Elements of Homoeopathy Vols. 1 and 2. Dr P Sankaran; edited by Dr R Sankaran. Homoeopathic Medical Publishers: Santa Cruz, 1996. Price: not available.

Most of us are by now very familiar with Rajan Sankaran through his thought-provoking books and seminars. His father, the late Dr P Sankaran, 1922–1979, has hitherto been only a name for most of us. In presenting his life's work in two volumes, Rajan has introduced us to his father, and paid him a touching tribute; and what a valuable and enriching introduction this is!

In a brief biography we learn that when young, he, like Hahnemann, experienced poverty in a large family. Later, living with an Ayurvedic practitioner uncle, he became interested in and studied both allopathic and Ayurvedic medicine. Only after becoming ill and being cured by homoeopathy did he lose his initial scepticism, and study homoeopathy himself. He studied in London with the pre-war generation of homoeopaths, including Borland, Weir, Blackie, Foubister and others. In Calcutta he had learnt keynote prescribing, and in London Kentian method,

with high potencies and emphasis on mental symptoms. He met Elizabeth Wright-Hubbard, who remarked on his sense of humour and wanted him to stay and teach in America. In fact he returned to Bombay and fitted in teaching and writing around a busy practice there.

His interest encompassed the preoccupations of his age: the bowel nosodes, Kirlian photography, Boyd's emanometer, psychology, photography, travel and playing the veena, (an Indian musical instrument). Rajan Sankaran, in his introduction, is at pains to say how carefully his father observed, and how he was prepared to experiment and learn from his experience. He points out practices at odds with conventional homoeopathic teaching, which seemed to work for him. He would, for example, often start treatment with a nosode where there was a family history of disease or repeat remedies at the same potency, even during a remission. As Rajan rightly says: agree or not, more research on these issues is needed to define best practice.

Dr P Sankaran describes his own conversion to homoeopathy: his own case, and those of two close relatives. Case reports are used throughout to illustrate each point, and they are always interesting. A feature of these volumes is the large number of quotations from other authors. The depth and extent of his own study, and his own modesty, are demonstrated by the fact that it is sometimes difficult to discern his own view on a topic. His ability to marshal evidence to illustrate his theses is impressive. His writing is lucid, easy to read, and stimulating.

In successive chapters Rajan has collected his teaching of the fundamental principles of homoeopathy, including the sources and preparation of remedies, potency, and some interesting pharmacological information. The study of *Materia Medica*, he admits, is both important and difficult. He is refreshingly open in his attitude to Hahnemann, lamenting that *Materia Medica Pura* is 'rather dry and difficult to digest, and . . . in the hands of a beginner likely (to) . . . frighten him away for life.'

The next, much larger sections, are 'Random Notes on Some Remedies' and 'Some Notes on The Nosodes.' They are well-named: not methodical, complete expositions of the *materia medica*, but dipping into it, they highlight important points, illustrating them with his own and others' cases. For example Lippe's

treatment of a man's ten years of impotence with *Lac-c cm* because ten years earlier he'd had very severe diphtheria in which the classical symptoms shifted from side to side.

Some of the quotations are surprising, and not in accord with general belief about a remedy. Few of us would agree that *Medorrhinum* is the most useful remedy in vomiting of pregnancy, as Boger wrote, or as frequently indicated in paediatrics as any other remedy (Underhill). His own case was a woman with asthma, where the diagnosis was made on the clinical observation that her breasts were markedly colder than the rest of her body—a classic *Med.* symptom.

Sankaran gives more information on some subjects than is normally the case. Insulin is described in detail from its provings; 26 subtypes of tuberculinum and other authors' descriptions of them are included, with Schmidt's comment: '[The French indications are] fanciful and based on insufficient data.' A clear, concise exposition of the bowel nodoses is taken from Bach and Paterson.

