Talk 21 : Summary : Observation in Case Taking

Theme: Observation in Case-taking

- The ‘Sensation’ and who the person is are two sides of the same coin.
- Observations of behavior in some remedies.
- Full case example 1
- Observations of children.
- Full case example 2
- Some more examples
- The importance of curiosity
- Curiosity versus casual inquiry
- Full case example 3
- Full case example 4
- Full case example 5
- The internal sensation and external behavior of the person are the same. Sensation and function are two sides of the vital force.
- Aphorism 9
- Full case example 6
- The importance of detailed enquiry
- Understanding who the person is
- One striking aspect could change everything
Question from the website: Can a homoeopath observe himself?

REFERENCES and READING:
1. Hahnemann, S: Organon of Medicine – Aphorism 9, and aphorisms on case-taking
2. Sankaran, Rajan: Soul of Remedies – Carcinosin

TALK 21

CASES

Talk 21 Full Case example 1

The outpatient department

Date: 11th July 2005

A man registered for treatment. On that day, no intern was available to interview him, but somehow the look about the man and the air about him gave me some first clues.

**Chief complaint:** A “heart problem”. He had been advised a bypass operation, since an angiography had detected three blocks in cardiac arteries. He also had ongoing renal failure, with Serum Creatinine at 2.4 mg/dl. This made the doctors hesitant to operate on him. He is a known case of diabetes mellitus, hypertension and prostate.

P: I am overworked and have some stress.

D: Can you tell me about it?
P: I am very particular about being on time. If someone pays me, I should not be late for duty. Somebody will point a finger at me. I feel guilty.

D: Can you tell me something more about your nature?

P: I do not lose my temper easily. If I get angry about something, I keep it inside. I feel upset when my children do not listen to me and I feel suffocated.

There is a history of heavy smoking from the age of eighteen years and also of alcohol addiction. This is all the written description of the interview!

**Talk 21 Full Case example 2:**

Date: 24th December 2007

A male aged seventeen years

Profession: Dancer

Appearance: Tall, lean and wiry, sporting a ‘funky’ look, with highlighted spiked-up hair.

**Chief complaints:**

1. Recurrent colds and coughs for the past four to five years. They start with coryza – a watery discharge from both the nostrils, with a lot of sneezing. There is continuous repetitive sneezing. Once he starts sneezing, then it goes on for about twenty five times. It is brought on by cold food and drinks, especially cold water. Dust also brings it on. Once the cough begins, there are also paroxysms of coughing, causing a dull pain in the chest.

2. Headache from exposure to the sun and on wearing a cap, for the past seven to eight months. There is no specific character that can be ascribed to the pain. It occurs mainly in the forehead and vertex. It is better by pressure and a massage. The moment he puts a cap on his head the headache begins.
3. Backache for the past four years, and knee pain as well, right more than the left.

P: When I was eight years old, I met with a severe accident. I was hit by a water tanker. I was conscious and fully aware of what was going on, but was not able to move my legs. I was taken to the hospital. There was no feeling (no sensation) in both the hands as well as the legs. I was not able to sit. I remained in hospital for three or four months. After being discharged I was confined to the bed for about a year. Later only I gradually began to be able to move my fingers and limbs and then begin to walk again. From the time of this incident onwards I have had pain in my back and knees. The doctors told my parents I would be on a wheel chair for the rest of my life, but I don’t know how I am back on my legs again, and even dancing.

D: Tell us something about your nature.

P: When I was in school I was very hot tempered. Small things would make me angry. There was a lot of anger. If my parents or my younger sister wouldn’t listen to me or wouldn’t do things as I wanted them to I would get wild. I would start shouting very loudly or keep nagging them throughout the day and thus get things done my way.

In school I would fight a lot. If somebody irritated me I would immediately hit that person. Twice I banged my classmate’s head very badly on the desk. I could not control my anger. Now I have grown up, things have changed. I do not get as angry as earlier. There would be a lot of complaints about me in school. My teachers hated me for the mischief I would cause.

In fact I was very mischievous. I would enjoy irritating others. I was not at all afraid of any of my teachers, not even the principal. I was someone whom you could always find at one place – the principal’s cabin. Everyday, for some reason or the other I would be called and fired. But still I was not affected by it.

