

## **The Use of Homeopathic medicines in the 1918 Influenza Epidemic**

Reference : Winston, J “ The Faces of Homeopathy” Great Auk Publishing 1999

### **Avian Influenza Epidemic**

There has been much discussion about the merits or otherwise of Avian Flu anti-viral medicines in the media but no discussion of the effectiveness of homeopathy in the treatment of influenza. History shows us that homeopathy was used by homeopathic physicians in USA to treat patients during 1918-1919 influenza epidemic. From information recorded by these doctors, homeopathic treatment was highly successful. In most cases one or two homeopathic medicines were needed. These are known as the “genus epidemicus” in an epidemic and become known through the careful observation of a number of influenza cases. It is difficult to speculate exactly what homeopathic remedies will work best in the possible Avian flu epidemic. However there are a number of known ‘flu remedies that may be useful eg Gelsemium, Bryonia, Arnica, Eupatorium- perforatum, Arsenicum etc . In the 1918 epidemic Gelsemium and Bryonia were most commonly indicated according to the following extracts.

### **1918 Influenza Epidemic**

In 1921 W.A. Dewey MD., published a paper in the *Journal of the American Institute of Homeopathy* entitled “Homeopathy in Influenza – A Chorus of Fifty in Harmony”. The following extracts are from this paper:

- In Philadelphia 26,795 cases of influenza treated by homeopathic physicians had a mortality rate of 1.05% compared with the conventional mortality rate of 30%.
- In Connecticut 30 physicians reported 6,602 cases with 55 deaths, (<1%).
- Dr Roberts in Connecticut also reported 81 cases in the transport service all treated with homeopathic treatment and all recovered.
- In a factory in Chicago, Dr Wieland reported influenza in 8000 workers with one death. All were treated with *Gelsemium*. He reports no aspirin was used and no vaccines.
- Dr Williams in Rhode Island reported no losses from influenza and a 2.1% loss in those that developed pneumonia. He observed that Drs using aspirin as the main treatment were having a 60% mortality in those patients that developed pneumonia.
- Dr Sappington reports that from 1500 influenza cases recorded by the Homeopathic Medical Society of the District of Columbia only 15 died. Recoveries in the National Homeopathic Hospital was 100%
- In Ohio, Dr McCann treated 1000 cases of influenza and had no losses. He says all credit must be given to homeopathy.
- Raymond Siedel decided to become a homeopathic doctor when he was a 10 year old delivery boy for a local homeopath. He said “ I saw that people who were taking Aspirin were dying, about half those who were drinking a lot of whiskey were dying, and those that received homeopathic remedies were living.”
- It was generally observed by homeopaths in the US at the time that the use of Aspirin was a major cause of deaths during the influenza epidemic. Its indirect action came through the fact that aspirin was taken until prostration resulted and the patient developed pneumonia.
- In Kentucky Dr Huff wrote “ I almost invariably gave (homeopathic medicines) *Gelsemium* or *Bryonia*. I hardly ever lost a case if I got there first, unless the patient had been sent to a drug store and bought Aspirin, in which event I was likely to have a case of pneumonia on my hands.”