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"Homeopathy for sports, exercise and dance" by Emlyn Thomas

Reviewed by Cor van der Meij, homeopath, The Netherlands

Being a long distance runner myself, Emlyn Thomas's book on the homeopathic treatment of sports injuries was one to have, read and, not last, to use in practice.

The book is based on a long period of practical experience with homeopathy, since 1976 as a physical education officer in the famous (British) Royal Air Force. The book is divided in two parts:

- an outline on theory and practice of homeopathy
- applying homeopathy in practice (i.e. sports injuries)

In both parts a lot of cases are discussed. Thomas is very clear in defining the power of homeopathy in (sports) injuries: 'A homeopathic remedy speeds the recovery of the patient at all levels (physical, mental, emotional and general state).'

Furthermore he defines the limitations: 'Homeopathy can not mend a broken tendon, or a broken bone, but recovery will be faster and more complete by the right remedy.'

Thomas emphasises the power of the right remedy on both the physical and the mental level. In an original way he describes the self-healing power of a living organism, calling it 'The healer within':

'When someone is ill or injured, his organism is "detuned" like a piano which has been damaged... the "tuner" for a living organism is within that same organism...' Hahnemann called this the Vital Force.'

As in our daily practice Thomas divides sports injuries in acute and chronic conditions. There is also a paragraph on the 'Constitution'. Again the way Thomas describes this is almost poetic:

'We regard the constitution as the physiological canvas on which the psychological activities of life are painted and enacted. It is the physical carrier of the vital force and the fundamental basis for expression of all the wishes and intentions of the individual.'

'All the feelings of health, joy, harmony and love are expressed through the constitution, as are those of envy, jealousy, anger, anxiety and disease. The constitution carries the relics of past trauma, disease, grief and other influences, often going back for a generation or more.'

Thomas is a true realist:

'Homeopathic remedies are not miraculous cure-alls. They cannot replace torn ligaments, repair a damaged meniscus, or regenerate deteriorated joints. For some conditions, including many sports injuries, homeopathic medicine can only accompany other medical care.'

'For example, homeopathy can speed up the repair of a fracture as long as the

bones have been set correctly. It can not replace corrective surgery when its need has been diagnosed'.

Then there is a chapter on homeopathic symptomatology, in which Thomas states that it is important to have a diagnosis from a regular sports medicine practitioner. This is followed by a description of the methodology in recognising homeopathic symptoms: location, sensation (and interpretation, together with observation, including some questions to ask), concomitants and modalities (including recognising the patterns and the causation or maintaining causes).

The following chapter is on 'Managing homeopathic treatment' in which attention is given to how to take the remedy, rules for prescribing, frequency, repeating, changing symptoms and if the remedy does not work.

The second part of the book starts with 'Traumatic injury and first aid', paying attention to inflammation and controlling bleeding, first aid remedies, head injuries, skin wounds, muscle tears, strains and sprains of tendons and ligaments, fractures and spinal injury.

The following chapter is on overuse injuries and conditions, in which Thomas also pays attention to 'Warm up and down', which is an actual theme of discussion. In 2002 two Australians, Herbert and Gabriel, published a survey study on this subject in the British Medical Journal, concluding that no evidence was found on the positive effects of stretching in relation to sports injuries.

Chapter 8 is on 'Local treatment for specific injuries', 9 on 'Treating common conditions' and 10 describes the main homeopathic remedies. Chapters 11, 12 and 13 are on 'Advanced uses of homeopathy' in which attention is paid on susceptibility to injury, enhanced performance and other complementary therapies and techniques.

Some final remarks:

1) Although Thomas mentions the most important remedies for a specific sports injury, you will sometimes notice that a particular remedy is missing. For example, for pain in the achilles tendon *Calcarea carbonica*, *Colchicum*, *Ledum*, *Mercurius*, *Zincum* and *Ignatia* (on exertion), can also be important remedies (Synthesis 8, Extremities, pain leg, tendo-achilles). So don't forget also to look in your repertory.

Also it can be interesting to compare Thomas's solutions with those of Asa Hershoff in 'Homeopathy for Muscoskeletal Healing'.

2) On page 103 Thomas states that the achilles tendon has no sheath. In my best opinion, this is not true, see e.g. the 'Merck Manuel'. nbsp;

In my opinion, this 322 page book is a must for all colleagues who are more than superficial interested in applying homeopathy in cases of sports injuries.

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