

Mike Andrews

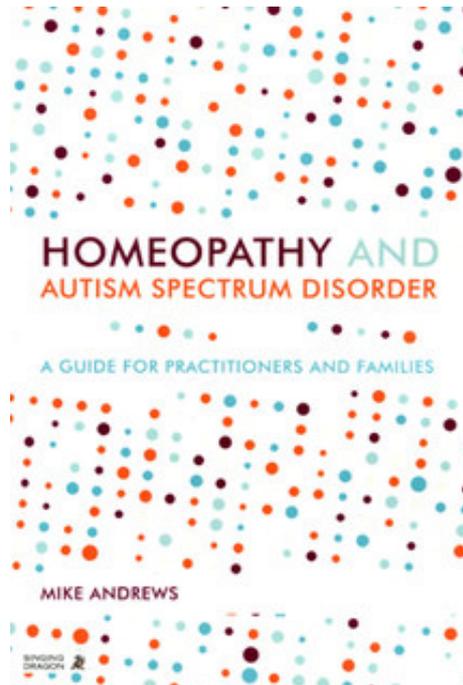
Homeopathy and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Reading excerpt

[Homeopathy and Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

of [Mike Andrews](#)

Publisher: Singing Dragon



<http://www.narayana-verlag.com/b17549>

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ASKING QUESTIONS AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

*Questions to ask the homeopath. Expectations of treatment.
The homeopaths expectations of parents/carers. Working
with non-verbal patients. Frequently Asked Questions.*

For many parents or carers the decision to investigate homeopathic treatment is a big step. They may have heard about homeopathy and its potential benefits for children on the autism spectrum on the internet, through an autism charity or from another parent.

In most countries the parents/carers will have to pay for homeopathic treatment as availability of the service is limited. In the UK there are National Health Service (NHS) homeopathic outpatient clinics in London, Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool, however getting a referral can be a long, drawn out process and availability of appointments may be limited. Many parents/carers choose to pursue private treatment with a suitably qualified professional homeopath; the cost is covered by some insurance companies but not all. However, the cost of homeopathic treatment is not excessive, as appointments are usually four to six weeks apart, rather than weekly and the cost is likely to be less than you might spend on the dentist or vet. In European countries, Australia and New Zealand, homeopathic treatment may be included under national health insurance schemes. In the US, homeopathic treatment is often covered in part by medical insurance.

It is important to check the qualifications and experience of the homeopath you choose; any good homeopath will be happy to talk to you first, before you book an appointment. The main registering bodies for professional homeopathy in the UK are currently the Society of Homeopaths, the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths, the Faculty of Homeopathy and the Homeopathic Medical Association. A list of national and international homeopathic registers and bodies can be found in the appendix.

Make sure that your homeopath's main area of specialisation is homeopathy. Other therapies such as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Flower remedies and Reiki have their place, but to receive good homeopathic treatment you need to make sure that the homeopath has a solid grounding in homeopathic philosophy and therapeutics. Also ask about the length and depth of their training and certification by a registering body. Some homeopaths are also qualified in nutrition and diet, and appropriate supplements are worth exploring both to help with absorption problems and detoxification.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE HOMEOPATH

What is their experience in working with children, or indeed adults, on the autism spectrum?

It is important that your homeopath has a good understanding of the different diagnoses and levels of disorder to be able to evaluate changes and be realistic about expectations.

How long will the consultation last?

The homeopath will usually spend one to two hours with you at the initial appointment. He or she will want to spend time speaking to the parents on their own asking questions about medical history, pregnancy and childbirth, developmental stages, any traumas, any similarities with either parent or other siblings. Depending on whether the child is high or low functioning and on their level of communication, the homeopath will want to interact with and observe the child. Some American homeopaths have had great

success working with clients long distance by telephone, but this relies on the ability of the parents to give clear information about the child, without the homeopath observing or speaking to the child. Other homeopaths practice by Skype; however in my experience this is not suitable for children, as it is hard to maintain a focused therapeutic space in this context with children.

Should I stop taking my other medications and will homeopathy interfere with any of my current medications?

You should never stop any conventional medication that has been prescribed by a doctor without consulting them first. Homeopathic remedies can be taken alongside, and in complement, to nearly all conventional medication. Homeopathy itself is free from side-effects and can often help with the side-effects of conventional medication.

How do I contact you in an emergency?

Sometimes with a homeopathic prescription, symptoms can flare up but will settle again, however if you are having difficulties you need to know how or who to contact outside office hours. Ask the homeopath about this at your first consultation.

EXPECTATIONS OF TREATMENT

An important part of the homeopath's task is to build a good rapport with your child so that the child will express themselves freely and feel able, as much as they can, to share their inner world. Homeopaths regard all the symptoms of a patient's condition - mental, emotional and physical - as evidence of a unified effort to resolve an inner disturbance and return to a state of balance. Homeopaths select and prescribe remedies that are known to produce similar symptoms to those of the patient. The remedies themselves are from a variety of sources and are tested on healthy people; there is no animal testing. The results of this testing (called proving) and clinical evidence are recorded in *Materia Medica* books.

