

Looking Forward: An Interview with Dr Peter Fisher

By Vatsala Sperling, MS, PhD, PDHom, CCH, RSHom(NA)

This interview first appeared in the 21st volume of this journal in 2015. Vatsala Sperling interviewed Dr Peter Fisher at the JAHC that year, where he had been presenting on the latest homeopathic research.

AH: Dr Fisher, in your last thirty years as a homeopath, what changes have you seen?

PF: Lots of changes. Homeopathy has come under vicious attacks. But the biggest change is the growth of research. We now have more than 300 randomized controlled trials and over 100 clinical trials of homeopathy. Homeopathy has emerged into the scientific field. But it is highly disputed by the skeptics even though the volume of scientific work is increasing rapidly. We now have some idea about what is happening in extremely high dilutions that do not contain even a single molecule of the original substance. Various scientific techniques have helped us see the structural change in these high dilutions.

AH: Modern techniques are helping explain homeopathy to a scientifically minded public?

PF: There is a bit of a credibility gap. The main idea of homeopathy, the law of similars and the problems around high dilution—these challenge the skeptics. Modern techniques help us understand high dilutions. Jean-Louis Demangeat has used Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, and Louis Rey has worked with low temperature thermal luminescence to give laboratory-based evidence for structural changes that happen in high dilutions. Jean Sainte-Laudy did a whole series of reproducible tests in independent labs and multi-center studies that favor homeopathy.

AH: Based on these findings, can we by-pass the skeptics and expect a brighter future for homeopathy?

PF: Mainstream medical opinion is that homeopathy does not work because of high dilution though there is plenty of clinical and scientific evidence. People who control the medical establishment do not accept this. However, homeopathy can deal with the current medical problem in public health. People suffer from morbidity and chronic diseases and they are given multiple pharmaceutical drugs. These drugs interact with each other and the patients have to endure multiple side-effects. This is one area where homeopathy can make an important contribution and help reduce the need for polypharmacy. Another field where homeopathy can create a considerable impact is antimicrobials. The current state of multi-drug resistant germs in community-based as well as hospital-acquired infections is appalling. We are running out of antibiotics and resistance to available antibiotics is spreading at an alarming rate. It takes decades to invent new antibiotics and in twenty years or so, we may not be left with any effective antibiotics. The germs would become resistant to all the antibiotics we currently use. In this area, there is good evidence that when antibiotics are used inappropriately or needlessly, homeopathy can be effective in reducing the use of antibiotics.

Bernard Bégau conducted an EPI3 study comparing conventional medicine and homeopathy with over 5000 patients suffering from musculoskeletal, upper respiratory tract and psychiatric diseases. Patients coming to homeopaths even with chronic conditions had better outcomes and quality of life as compared to those on non-steroidal drugs. Patients who received homeopathic treatment needed fewer antibiotics.

AH: During your practice, you have witnessed the emergence of many different systems, ideas and new remedies in homeopathy. Please could you tell readers how to navigate these?

PF: A lot of systems are based on metaphors. As a rule, in homeopathy, about 90% of prescriptions are for 10% of remedies. If remedies are selected based on metaphors, and not the law of similars, then it is not homeopathy. That is the danger of following the new methods blindly. We need to stick to core knowledge and stay away from speculations. The *Organon* is our foundation. It is 200 years old. All homeopaths must study it. Some homeopaths attack vaccination unaware that in the 6th edition of the *Organon*, Hahnemann has said that vaccination is a wonderful thing and it has saved the lives of children. Do see the footnote under paragraph 43. Hahnemann seems to have considered that the Jennerian method of vaccination — scratching cowpox pus into the skin — was both preventative in epidemics and curative when it was used against similar disease states. Both homeopathy and Jenner's cowpox vaccine came around in late 1700s and Hahnemann saw the benefits of cowpox vaccination.

In the present day and age, we have been able to eradicate polio, smallpox, diphtheria and even tetanus by judicious use of vaccination. I see cervical cancer being wiped out by the use of the HPV immunization program. We have to

wake up to the benefits of vaccination. There can be some adverse effects, no doubt, but vaccination has done a lot of good. Homeopaths would be able to do a lot by staying out of the vaccine controversy and focusing on where they can actually help, I mean, the area of polypharmacy and anti-microbial resistance. The laboratory evidence is catching up and beginning to shed light on structural changes that occur in high dilutions and plenty of clinical studies are coming out in support of homeopathy. Though skeptics stay strong, I have hopes that homeopathy will not only survive but it will also enjoy a wide-ranging acceptance in the future.

Vatsala Sperling MS, PhD, PDHom, CCH, RSHom(NA), was the Chief of Clinical Microbiology services at a children's hospital in Chennai, India, where she conducted research with the World Health Organization and published extensively. On moving to the USA to start a family, Vatsala pursued an education in homeopathy at Misha Norland's School of Homeopathy. An author of eight books (www.InnerTraditions.com) and many essays and articles on homeopathy, health and spirituality, Vatsala continues to study with several teachers. She practices classical homeopathy in Vermont, currently volunteers on the case review committee of the CHC and has served on the board of directors of NASH. Vatsala can be reached via her website, www.rochesterhomeopathy.com.



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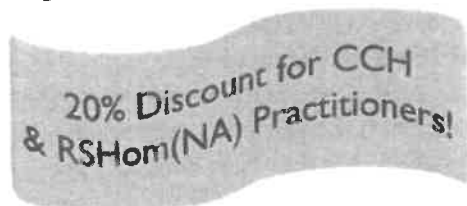


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