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RHEUMATISM

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Urvi Chauhan
Artur Wölfel
Tali Levi
Heidi Brand & Norbert Groeger
Massimo Mangialavori
Franz Swoboda
Heinz Wittwer
Anton Kramer & Jan Scholten
Christina Ari
S. Chidambaranathan
Reinhard Flick
Peter Gregory



EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Almost 10 of the German population suffers from rheumatism, a widespread and multifaceted disease. Rheumatic disorders include around 240 various illnesses with differing symptom pictures and treatment modalities. The number of homeopathic remedies that can be used to treat rheumatism is even larger. We have chosen a selection of remedies to highlight certain trends, at the same presenting various homeopathic approaches in the treatment of patients with rheumatism.

Obviously there is a number of classic homeopathic remedies for rheumatism which are frequently used in practice. One of these is *Ruta graveolens*. *Jürgen Hansel's* case of incipient rheumatoid arthritis shows how the remedy picture of Rue encompasses not just the physical symptoms of chronic polyarthritis but also the typical personality traits of rheumatism patients. In the Rue remedy family, *Ruta* is assigned to the cancer miasm. It is therefore no coincidence that the contributions of our authors repeatedly refer to this miasm. The pain, the restricted movement, and the deformation of the joints indicate, according to *Tali Levi*, rigid thought patterns and inner fixations: „The blockage starts in the head“ is her pithy description.

Artur Wölfel's patient with lupus erythematoses demonstrates another aspect of the cancer miasm. Her basic attitude is: „Fitting in with the wishes of others. I'm a perfectionist.“ Since starting treatment with *Carcinosinum* she has been able to stop all the immunosuppressants and biotechnology treatments, and the severe collagenosis involving multiple organs has now been in remission for over five years. A similarly positive result is seen in *Urvi Chauhan's* case of seronegative polyarthritis with the Papaveraceae plant family remedy from the cancer miasm. *Opium* causes the unbearable joint pains to recede and permits previously repressed feelings to be expressed.

Taciturnity, emotional repression, an emphasis on rational understanding and a tendency to perfectionism are personality traits frequently found in rheumatism patients and *Massimo Mangialavori* says this can point to the Primrose family: „They tend not to be open but they suffer greatly and do not easily show themselves.“ If the reserve and the lack of emotional expression go deeper to the point of isolation and depression, and if this state of inner rigidity is expressed in painful stiffness and deformation of the joints, a precious stone remedy should generally be considered, specifically Lapis lazuli. This tip comes from *Franz Swoboda* following his long odyssey through the materia medica. Only when his patient's joints are already severely deformed and after several operations can he find the right homeopathic path with the help of her dream of starving.

Even if many case histories in this issue of SPECTRUM share common characteristics, there are also some very different patterns found in rheumatism patients, such as *Tali Levi's* patient who experiences unbearable pain all over her body after the death of her mother. In her primitive dependence on her mother she is like a foetus. She describes her pain as something that restricts you like a rubber band, preventing any independent movement. Here we can also recognize a specific correspondence between the inner state and the physical symptoms. In *Heinz Wittwer's* patient too, the mother-daughter relationship is characterised by dependence, here experienced as restrictive. She also experiences her illness in terms of restriction. The healing in such cases involves an inner process of clarification, as shown by *Norbert Groeger* and *Heidi Brand* in their case of *Chara intermedia*, an alga with purifying power.