I was good at studies still the eighth standard. I would get 90% marks most of the time, but suddenly around that time I started losing interest
and then my scores came down to 45 to 60%. In the tenth standard board exams I scored 65%. Now also I am not interested in studying. I am doing a degree just for the sake of acquiring one.

I love dancing and music. It is my main field of interest. It’s what I want to do. I would like to work in the field of entertainment. I have so far choreographed and organised many dance shows.

D: Can you tell us more about your special interests?

P: I love speed. I do everything very fast. I walk fast, talk fast, even eat fast. I am very fond of speed biking. I ride my bike at a very high speed and only then I feel very happy. I am fond of dangerous activities. I am very courageous and enjoy doing daredevil stunts. I feel very happy to do those things.

Also I am an extrovert, very talkative, and mix with people very easily. I would like to have some company, but since I have only just now come to this city for my degree, I don’t have many friends yet. So I feel very bored. I have nothing to do the whole day. I just watch television. Then I love watching horror movies and comedy also.

D: Do you recall any significant dreams?

P: More than twice I have dreamed of cows and bulls hitting me with their horns from behind me. They are constantly chasing and hitting me. I wake up frightened. I also dream of snakes. I get clairvoyant dreams. Whatever I see in my dreams happens the next day. One day I saw this big python in my dream. The next day while riding my bike, I saw the same snake sitting in the middle of the road. I stopped, took a photograph of it and then went on. Then I also have dreams in which I am winning something.

Disease history: Nothing significant

Family history: Hypertension (father)
Physical Generals

Thermal state: Mildly hot

Desires: Cold water, Sweet³, salt³. Sometimes sprinkles extra salt on his food

Aversion: nothing particular

Thirst: moderate

Food agg: Cold drinks and cold food

Talk 21 Full case example 3

The clinic

14th February 2008

A male aged fifty-six years

Chief complaints:

1. Urticaria and angioedema: There is lot of itching all over the body for the past seven months, especially on the ankles forearm and shoulders. The itching got worse after they got pest control procedures done at his house. He has been taking massive doses of anti-histamine tablets daily without much effect. He also took homoeopathic treatment.

2. Floaters in the eyes for the past two-three months.

3. Increased urging for urination

Disease history: In the past he had angina attacks and had to undergo angioplasty. He had chicken pox at 5 years of age, jaundice at the age of 16, Bell’s palsy at 43 yrs, angioedema at 55, and is suffering from diabetes
mellitus and hypertension at present. He had exacerbations of Irritable bowel syndrome at the ages of 42 and 46 years.

*Excerpts from the case record:*

Dreams: “About travelling, of snakes, sexual pleasure. I am in Europe; I am holidaying in Switzerland, a very nice place in the mountains.”

**Physical Generals**

Craves: Bread, butter, sweets, warm food and fruits

Sweat: very scanty

*He writes about his life and situation*

“I believe I am a professionally successful person and I could leave a high profile job at my will and start my own business which is also doing well. I have a very charming, loving wife who has allowed me to pursue and excel in my chosen profession. We have a respectful and caring relationship. We have good friends but most of them are jealous of the success and our family bonding.

Q: How does future look to you?

P: It is very exciting and secure, it will only get better.”

*Notes from the interview*

When asked about his nature, he said, “I am a people’s man. I like everything organized, I am very passionate about what I do...I can’t take ‘No’ as an answer...I am very efficient. I like challenges, like any difficult business situation requiring extraordinary planning and communication skills. I like to have an efficient organization of meticulous performance
which involves a lot of planning and understanding and an analytical mind to foresee problems and to preempt those problems. Whenever there is a job difficult to achieve I start with full confidence.

I don’t share information with my wife... Sometimes I feel isolated like in a tower in the mid ocean.”

I asked him about his interests and hobbies. He said, “I like art... Art is that which is created by human hand with passion and skill.”

Further, as he spoke, he said, “It is important to not to be arrogant which is to make others feel that you have arrived. It feels like you are belittling them.” He said he is very comfortable with public speaking.

*Experience with the patient*

My impression of him is that he is a very self assured, egoistic person but on the surface he is very friendly and smiling.