There is a section on the currently new provings, in some of which the author had participated. The symptoms are given in detail, but although he mentions that a double-blind method was used, with some provers getting placebo and the director being ignorant of their identity, there are too few details to satisfy modern experimental standards. In excellent chapters on case-taking and analysis he again quotes extensively from others' writing. The teaching is orthodox and as clearly put as in any text book I have met. For him, the correct remedy was found from the totality of symptoms, correctly chosen for their peculiarity, in the hierarchy we know well. Modern schemata incorporating essence, and so on have emerged since his time.

Advocacy of the Repertory may seem superfluous. We are reminded how useful many teachers found it: how even Pierre Schmidt confessed to needing to refer to Kent's Repertory ('that golden book') 50 times a day! There is a long section of cases, mostly repertorised, studying which would be of great value to any student, (who might do best to do his own repertorization before reading the answers.) He seems mostly to pick out an essential causation or very peculiar symptom, then only include in subsequent rubrics those symptoms which were in that initial rubric. This method is fine, when it works: I could give

many instances when it does not! And it can appear to justify a prescription on one or two symptoms only. I'm not sure if Sankaran intended to imply this.

Sankaran studied, liked and used Boger's Synoptic Key. He describes it in considerable detail and in comparison with Kent's Repertory; then he gives many case illustrations of its value.

Before computers, card indices were tried as a method of simplifying the work of repertorization. Sankaran made his own card index, based on his own Pocket Repertory, gleaned from various respected sources. This is included in the text. Generally, the rubrics are smaller than those in Kent, and concentrate on the better known remedies. There is an interesting table of prophylactic remedies, with their sources, a selection of cross-references for Kent quite different from that in Synthesis.

In Volume 2 potency is the first topic. Having quoted no fewer than 138 authorities, Sankaran concludes with a set of 12 rules which set out succinctly our own normal practices. A similar technique is employed in discussion repetition. After quoting the 5th and 6th editions of the Organon, and many other writers, Sankaran discusses his colleagues' practice of frequent repetition of high potencies in chronic disease, which he seems prepared to recommend to experienced practitioners who watch their cases closely.

Dietary restriction, and coffee, etc. as obstacles to cure: here, for once, Sankaran gives his own opinion first, soundly based on cases and personal experience. He found coffee was not so deadly as has been made out, and he quotes and questions the aphorisms on which this advice is based. He also covers: what to do when the well-indicated remedy fails; the importance of aetiology; the scope of homoeopathy in general, and in pathology and surgical conditions; the limitations of homoeopathy, and some then current research. Finally, there is a diamond dust collection of many small writings, each one well worth browsing through.

P Sankaran was clearly a great homoeopath, a good observer and prescriber, a clear writer and teacher, and doubtless an inspiration to those who knew him. An essential modesty and integrity shines through these volumes.

Whatever one may think about Rajan Sankaran and his contribution to homoeopathy, there is no doubt at all that he has done us a

great favour by making his father's work more widely available. I thoroughly recommend these volumes to practitioners and students of homoeopathy of whatever level, as there is much here for everyone. They are hard-backed books printed on good quality paper to a high standard.

JOHN M ENGLISH

Encyclopaedia of Remedy Relationships in Homoeopathy. Edited by Dr Abdur Rehman. Heidelberg, Karl F. Haug, 1997. ISBN 3-7760-1545-4. Price: not available.

Dr Rehman states that this work has taken him 16 years to compile, which really is no surprise. This is a work requiring immense scholarship and attention to detail. Professor Diwan Harish Chand comments:

'The tremendous study, devotion and hard work that has gone into its writing is something to be admired . . . he has collected the material and compiled it in a tabulated form with cross-references . . . unparalleled in homoeopathic literature . . . (He covers) a wide canvas (of) 191 authors and 275 books . . . in English, German, French and Urdu.' (686 remedies are considered.) He must be right in saying that 'this work greatly enlarges the scope of the previously existing books on the subject.'

The book is laid out in two columns per page, using a small typeface. Each remedy is considered under at least five headings: Complementary; Followed well by; Inimical; Antidotes; and Collaterals;. A major remedy also has Miasm, Temperament, Laterality, Related Bowel nosode, Duration of action, Foods to be eaten and to avoid, and a Remarks section.

