

Published: *When is the Acute Remedy the Chronic Remedy... and When Isn't It?*
by Lisa Samet, N.D.

I've been treating two of the three children of a family who lives in upstate New York. There are no Naturopaths there and even though I live in Montreal, Louise makes the one hour trip with the kids to see me, or we follow up by phone. Both children had been doing quite well on their chronic remedies and Louise had been suggesting it was time to bring in her oldest child as well.

On a Tuesday in early June, Louise phoned me with some desperation in her voice. Anka, her almost one year old daughter, had not been feeling well since Saturday. She had a low fever, between 100-101*. She was waking up screaming with pain in her abdomen from gas each night at around 11pm. Her stool in the past few days had become hard, like small round balls. Her appetite was decreased. There was a lot of rumbling in her belly. "Anything else?" "Oh yeah, she starts screaming if I walk out of the room. She wants to be near me all the time, in my arms if she could have it her way." "Anything else?" "Well, maybe she's warm because she's perspiring a lot." "Is there anything particular about the sweat?" "Yeah, now that you mention it, it seems she's sweating more on her head." "Is she sweating any place else?" "No, actually, it seems like just on her head." "Any food cravings?" "Not really. She just asks for milk. Probably more than usual."

So, what do we have, I was thinking. Thirsty. Hot. Desires milk. Perspiring on the head only. Worse 11pm. Shrieking from pain. Small, hard stools. Desires company. It sure looked like Sulphur, her chronic remedy. Anka had been doing well on Sulphur since I first prescribed it for her in March. She was now taking it in the 1M potency. But Silicea also covered the case quite well, especially the peculiar symptom of sweating only on the head. Hmmm.

"Anything else?" I asked again, hoping that some interesting symptom would present itself to help me decide. "Was she exposed to any other kids who were sick? Did she get a chill?" "No," said Louise, "but I did take her to get a vaccination on Friday for polio. Do you think that could have anything to do with it?" "Absolutely!" I said and quickly looked in my repertory under "Generalities, vaccinations, after" Sulphur a 4! Silicea a 4! As often is the case, I was torn between two remedies.

"Try giving her Sulphur 1M," I suggested. "Every 2 hours until she is better, then give it as needed if she begins to relapse or doesn't continue to improve. If she's not better by tomorrow, phone me again." I used my rule of thumb, if the chronic remedy of the patient covers the acute picture, go with the chronic remedy first.

Louise phoned me the next day. "Anka is not much better...." "Any new symptoms?" I asked. "Not that I can think of." "OK," I said without hesitation, "Give her Silicea 200C, the same way as you did with the Sulphur, and call me tomorrow if she's not better. But I don't think I'll be hearing from you." And I didn't. A few days later I got a message saying the Silicea worked like a charm and Anka was back to her usual happy self.

Although it often happens that the acute remedy needed can be the same as a chronic remedy, it is not always the case.

Only a week later I heard from Louise again. This time it was for her oldest son, Thierry. "I know you've never met Thierry and I've been meaning to bring him in to see you for a chronic remedy...but now he's sick and I'm wondering if you could help us?" I paused. It's difficult enough to prescribe over the phone sometimes, and especially so for someone I had never met. "Well, we'll give it a try," I said. Louise's kids were giving her lots of experience with homeopathy lately and she was becoming quite good at reporting symptoms and identifying the "strange, rare and peculiar". I was confident that together we could get a good picture of the remedy. "What's the problem?" "Well, it's his ear. I brought him to the doctor today because he was complaining of his ear hurting. The doctor said it's infected and wanted to put him on antibiotics, of course. But I'm tired of that approach." I had heard this before. "More than anything, though, his mood has changed, he's like a different boy." "Tell me about it." "Well, the doctor says the infection is in his left ear which is all swollen inside and red. Thierry says it itches. And feels like it's plugged up." No other modalities. "What about his mood?" "Well, he won't listen at all. He's totally disobedient. He contradicts me on every point. Everything irritates him." "What is he usually like?" Well, he can tend to be quite stubborn and obstinate, but not to this degree. "What else?" "Well, nothing really." I asked lots of questions. No cold, no sore throat, no runny nose, no chills, no fever, thirst and appetite were normal. Not much to go on. It could be any remedy. I decided to find out a bit more about him in general...maybe in this case the chronic remedy, if I could find it easily, would cover the acute.

"What's he like in general? Anything unusual about him compared to your other two kids?" "Well, one thing is he always has a very large stool. I mean the circumference. Its thick. And another thing about him is that he sweats a lot in his sleep. Drenches the bed in fact." "Oh yeah?" My ears perked up. "Does he sweat more in any place in particular?" "Yes, his head, but really only at night when he sleeps."

I continued to question Louise. The most notable thing I found was that Thierry was much worse from skipping a meal; he gets really irritable and cranky. She always carries snacks for him whenever they go out.

Large stool. Perspiring from the head at night. Worse fasting. Obstinate, headstrong child. It looked like Calc carb. But did it cover the symptoms of the ear? There weren't many. I read in my materia medica: swelling in the ear, itching in the ear, otitis media.

"Let's try Calc Carb 200C. Give him a dose every few hours until his ear feels better. And watch for the stool, the perspiration, the need to snack often. Let's see if there are any changes in those symptoms. You may be lucky in that this acute may have led us to his chronic remedy." We spoke a few days later to follow up on the earache. It was completely better. As was his mood. And Louise had noticed a change in his stool. It seemed less thick. She also thought the perspiration on his head at night was a bit less. I told her to give him another dose and wait 4 weeks before the next follow-up. She has reported since that he is doing much better in general. The stool is more normal, no more perspiration at night and he can go longer between meals without snacks.

In practicing homeopathy quite often an acute illness can lead you to the chronic remedy. Whenever I have a patient with whom I am struggling to perceive the simillimum, I always see it as an opportunity when they have an acute illness. In that acute, there is often a clue to the whole case.