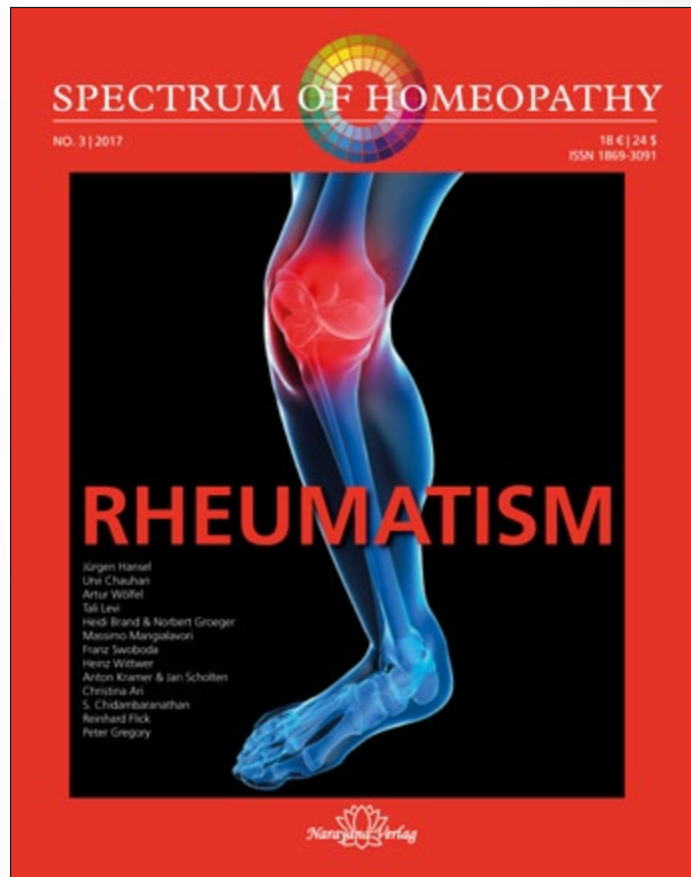
The short path to the simile is described by the vet *Peter Gregory*, who offers an overview of homeopathic 'rheumatism remedies' with his examples of limping dogs. The classic rheumatism remedy is of course *Rhus toxicodendron*, for which *Reinhard Flick* provides a case history. *S. Chidambaranathan* presents his experience with *Bryonia* for joint complaints in connection with a raised anti-streptolysin titre. The Lanthanides have also proved to be of great use when the rheumatic illness is based on autoimmune disturbance. In the practice of *Jan Scholten* and *Anton Kramer*, Neodymium salts are very often prescribed. Hormonally-caused rheumatic complaints, especially in the menopause, frequently react well to the sarcode *Folliculinum* according to *Christina Ari*. The tried-and-tested remedies obviously work best when the similarity to the person holds at all levels.

Christa Gebhardt & Dr Jürgen Hansel

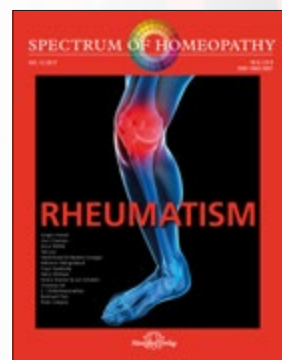
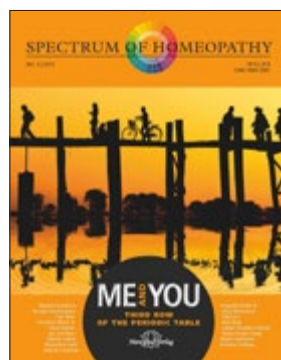
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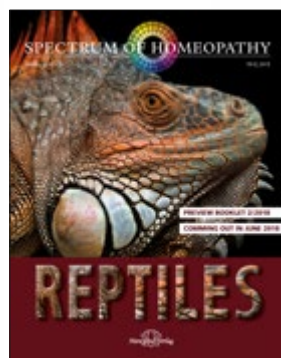
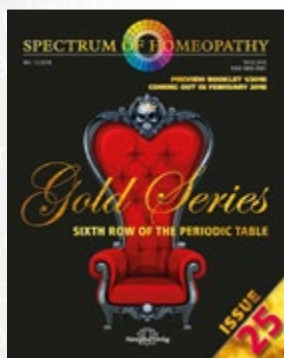
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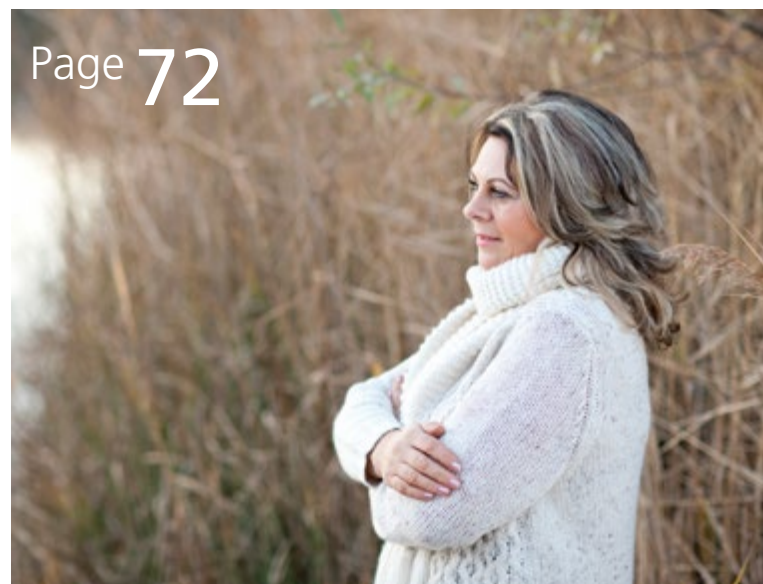
Lack of self-confidence: the themes of self-worth and care indicate the Lacs.