Accepting the immense scholarship, and the immense labour taken in creating this volume, there remain questions: How reliable is the information? And even if it is reliable, how useful is it in clinical practice?

Taking the first of these, there is the huge bibliography already referred to. It includes authors who write in English, German and French. A curious omission is Dr Gibson-Miller's booklet on the same subject. A major source is JH Clarke's Clinical Repertory; the Miasms, Laterality and Food headings are from Schmidt and Chand's edition of Kent's Reper-

tory, and that on Temperaments is from Flury. Where this is not so, the source is stated. Unfortunately, tracing the reference number is tedious with the way the bibliography is arranged. Clearly, we are not expected to question the source material. Unfortunately, too, many of the references are of descriptive books or articles in which the particular 'fact' is unsubstantiated and may well only be a clinical impression. Its reliability is therefore questionable. In the past authors could use such authority and still be accepted, but nowadays, when other major works are being much more carefully annotated with proven source material, a work we are expected to take as a reliable reference should have the same degree of backing. In many instances this may be unavailable. What research has been carried out on the way in which remedies interact with each other? Surely it is all based on that most dubious authority: clinical impression.

If we accept the inevitable limitation of its accuracy, how useful is it? The authors naturally say that knowledge of relationships is valuable in clinical practice. They have been available in a more modest way before, but all the teaching I have had has placed 'the related remedy' fairly well down the list of considerations, when a change of remedy is indicated. Experience has emphasized some progressions, such as the *Calc-Lyc-Sul* triad, or the related bowel nosode after the well-indicated remedy. Many of those in this volume are far less well-known, and I suspect less well-justified by experience. The duration of action is something which surely varies from case to case, and which one observes in a given patient, rather than accepts from a theoretical standpoint.

The division into the four main miasms is interesting, but most of us can work it out from the *materia medica* of the remedy. It makes a good teaching subject, but few outside South America and Mexico make substantial routine use of miasm theory. The four temperaments are again not generally recognised as important prescribing indicators, although they do make an interesting addition to our ways of understanding each remedy. I found it confusing in the polychrest entries to see so many remedies entered, often under each of the main headings. Under *Sulphur*, for example, *Calcarea*, *Mercurius*, *Pulsatilla*, and *Rhus toxicodendron* occur under *Complementary*, *Followed well by*, *Inimical*, *Antidote* and *Collateral!* What are we to conclude?

Laterality and the information on foods may sometimes be more or less detailed than the standard repertory entries, and in the former case the source's accuracy is possibly suspect. Such information is as easily obtained from the repertory. The collateral entries are interesting, and may point the way to the consideration of alternative remedies, but again, they compete with repertory entries for specific symptoms, and the repertory may be more complete.

This is certainly a reference book: it contains far too much information for most of us to try to retain. Although for emphasis the Kentian system of capitals and italics is used, there is so much information that I doubt that the really important facts are sufficiently highlighted for the work to be used as a textbook except by the advanced student.

I feel quite churlish, being so critical of what I acknowledge to be a Herculean labour genuinely undertaken, but the question-marks hanging over it remain. Those who like to collect books will no doubt buy and enjoy it, but those on a limited budget would do better to study it in a library first. It contains the sort of information which computer enthusiasts will want to have available via that medium.

JOHN M ENGLISH

Evolution of Homoeopathic Repertories and Repertorisation by Jugal Kishore

Kishore Cards Publications, 86 Golf Links, New Delhi 110003, India; 386 pages, 1997 \$120, hardback

Sitting in Dr Jugal Kishore's busy clinic in New Delhi is a unique experience. He presides, a small benign gentle and distinguished man in a large office chair in one corner. Around him in alcoves of the room are his assistants absorbed in taking cases. They come forward with the notes and patient, and present the case to Dr Kishore. He listens carefully, maybe asks a few questions, perhaps retakes the whole case. He then takes a photograph of the patient and also of the local symptoms for before and after shots to verify the cure. He usually suggests some rubrics to the assistant or himself goes over to a special filing case and deftly pulls out a number of punched cards which he holds up to the light. This is the pre-computer technology of the famous Kishore Cards repertory system, of which he is of course a nimble master. Holding them up to the light reveals the remedy as a hole

which coincides in each card. Holistic homoeopathy? Prescription to the compounder and next please! He sees patients at a prodigious pace.

