HOMEOPATHY

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Homeopathy, brilliant therapeutics discovered and developed by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann at the end of the 18th century, at first used for the treatment of human beings, has proven its efficiency in the treatment of several animal species.

In order to understand the use of Homeopathy in Veterinary Medicine, we must know the history of this therapeutic method, which started when Hahnemann, displeased with the aggressive and inefficient medicine of his time, leaves it and dedicates himself to translate books and scientific articles. While translating a Materia Medica on the use of China officinalis in the treatment of malaria, something made Hahnemann surprisingly try China himself. He felt all the symptoms of malaria, although in a milder form. From this self-experiment, Hahnemann verified the Law of Similitude, written by Hypocrates several centuries before (Similia similibus curentur). After experimenting other substances and writing his observations, Hahnemann splendidly developed Homeopathy. This new "Art of Healing", as he designated homeopathy, has four main principles:

- Principle of Similitude: when a patient reports the symptoms of his/her disease, a remedy made from the substance, which produced the same symptoms during the experiment or "artificial disease", is administered to him/her.

  In other words, every substance, which produces certain symptoms, is capable of curing them.

- Experimentation in the healthy person: If the individual who experiments the substance is suffering an ailment, then the results are not reliable, because it is not possible to know if the symptoms are caused by the previous illness, or by the ingestion of the experimental substance. Some symptoms were also collected through the observation of accidental intoxication with poisons.

- Diluted and dynamized remedy: This procedure, the foundation of homeopathic pharmaceutical technique, confers the healing power of the homeopathic medication. Hahnemann discovered it when he, aiming at minimizing the toxic effects of some lethal substances, which symptoms caused in the patient were similar to the intoxication to this substance, diluted and stirred them. Subsequently, he observed that when using this substance in the patients, there was a quick and effective improvement. The infinitesimal doses of Homeopathy are still controversial because, when it is assumed that the substance is no longer present in its ponderable form, there is strong reaction by the traditional scientific community. According to Kent, prominent English homeopath, who, before convincing himself of the efficacy of Homeopathy was an acute critics of this science, "It is impossible for our cognitive faculties to understand reality beyond the senses." This assertion is explained by Vitalism, a current which advocates that what rules and shapes our matter, that is, our organism, is the Vital Energy, an when it is unbalanced, the material body also unbalances.

- Single Remedy: The Hahnemanian school indicates that all array of symptoms presented by the patient must be analyzed, and after the "mosaic" of all these symptoms is built, only one remedy must be prescribed, because only it will correct the unbalance in the patient, taking into consideration its high similitude with the disease.

The use of homeopathy in animals started by Hahnemann himself, who medicated his horses with this therapeutics. In addition, Guilherme Lux (1773 - 1849), successfully worked with dynamized remedies for sick animals with glanders, a knowledge acquired from Hahnemann.
Veterinary Homeopathy today

After many years being almost secretly used by some professionals (mostly human physicians), since the 1970s was raised to the category of medical specialty. Homeopathy courses for veterinarians were soon created. Before that, self-taught veterinarians made the use of Homeopathy.

There are presently some good Homeopathy courses for veterinarians in Brazil. These courses are evaluated by the AMVHB - Brazilian Association of Homeopath Veterinarians. This body obtained a great victory in 2000, when Homeopathy was recognized as veterinary specialty by the Federal Council of Veterinary Medicine, which confers the title of Specialist to homeopath veterinarians approved in the exam applied by AMVHB.

The Practice of Homeopathy in Veterinary Medicine

Homeopathy treats each organism as a unique organism, respecting its peculiarities. Based on this premise, the homeopath veterinarian individualizes the patient, looking for all rare, strange, and peculiar symptoms shown by the disease, understanding the patient must be cured, and not the pathology per se.

Consequently, most homeopath veterinarians work in companion animal clinics. Typically, when the owner seeks homeopathic treatment for his/her animal, it is because all allopathic resources no longer work. The typical cases are chronic diseases, such as dermatitis, antibiotic-resistant ear infections, and seizures. Recently, behavioral disturbances are preferentially referred to homeopathic treatment, which is usually successful.

When treating herds of animals, this individualization is made considering the herd as a single organism - each group has its own characteristics, such as breed, temperament, geographic occurrence, etc. These factors must be taken into account as they characterize that herd as unique, and its diseases as unique. This is how Hahnemann treated a scarlet fever epidemic with Mercurius, which was the remedy that covered the symptoms of that epidemic in particular. Hahnemann designated as Epidemic Genius Remedy those remedies used to treat a disease affecting an entire population.

Based on the experience of many homeopath veterinarians, we can assert that Homeopathy can be used in many animal species, and that some species, particularly horses, respond very well to homeopathic treatment. In the next sections, we will detail the conduct of homeopathic treatment in several species, and report some clinical cases.

1. DOGS

These are the most "human" domestic animals, due to their close contact with man for many centuries.

During the homeopathic appointment, the priority of anamnesis are the behavioral symptoms of the patient, seeking strange and peculiar symptoms (jealousy, anxiety, fears, ill temper, depression, etc.), biopatographic history (since when the disturbance was observed and its cause), interactions of the animal in society and with the people it lives with. It is common to obtain the information that the family is undergoing a stressful period, and thus it is assumed that the animal perceives this disturbance and also suffers along with the people it likes, and consequently gets sick.

After this stage, anamnesis focus on the observation of symptoms of thirst, appetite, thermal sensitivity, when do the symptoms intensify or alleviate (laying down, walking, outdoors, in winter).

Based on these data, along with clinical diagnosis and complementary exams, the homeopath veterinarian prescribes a remedy that covers all this array of symptoms and that is translated as that remedy that will balance the Vital Force of this individual. Sometimes, more than one remedy is prescribed, but this is not the standard procedure.