The homeopathic approach to case-taking is very non-judgemental and based on seeking to understand what is unique about each individual client. The child's fascination with a particular computer game may not seem relevant from a conventional medical standpoint. However I recall one particular case of a five-and-a-half-year-old boy who was obsessed with an online dating game, rather than the more usual 'Angry Birds', and composed a very mature love poem the day that his sister broke up with her boyfriend. Taking this sentimentality into account I prescribed a remedy, *Antimonium tartaricum*, after which he started to spend more time playing outside rather than on the computer and forgot all about the dating game. Other important changes also took place in his autism symptoms, such as developing more sensitive communication with others and less repetition of obsessive patterns.

Another child with Asperger's syndrome would take her brother's toys, wrap them up and hide them; she also loved playing with Sellotape, making sticky webs everywhere around the house; this was taken into account in selecting a homeopathic medicine for her. There is no standard treatment protocol for ASD with homeopathy; each person is treated as an individual and their characteristic symptoms and behaviour taken into account in selecting the most appropriate homeopathic remedy for them. How is your child different from other children with a similar diagnosis? It is important for your homeopath to be aware of the common symptoms of the diagnosis and look for what individualises your child.

Parents are often surprised by the kind of questions that a homeopath asks and no-one may have asked those kinds of questions before. Part of their task is to look at how the child's innate potential has gone off course. The child's response to possible causative factors for ASD will be determined by their genetic makeup and the health of parents and grandparents, and each person will have their own inborn susceptibility. If vaccination for example was the cause of autism, why is it that not everyone develops autism?

This is why understanding all of the factors in a child's development and background is important to the homeopath. The more the homeopath knows about the development of your

patient draws from you and to use this therapeutically. The concepts of transference and counter-transference are recognised in many therapeutic relationships as being valid tools to work with.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In May 2013 I conducted an informal question and answer session with parents in the Sussex Autism Group and presented some of the research materials in this area. There may be many more questions that a prospective user of homeopathy may want to ask, but questions asked by this group are helpful to explore with regard to misunderstandings about homeopathic treatment that people may hold. Making the choice to use homeopathy involves a radical rethink for many patients or parents.

What is the idea behind homeopathy? How does it work?

As I have written elsewhere in the book I explain that homeopathy is based on the principle of treating 'like with like'. The homeopath takes an in-depth case history and then matches the characteristics of the remedy to the characteristics of the patient. The prescribed homeopathic remedy will then stimulate the body's dynamic energy system to re-balance itself.

My child has anxiety, is wetting and soiling - would it help?

My personal experience with cases that I have treated is that homeopathy has helped with toileting. The research from India by Gupta *et al.* (2010, p.25) confirms that 'homeopathic therapeutic regimen could bring profound control and better coordination in the bowel and bladder especially in cases of nocturnal urination'. The American homeopaths Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman and Robert Ullman (Reichenerg-Ullman, Ullman and Luepker 2005, p.47) say that in their experience bedwetting is a symptom that sometimes gets better.

How does other medication affect homeopathy?

Other medication can mask the original symptom picture, so homeopaths will often ask how the patient was before they started the other medication. Mixing, and particularly starting, several new treatments at the same time can make it difficult to assess the action of each treatment or medication prescribed. Some homeopaths think that certain substances or medications can 'antidote' or stop the effect of homeopathic remedies. This is something I have rarely seen in my practice, but it can happen very occasionally.

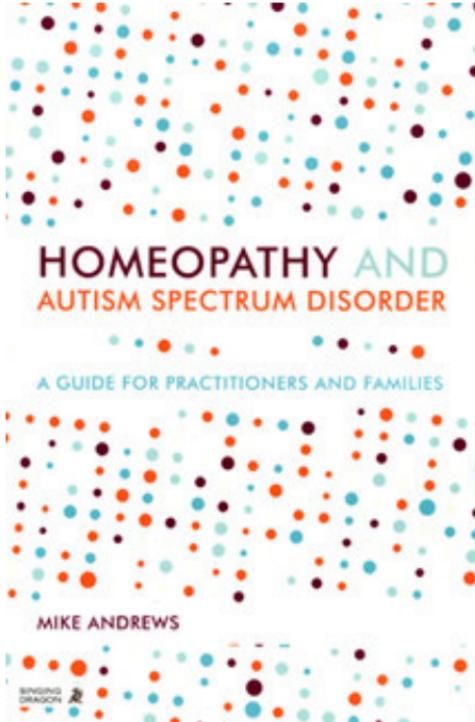
It is not only medication, but also biomedical treatments, supplements and special diets that can hide the full symptom picture which the homeopath needs to be aware of to be able to make the best prescription. It is important not to stop taking any previously prescribed medication when starting on a course of homeopathic treatment. Homeopathy can be used alongside conventional medicines.

Is there any interaction with ADHD drugs?

No. Homeopathy has a long history of being used to help with side-effects or for the after effects of medication that continue after the medication has been stopped. Homeopaths refer to this phenomenon as 'never-been-well-since' (NBWS); this is why a vaccine may be needed in homeopathic form if there is a clearly observed decline in health since a particular immunisation.

Does it take a while to start working?

It can take some time to find the remedy that is most effective. Most patients or their parents/carers observe some changes in the first few days after taking a remedy. In an acute, self-limiting illness, such as an earache, parents can see homeopathy's effectiveness, when for example a child screaming with ear pain experiences immediate relief after one dose of the remedy. This is something observed by parents and homeopaths in thousands of cases. However, more chronic or long-term conditions, which autism spectrum disorder certainly is, will require persistence and commitment on the part of both parents and homeopath. Homeopathy can work amazingly



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A Guide for Practitioners and Families

208 pages, pb
publication 2014



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