Unbearable pain: the lack of control indicates the cancer miasm.



Stiffness and rigidity: with Lapis lazuli the long-lasting joint pains finally recede.



Menopause and old age: Follikullinum helps with joint pain.

Overexertion and dependence: a perfectionist pattern is central in one case whereas in another case the unknown remedy *Microcystis aeruginosa* is used.



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DISAPPOINTED, UPSET, DEEPLY HURT

Ruta graveolens for incipient rheumatoid arthritis

AUTHOR | Jürgen Hansel

SUMMARY: The remedy *Ruta graveolens* resembles the symptom picture of rheumatoid arthritis both at the physical as well as the emotional level. A typical example of this is presented in which a patient does not display his emotions and feels little aggression while reacting to deep disappointment with physical complaints of an auto-aggressive illness. The sensation of being beaten with an iron bar is associated with the feeling of being unable to function.

KEYWORDS: arthritis, cause, psychosomatic, rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, *Ruta graveolens*, Rutaceae, vital sensation

A close-up photograph of the flowers of Ruta graveolens (Rue). The image shows several clusters of small, bright yellow flowers on green stems. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the petals and the structure of the inflorescence.

Ruta graveolens, commonly known as Rue, is a plant species from the genus *Ruta* in the Rutaceae family. It is primarily a herbal plant that was used medicinally in the Middle Ages and is sometimes grown as a decorative plant.

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The most common multi-system illness associated with autoimmune reactions is chronic polyarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, which is primarily chronic. It affects around 1% of the population. Even though the synovia of peripheral joints are the main areas affected by the associated chronic inflammation, we frequently find extra-articular manifestations. Typically there are rheumatoid nodules on tendons, bursae or other connective tissue structures. In rare cases the autoimmune process can impact blood vessels, the eye or the pericardium.

Difficult prognosis: From the point of view of homeopathic treatment it is interesting to note the spontaneous course and prognosis of the illness. In general we can say that the course of rheumatoid arthritis is very variable and it is therefore difficult to give patients an individual prognosis. Most patients experience a persistent but fluctuating level of illness, which can also progress in episodes with a varying level of joint deformation. Yet there are certain parameters that influence the prognosis, such as the number of affected joints, the radiological evidence of bone erosion, the level of erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) and rheumatoid factor and the occurrence of rheumatoid nodules or severe concomitant illness.