Part of the contents of this book formed part of the introductory volume to the first edition of the cards, long out of print and now available in a third edition, here revised and expanded so that this really is a new publication. The first chapter of 123 pages deals with the titled *Evolution of Homoeopathic Repertories*, and the next 50 pages with case taking. Then there are 140 pages of examples of worked out cases using a variety of methods, and then some conclusions with more repertory exercises. There is not another book like this one, it is not essential to have the card repertory to use it. But having not only a Kent but some other older and newer repertories and a computer will help, as the book really comes alive if the reader tries out the cases as a learning experience. If you do buy the cards they come in 4 hand crafted wooden cases; readers are welcome to inspect my set by appointment.

Kishore has our literature at his fingertips and cites not only his own cases but those of many colleagues. P Sankaran, father of the current world favourite seminar teacher, Rajan Sankaran found some small rubrics to be gold when they were needed, such as palpitation in the bath, urinary retention after hysteria, and nose itching while eating. He cites the well known peculiar symptoms, nose running during stool, to which I add stool runs while eating! These all illustrate the author's message that the repertory is a window to the materia medica and memory alone is not sufficient.

There are the inevitable errors which creep into most Indian publications, for example the names Candegabe and Santee are mis-spelt, there are some unfinished sentences, and many odd gaps between words. Neatby is dated 50 years late. But the binding is sound and these errors should not detract from the value of this amazing collection. There are also omissions based partially on language barriers, such as Broussallian's French Kent card repertory and Flury's Swiss card repertory. But there are also mentions of some of my favourites: for example Jiminez' bilingual English/Spanish card repertory from Costa Rica and Mexico acquired a US patent in 1925! Farley's Spindle Repertory is bound with a large screw at the base so that the cards fan open. Other card

repertories like Field and Boger are explained. Kishore is up to date demonstrating his methods by comparing the same cases worked out in Boenninghausen, Kent, the Kishore cards, and MacRepertory, with illustrative charts.

We are taken through the history and development of repertory in great detail. Kishore really understands the minds of such scholars as Boenninghausen and explains his methods in a practical way, as he does for TF Allen, Gentry, Knerr and more. There are historical lists which date complete and partial or 'regional' repertories. Many of these repertories are still available as inexpensive reprints directly from India.

The chapter on case taking is fascinating. Kishore relates the case of a bashful 14 year old who was cured of enuresis. He had made his mother promise not to tell the physician and blamed her for revealing his secret when he awoke in a dry bed! He would not return to see the homoeopath again. Here is real solid guidance on sensitive interrogation, with illustrations and small cases. This chapter would have made a small book by itself and illustrates that whether with a computer or a book, repertory analysis of a case will produce no results if the case is not well taken.

There are few books which teach repertorisation, Bidwell's small book *How to use the Repertory* is an introduction to Kent. Dhawale explains at length how to differentiate the methods of Kent and Boenninghausen but is long out of print. Ahmed Currim has produced a recent introduction to Kent, worthy but laborious and almost obessional in detail by the side of Kishore's relaxed narrative. Bhanu Desai has written a good introduction to Boenninghausen.

Here we have a book which is written in an easy style with many fascinating digressions and anecdotes to catch the imagination of the novice and experienced practitioner alike. The beauty of this book is in the explanations which place these repertories into contexts of history, and methodology so the discerning reader may see how one repertoriser developed his work from that of a predecessor, and enable the reader to work out the case exercises to learn how to use our indispensable reference tools. Kishore is sharing his lifetime of clinical experience in this book. It should be on every reading list.

FRANCIS TREUHERZ