**Talk 21 Full case example 4:**

**The clinic**

A fifty year old man came to me in 1993 with the following complaints:

1. Constipation since childhood.
2. Trachoma in eye since childhood
3. Acidity only after eating deep-fried food
4. Skin trouble – Ringworm (Tinea) infection in groin.
5. Multiple fat nodules (Lipoma) in body.

He is obese and has bilateral lower lid oedema.
About his mind state:

He was very anxious regarding his health, fear of robbers, of height, of pain and pain in disease. He would be anxious and doubtful about the house doors being closed at night.

He is impatient about everything, queues not moving, about people not understanding when he tries to explain.

He is very attached to a spiritual ashram, which he visits frequently. He is financially comfortable and wants to live in the ashram longer, but can’t do it.

There is a dream in which he is trying to go way from a leper. He says, “I cannot run away but they cannot catch me. I am either too slow or too fast there is some in activity in legs; I cannot go completely away from them. I am still at the approachable distant yet out of their reach.”

Talk 21 Full Case example 5:

The clinic

A forty- four year old lady

Profession: House wife and helping in family Business

She was referred by a colleague who was treating her. She had fever. It went on for six to seven months or more. Every night she would have temperature, feel weak and cannot do anything. She had measurable temperature and was subjected to every kind of test. They did not find anything. She continued to have temperature. With antibiotics the fever stopped for less than a week. Again she got it for three-four months. This time she said, “I am not going to take allopathy.”
26th September 2005

Chief complaints:

1. Fever: Since yesterday I again landed up with fever, temperature rising almost to 102°F in the evening. Whatever I eat tastes bitter. My thirst has increased. The fever increases in the early morning and during menses.

2. Leg pain: for a day the legs are paining, she feels like banging them

Regarding herself she said:

“I don’t feel confident about myself. I am always on my toes doing work; I work almost 14-18 hrs all the time…I am a perfectionist, responsible and dutiful."

She described a stressful situation, about which she said, “Everything went hay wire, I had a very hard time to put all duties to place.”

We gleaned some background information about her:

She stays in a joint family, the whole family is under treatment and everybody has problems

at some juncture. But she is always calm, composed and handles every situation. She has taken up the responsibility of house and office, both, and does her best. She is almost like a pillar in the family, balancing everything. She is very much concerned about everybody.

Dream – Things going out of control and have to put them back. She has to keep the control in her house and work.

Physical generals:

Desires: sweets², cold milk, salty²
Aversion: sour

Sleeps: on lateral

Sweat – more on forehead, above lips

This is all we had at the first interview, but the dream, her life situation and our observation about her gave us very strong clues about the remedy.

**Talk 21 Full Case example 6:**

The outpatient department

Date: 26th September 2005

A young boy aged nine years

**Chief complaints**

1. Headache; pain in the vertex, worse on exertion.

2. A slow learner with delayed milestones from the age of four years. Teething, talking and walking was delayed. The IQ is low. He finds it very difficult to concentrate.

His father, who accompanied him, gave these symptoms:

“His head was big at birth and he grew slowly. He is very irritable and finds it difficult to concentrate on his studies. One has to explain the lesson to him over and over. He cannot understand things and is very childish and won’t go to school alone. He wants someone to accompany him every day. He doesn’t seem know what is happening to him. He also feels weak.

He doesn’t like to mix with people, though he is not really shy. He is very quiet, reserved. He weeps very easily on being scolded and gets angry on small matters. He is very sensitive and says, “I am dumb. I don’t have
any brains. Everybody laughs at me. No one is my friend. With whom shall I play?”

If anyone says ‘hi’ or ‘bye’ to him, he doesn’t react. He looks almost blank, as if he hasn’t heard or doesn’t understand. He stares. If one has explained to him what a cycle is, he will understand at that moment. A few days later he looks at it as if it something new and asks about it again.

He is very sensitive to noise. His headache aggravates with noise, like that of the television. He used to say, “Why is this world so noisy? Why isn’t it quiet?”

He has a number of fears. He wants to escape, run away. There is a recurrent dream of falling into a pit and being eaten by a crocodile.”

There is a lot of sweating of the occiput.

The psychiatrist diagnosed learning disability dyslexia with? Absent seizures.

End of Summary