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR HOMEOPATHY

Around 15% of patients with rheumatoid arthritis have a brief illness with minimal inflammation and without subsequent functional impairment – these patients in particular do not display the markers typical of more severe forms of the disease mentioned above. It is self-evident that successful homeopathic treatment for rheumatoid arthritis as well as other autoimmune illness tends to conventionally be explained by referring to this small group with spontaneous remission.

This could also be true of the case discussed below, which involves the initial stage of chronic polyarthritis with currently minor clinical and humoral activity, according to the diagnosis of the rheumatologist. At such an early stage we do not know where things are heading. Rheumatologists maintain that the symptom pattern at the start of the illness has no predictive power for the development of functional impairment. For we homeopaths, however, this means that we can more favourably influence the course of the illness at an early stage compared to cases in which the patients have already been treated with cortisone and immunosuppressants.

In the last ten years the conventional medical approaches to rheumatoid arthritis have dramatically shifted towards early and aggressive intervention. The former president of the German Society of Rheumatologists (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rheumatologie), Prof Dr Elisabeth Märker-Hermann, maintained as early as 2005 at the rheumatology congress: "The new treatment approaches have been made easier thanks to the availability of new immunosuppressive medication such as methotrexate, leflunomide and cyclosporine as well as the TNF-alpha inhibitors. It has been shown that these disease-modifying anti-rheumatic

drugs (DMARDs) must consistently be used as early as possible in the window of opportunity to prevent or effectively delay inflammation, joint destruction and severe functional disturbances. A recent study demonstrated that the outcome after five years was significantly worse after just three months' delay in commencing DMARD treatment."

Due to this new strategy of rapidly deploying aggressive anti-arthritic treatments, the homeopathic window of opportunity to pre-empt the immunosuppressives, the TNF-alpha blockers and other biotechnology treatments has shrunk further and we need to use it quickly and effectively.

CASE: 60-year-old man with incipient rheumatoid arthritis

The patient comes from the rheumatologist with a suspected diagnosis of seropositive chronic polyarthritis. The test results show clear signs of inflammation with an ESR of 41 / 60 mm/h (normal range for males is 0-22mm/hr) and a CRP of 23.0 mg/l (normal value < 3.0). The rheumatoid factor is 13.0 IU/l (normal value < 8.9). X-rays of the hands and feet show no signs of erosion.

Casetaking: The complaints started gradually three months earlier with pain and swelling in the left wrist and then the right too. Later the middle joint of the right ring finger, the metatarsus of the left foot and the left ankle were also affected. On the metatarsus there is pressure-sensitive pain where the patient broke the bone 30 years ago. The pain, which is associated with stiffness, is worse in the morning and improves during the day: "By midday I don't need to limp anymore." The pain in the wrists bothers him most. It goes from the outside to the inside with a feeling of someone hammering him with an iron bar or a wooden stick. The pain goes from the outside inwards and he feels it most during twisting movements, such as opening or turning a door handle, which is very painful for him.

He suffers greatly from the restriction caused by the rheumatic complaints. He used to be very active in house and garden, liked to chop wood and take long walks but now he feels condemned to inactivity. He has always been an active person, involved in various voluntary works in the church and local area, and works in the caring professions. While he is professionally involved with the feelings of other people, he is reluctant to discuss his own feelings, remaining taciturn and matter-of-fact. He says he does not tend to feel annoyance or aggression and describes himself as yielding. His aim in life is to "live a holy life without thinking the grass is greener on the other side." Complaining and moaning is not his style. He can put up well with difficulties – such as a heart attack several years ago, which he did not make much of a fuss about.

Emotional hurts: In the period before eruption of the illness, there were nevertheless two events that strongly disconcerted him. The first is that the institution where he has worked for the last 30 years and which he has been leading for a long time

PSYCHOSOMATIC ASPECTS OF RHEUMATISM

There is a series of psychological studies looking at the specific personality characteristics of patients suffering from chronic polyarthritis and the possible triggers preceding the outbreak of the illness or relapses. The inhibited aggression seen in those suffering arthritis is a psychological phenomenon that is generally recognized and can often be observed in our practices. It is not so much that these patients consciously repress their aggression – they simply do not feel it in the first place.