When returning to the clinic, the animal will be evaluated as to the disappearance of the symptoms, the emergence of new symptoms, behavioral changes, and this analysis is the dynamic clinical prognosis of the case. Based on these observations, the homeopath veterinarian will determine a new remedy or will maintain the recommended remedy.

Example of a clinical case:
Dog, German Shepard, 3 years old.
An allopath colleague, who reported a peculiar pattern of seizures, which happen only on Fridays, referred this patient to the homeopath veterinarian. During anamnesis, it is informed that the dog is very affectionate, that it destroys objects, that it has a very childish behavior, despite being an adult dog, and
that had an ear infection treated with antibiotics about 3 months before. The family received this dog recently. The previous owner could not bear its destructive temperament. It was reported that the dog at first did not eat well and remained quiet for several days, but it seemed much “happier” for about two months.

The following symptoms were collected as “guides”:

1. (a) Rejection
   (b) Periodic seizures - every seven days
   (c) Childish behavior
   (d) Destructive behavior
   (e) Discharge suppression (ear infection treatment)

The remedy chosen, which covered most of the symptoms, was Stramonium. After a few days of use, the remedy caused the relapse of ear infection. It was advised to the owner that antibiotic treatment should not be used this time, and after a few days, there was the remission of the ear infection, and the animal no longer presented seizures.

In this clinical case, we can observe the Hering’s Law, which states: “The cure occurs inside out and upside down, presenting symptoms in the inverse order of their emergence, from the more noble organs to the less noble organs.”

The case of this German Shepard dog was an example of this law, when the unbalance diagnosed through brain symptoms (noble organ) proceeds to the ear (less noble organ) until the cure. It also shows the procedure of the homeopath veterinarian during anamnesis, with an interest in peculiar symptoms, and concern for the origin of the unbalance (rejection).

2. OTHER ANIMALS:

The individualizing character of the homeopathic therapeutics allows all domestic animal species to benefit from this treatment. Some species, such as horses, are especially receptive to Homeopathy, and the velocity of response to the remedy administration is remarkable in these animals.

Whereas in domestic animals we can count on the owner to help the anamnesis, in wild animals, we use behavioral observations to collect the symptoms needed to prescription. The challenge to treat wild animals saved from captivity, and therefore, stressed and traumatized, is solved by Homeopathy. These animals are extremely sensitive to allopathic medication principles, and their restraint to administer injections may cause death. One of the advantages of the use of Homeopathy in these animals is that medication can be administered via drinking water or feed, and therefore, does not aggravate the capture stress. Homeopathy offers conditions to treat the unbalance caused by captivity trauma, as the animal is treated as a whole, including the balance of its mental sphere. In addition, it does not intoxicate the animal with substances unknown to its organism contained in conventional medication.

0.1 Homeopathy in Herd Treatment

The herd, with all the peculiarities of the species involved in animal rearing, is considered by Homeopathy as a single organism, and it is treated accordingly, following the steps of individual treatment procedures.

The advantages of the use of Homeopathy in herds include:

1. Animal balance: The energetic character of homeopathic therapeutics promotes stress reduction in the treated animals, especially in confinement, as this situation is quite different from the natural environment to which they are used. Therefore, this procedure, along with a proper management, provide Animal Welfare, an essential condition to the herd energetic balance and consequently to its health. Animals raised under low-stress conditions develop their production potentials better.

2. Ease of administration: the homeopathic remedy is administered per os, and can be added to drinking water, feed, or mineral salt, therefore allowing easy and non-invasive administration, not submitting animals to restraint and trauma, as it happens with the application of injections.
3. Absence of residues: the products of animals treated by Homeopathy do not have residues. This is why it is used in organic production.

4. No environmental contamination: Homeopathy does not present contamination risks as those presented by parasiticides used in beef cattle dips, which, as other compounds used to control parasites, contaminate water, plants and soil. This contamination changes the environment, reducing the number of endemic insects that help the biological control of pests. A good example is the tumblebug, which controls the development of horn fly larvae that grow in the manure.

Based on data collected along the years when Homeopathy was used in beef cattle herds in Central Brazil, it is observed that some behavioral disturbances are efficiently and easily treated, as the remedy is administered per os in the feed or mineral salt. We highlight:

1. Weaning stress: Soon after weaning, calves loose weight and are more susceptible do diseases due to the stress of being separated from their dams. These dams also become more fragile, seeking their calves, vocalizing, decreasing feed intake and trying to jump over the fences.

2. Sodomy: This condition is presented when non-castrated males are grouped in feedlots or paddocks. Due to the high level of sexual hormones and to the stress imposed by confinement, steers display continuous mounting behavior, choosing one animal to be mounted. This behavior leads to energy depletion, lack of appetite, and traumatism, causing lower weight gain.

Homeopathy improves the productive performance as it minimizes stress, resulting in better weight gain and milk production. In reproduction, better reproductive indexes can be obtained by stimulating heat in the females and spermatogenesis in males with the use of Homeopathy.

The control of ectoparasites, such as ticks, horn flies and lice is efficiently made by Homeopathy in cattle herds in extensive production, particularly in crossbred (zebu x European) animals. This practice keeps the environment free from the contamination of parasiticides commonly used in cattle, and results in meat free of toxic residues for safe human consumption.

Therefore, we can say the quality of life of the animals will be reflected in the quality of life of human beings, either in pleasure of seeing that your pet is healthier, feeling that your organism is less intoxicated, being aware that some endangered species may have the chance of a safe treatment, or having the opportunity of eating safer and purer food. Presently, as our planet is so damaged, contaminated and unbalanced, Homeopathy represents the possibility of true balance and the hope that non-aggressive practices will again be used. Or, as Samuel Hahnemann said, the expression of the true “Art of Healing.”