

## HAYFEVER

What effective remedies has non-orthodox medicine to offer those who can not escape the environment and who suffer each year?

**Acupuncture** (9 sessions over 3 weeks) and **Laser Acupuncture** (15 sessions) were shown to be significantly superior to placebo-laser acupuncture in a controlled study in treating 174 hayfever sufferers [Zeitschrift Allg Med, 1998, 74:45-46].

**Phytotherapy** showed a higher degree of improvement in a double-blind randomized controlled trial using *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle) for one week [P Mittmann. Randomized, Double-blind Study of Freeze-dried *Urtica dioica* in the Treatment of Allergic Rhinitis, *Planta Med*, 1990, 56:44-47].

*Ephedra sinica* (Chinese: ma huang gen) has been used for more than 5000 years for allergic respiratory conditions in the Far East, without undue side-effects. In 1924 Prof Chen, a Chinese scientist, conducted and published detailed pharmacological studies on this plant remedy. Two years later the German pharmaceutical company Merck produced and marketed the single synthetic alkaloid *ephedrine*. This was soon widely used in orthodox medicine for all kinds of allergic respiratory problems, including asthma. It then emerged that this single, unbuffered alkaloid played a part in inducing severe hypertension, glaucoma, hyperthyroidism, and coronary thrombosis. What happened then? The use of the herbal remedy was subsequently restricted in most Western countries. Yet the full botanical medicine had not caused those problems, because the other six or so constituents in the plant buffered the action of the *ephedrine*. One of these, called *pseudo-ephedrine*, for instance, actually reduces the heart rate and lowers blood pressure. That explains how this medicinal plant was widely used for thousands of years, with no undesirable side-effects. Despite this, the plant remedy has largely remained 'restricted' in the West [Richard Mabey. *The Complete New Herbal*, London: Penguin Books Limited, 1991, pp 56 & 188; and *British Herbal Pharmacopoeia*, part II, Cowling, W Yorkshire: British Herbal Medicine Association, 1979, pp 75-77]. It should certainly not be used alongside any mono-amine oxidase inhibitors. *Ephedra* species are found all over the world. In Western traditional medicine (in France, Italy, Persia, Spain and Switzerland), their use goes back into antiquity. One of its species is the *sea grape* which is believed to have been a component of the *Soma draught*, a celebrated tonic for the elderly, already mentioned in one of the oldest Sanskrit manuscripts, the Rigveda, which is a collection of poems of the Indogerman peoples who migrated to, and populated, India in very early times [R F Weiss. *Herbal Medicine* (transl from German), Gothenburg: Ab Arcanum, 1988, pp 182, 218-219].

**Homoeopathy**, as well as two derivative versions of it (**homotoxicology** and **isopathy**), have all shown very promising evidence of significant success in treating hayfever:

In double-blind randomized controlled trial over 42 days involving 146 hayfever sufferers, the effects of the **homotoxicological** nasal spray *Luffa comp-Heel* was compared with those of an orthodox nasal spray containing *cromolyn sodium*.

The assessments demonstrated therapeutic equivalence of the two sprays [M Weiser, L H Gegenheimer & P Klein. *A Randomized Equivalence Trial Comparing the Efficacy and Safety of Luffa comp-Heel Nasal Spray with Cromolyn Sodium Spray in the Treatment of Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis*, **Forschung Komplementaermed**, 1999, 6:142-148].

A double-blind, randomized placebo-controlled trial involving 144 hayfever sufferers tested the therapeutic effects of homoeopathic dilutions of specific **isopathic** antigens, individually determined for each patient by prior skin tests.

The use of antihistamines as well as all the symptom scores were significantly

more reduced in the **isopathically** treated group [D Taylor Reilly, M A Taylor, C McSharry & T Aitchison. *Is Homoeopathy a Placebo Response? Controlled Trial of Homoeopathic Potency, with Pollen in Hayfever as Model*, **Lancet**, 1986, 2:881-886].

*The UK Pollination Calendar could be used instead of skin tests to determine the specific pollen(s) causing an individual's seasonal hayfever, so as to be able to prepare the appropriate isopathic remedy.*

A meta-analysis of seven separately conducted randomized placebo-controlled trials of *Galphimia glauca* (listed in 'Materia Medica of New Homoeopathic Remedies' by O A Julian, Beaconsfield:

Beaconsfield Publishers, 1979, p 236) involving 752 patients shows that this **homoeopathic** remedy is effective in 79% of hayfever

cases, improving or removing both eye and nose irritations as effectively as

orthodox treatments [Meta-analysis: *Homoeopathic Galphimia glauca for Hayfever*, **Forschung Komplementaermed**, 1996, 3:230-234].

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