This was shown in an American study observing 300 patients suffering from arthritis over a period of 30 months: the patients who stated that they only rarely felt rage or could not remember such feelings, suffered arthritic episodes significantly more often than patients who could remember a recent episode of rage. So the high levels of inhibited rage seem to be less an expression of the illness than of a predisposing personality type. The inhibited aggression is frequently associated with a general blockage in the expression of emotions.

The failure to live out one's aggression is compensated at the physical level. Rheumatism patients frequently report a strong tendency to physical activity in the period before the outbreak of their illness. When people with such a personality type and a genetic predisposition to rheumatoid arthritis are subject to particular emotional burdens, the result can be an outbreak of the illness. Such burdens primarily concern events that signify a loss of personal security – such as job loss, financial difficulties or family disputes.

Evidently the symptom picture of rheumatoid arthritis is associated not just with typical physical symptoms but also with specific personality characteristics. For homeopathy this means that – even if not doing clinical homeopathy – we can expect to frequently encounter certain specific remedy pictures or remedy families that cover these characteristic psychophysical symptom patterns.

is threatened with closure, which greatly upsets and unsettles him. Just a few years before retirement, he now feels that his life work is threatened. Yet he can do nothing about it – he simply has to wait and see how things turn out.

He is similarly disturbed by the fate of his son, who has had a child "thrust on him." His son is deeply affected and hurt that the woman has set him up in this way. When the patient as father says: "My son can no longer do what he wants," the patient is in fact the one suffering most of all because there is nothing he can do to ameliorate his son's crisis. His emotional reaction to the threat to his job and his son's predicament is a feeling of profound disappointment. Never before in his life has he felt such a sense of disappointment.

ANALYSIS

In this case we recognize a striking correspondence between the emotional and the physical sensations. The patient experiences two major disappointments. He is most of all disturbed by the fate of his son, with whom he strongly identifies. He himself is disappointed, upset and deeply hurt about what has happened to his son and this profound emotional disturbance is reflected physically, since he finds great difficulty otherwise expressing his emotions: his wrist feels like it has been hit by a metal bar and severely injured.

What is the effect on him of this emotional hurt and physical pain? He becomes literally unable to function and suffers most of all from being unable to do anything. This state of being unable to function, as if someone has smashed him on the wrist, can be repertorised in *Kent*.

The typical symptom: The essence of this case can be crystallized in this symptom: Extremities – lameness – wrist – bruised; as if; calc-p., **RUTA**.

This symptom combines the localization, type and depth of the pain with the effect – the inability to function or lameness. It is a very specific rubric – not just for this symptom picture but also for the remedy *Ruta graveolens*. It is obviously dubious to prescribe a remedy solely on a single rubric. Yet the rubric in this case is sufficient to examine *Ruta* more closely. We know this remedy especially from its organotropic connection to the eyes, tendons, cartilage, periosteum and joints. It is above all the wrist where the effect of *Ruta* can be seen. It is a major remedy for complaints of the wrist, specifically for rheumatic illness. Therefore the quality of the pain is very typical: soreness, as if smashed or broken. We can see this clearly in *Hahnemann's* remedy proving:

- Paralytic pressure on the outside of the right forearm
- Tearing pressure in the right wrist, worse with strong movement
- He has pain in the left wrist, as if shattered, even at rest
- The bones of the wrist and the back of the hand are painful as if smashed, at rest or in movement

THE RUTACEAE FAMILY

Rutaceae according to Sankaran: According to Sankaran, this type of pain is typical of the entire remedy Rutaceae family. The Indian homeopath describes the vital sensation of the Rue family as 'squeezed, then crushed.' 'Squeeze' means squeeze (out), press (out), or jam. And figuratively it means to go to the limits of one's strength. 'Crush' of course is even stronger, meaning to squash, pound, squelch, shatter, or break to pieces.

