

New impetus in research on high dilutions and homeopathic remedies

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The mode of action of highly diluted, homeopathically prepared remedies is still unknown. One consequence of this situation is that empirical results of clinical and preclinical research on efficacy as well as effectiveness of homeopathic preparations are usually not integrated in the common body of knowledge in science. This leads to an underestimation of the potential of homeopathically prepared remedies for medical use.

The aim of GIRI – the International Research Group on Very Low Dose and High Dilution Effects – is to unite all scientists who work in the realm of basic and clinical research into homeopathic remedies, with a focus on the potentization process as well as the homeopathic “law of similar”, and the ultimate goal to unravel the mystery of the mode of action of these two main principles of homeopathy. In order to achieve these ambitious aims, scientific exchanges between research groups as well as common research projects are necessary. Therefore, GIRI organizes annual international scientific meetings since 1987. An overview of these meetings can be found on the GIRI homepage (www.giriweb.com).

The University of Bern, Switzerland, was in the fortunate position of being able to hosting the XXVII GIRI meeting. More than 50 participants from more than 10 countries attended this meeting on 3rd and 4th of September 2013, which took place for the first time in Switzerland. 21 oral and 23 poster contributions were presented. The abstracts can be found in the present volume of the International Journal on High Dilution Research. Four sessions covered the main research areas: physicochemical research, plant-based bioassays, animal models, and clinical and *in vitro* research. A further session covered the topic of research paradigms, and in the closing session current and future joint GIRI research project was discussed.

In the physicochemical research session, several new approaches and measurement techniques were presented aiming at determining whether homeopathically prepared remedies exhibit specific physicochemical properties that might enable researchers in the long run to identify the mode of action of these highly diluted homeopathic preparations. Furthermore, first studies were presented that investigated the stability of homeopathic preparations against externally applied electromagnetic fields. Finally, a theoretical research program was announced to study the potential of a quantum-coherence domain theory to explain the presumed information storage within homeopathically prepared dilutions.

In the bioassays session, the potential of plant-based laboratory models was highlighted. Besides the presentation of new models, there were reports on potential applications in agriculture, but also for use in basic pharmaceutical questions, such as the number of succussion hits necessary to obtain a biologically active homeopathic dilution. Plant-based bioassays provide the unique feature to investigating biological effects of a high number of homeopathic preparations simultaneously, within one experiment, allowing for a comparison of the effects of e.g. different potency levels or differently prepared homeopathic remedies.

In the animal research session, homeopathic treatment options were discussed to control the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*, the cause of Chagas disease, as well as to possibly treat melanoma. The question of

adequate controls (succussed or unsuccussed) for use in animal research was empirically assessed. Furthermore, possible transmission pathways of the homeopathic “information” were investigated in a model with toads.

The research paradigms session highlighted the importance of the theory on which laboratory models are based to properly investigate effects of highly diluted homeopathic preparations. The model of late Madeleine Bastide and Agnes Lagache – the paradigm of signifiers – is particularly relevant in this context.

In the closing session on the joint GIRI project, several approaches to study homeopathic preparations of *Zincum metallicum* were presented. At the last GIRI meeting in Florence, Italy, 2012 it had been decided that each participating research group should investigate the effects of *Zincum metallicum* at specific potency levels with the research methods and models that were established in the corresponding working group. In a second step, successful investigations shall be replicated in other laboratories. Until now, several research groups from Brazil and one from Italy participate in this collaborative research effort. Further research teams are welcome.

Summarizing, the main topics of the conference were (i) the further development of apt laboratory methods and models to study specific effects of homeopathic remedies with a sound theoretical basis, (ii) first intervention studies investigating the stability of homeopathic potencies against external physical influences, and (iii) studies on the mode of action of homeopathic remedies.

Having been the local organizer of this XXVII GIRI meeting, I had the impression that research in highly diluted homeopathic preparations gained new impetus. This momentum will hopefully be preserved and enforced in the future by the growing research community all over the world, in order to enlighten the long sought for mode of action of homeopathic preparations and to optimize homeopathic pharmaceutical procedures to enabling supplying remedies of the highest obtainable quality to practitioners and patients.



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