Rutaceae according to Scholten: The squeezing and going to the limits of one's strength, according to Jan Scholten, characterise the entire picture of this family, to which the citrus plants also belong. Scholten compares this to a glass of orange juice, which in the morning confers energy and good spirits for the

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS ANGUSTURA VERA

	Ang.	Ruta	Kan.	Ptel.	Regle.	Ja b.	Baros.	Regle-f.	Atista	Cit-a.	Piloc.
Total	20	18	4	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
Rubrics	6	6	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kingdoms	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
generalities; INFLAMMATION; joints, arthritis (255)	■	■									
generalities; PAIN; joints, articulations (958)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
generalities; PAIN; squeezed, as if (253)	■	■		■							
generalities; PAIN; blow, as after a (156)	■	■									
generalities; PAIN; broken, as if (200)	■	■	■								
extremities; STIFFNESS; joints, articulations (166)	■	■									

Along with Ruta, Hahnemann proved a second but less well-known remedy from the Rue family. It is extracted from the bark of *Angustura trifoliata*, a South American tree. The currently valid botanical name is *Galipea officinalis*, although homeopathically it is still generally known as *Angustura*.

The outstanding symptom, which we often use in our practices as an indication for this remedy, is a pronounced desire for coffee. In the corresponding repertory rubric since Kent it is the only three-grade remedy. With such excessive coffee consumption it is not surprising that those affected show typical *Coffea* symptoms such as 'great irritability, tense cheerfulness and mental activity'¹. They often have extravagant ideas and constantly enthuse about new projects that never get implemented. The coffee also encourages the particular quality noticed by Scholten in *Rutaceae* patients of going through the day in an energetic way and in a good mood, persevering despite being at the brink of exhaustion.

Angustura is one of the most bitter substances in the homeopathic materia medica and indeed the bitterness can be seen in the remedy picture: the bitter taste in the mouth, bitter eructations, but above all a deep-seated feeling of bitterness. In Hahnemann's *Materia Medica Pura* we find the symptom: 'Minor slights fill him with bitterness'¹. This bitterness is not, however, expressed in outbreaks of rage and aggression similar to the equally bitter *Nux vomica* but rather like that found in the other *Rutaceae*: 'Moroseness, discontent with his position, displeasure at jokes'¹.

At the physical level we find a similar affinity to muscles, tendons and joints as seen in *Ruta*. In the muscles there is stiffness and cramps at a level like that found in tetanus. But *Angustura* is, precisely like *Ruta*, 'a remedy for rheumatic states with fatigue and stiffness of the limbs approaching paralysis'². And just as pronounced as in *Ruta*, there is the vital sensation of *Rutaceae* described as: 'Crushed, squeezed, shattered'³. In the repertorisation⁴ of the case in this article, *Angustura* covers the joint symptoms even better than *Ruta*.

If we only look at the physical symptoms, *Angustura* would certainly have been an option in this case. The decision was made to give this patient *Ruta*, however, due to the *Ruta*-specific cause at the mental level, with the double experience of deep disappointment and the feeling of being betrayed and cheated.

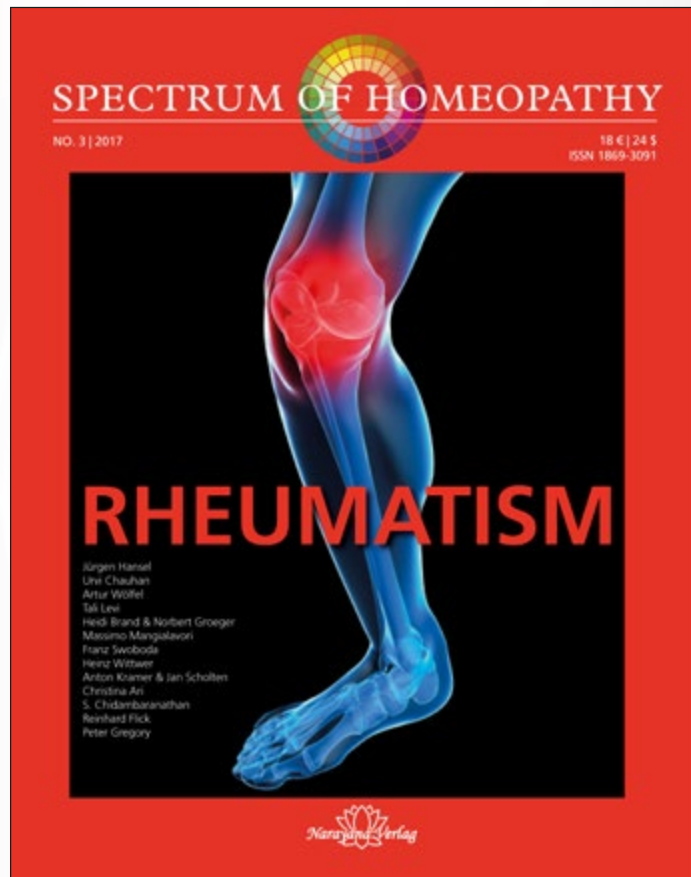
Sankaran's miasmatic classification also helps with the differential diagnosis in this case between the two similar Rues. *Ruta* is assigned to the cancer miasm whereas *Angustura* is assigned to the malaria miasm. The latter is associated with severe but intermittent attacks whereas the cancer miasm is characterized by chronic progressive disease, against which one is relatively impotent despite one's best efforts, hence the feeling of powerlessness and loss of control. In the malaria miasm the patient complains and moans about their miserable situation whereas in the cancer miasm the emotional expression tends to be blocked. Even though these aspects point to *Ruta*, in this case it is not possible to make a clear differential diagnosis based on the miasmatic classification, since the patient's feeling of being blocked in his activity and unable to function can just as much be an aspect of the malaria miasm as the bitterness that we see in him, which is very typical of *Angustura*.



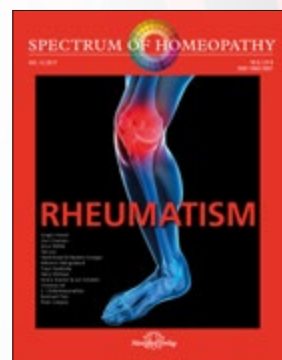
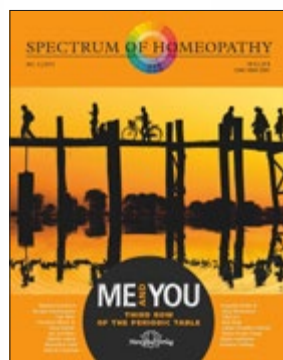
The term angostura or angostura bitter denotes a cocktail bitter which, along with gentian root, can also contain bitter orange, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon and cinchona. The bitter is used to flavour spirits as well as for making cocktails.

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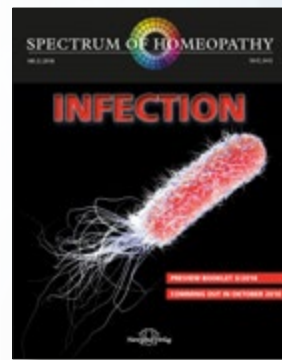
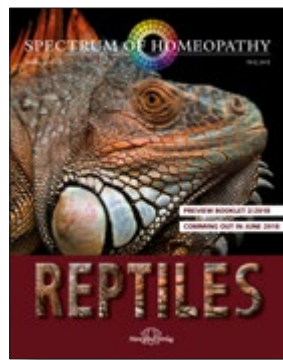
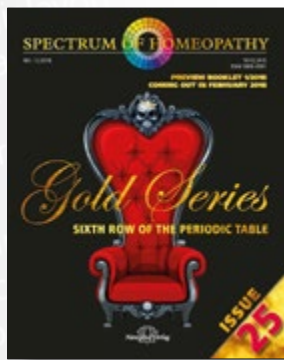
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