

# Healing with Arnica Montana

By Leena Padia

**A** 41-year-old woman came in with migraines and skin conditions as her chief complaints. In her intake form she listed chronic headaches, patchy eruptions on her back and left forearm, and frequent red rashes on her hands.

## Family History

Father: Heart disease

Mother: Diabetes

Brother: Oversensitive to sun (exposure to hot sun rays leads to red itchy rashes on all exposed parts)

## Personal History

Two pregnancies without complaints. No major disease or hospitalization in the past.

## Observations

The client was full of energy, talking rapidly, smiling and very friendly. She was of moderate height and had delicate, fair skin with visible blood vessels, especially on her cheeks. She was suffering from headaches most days but completed all routine duties without missing work. Three times during the consult I observed her forgetting words or what she was about to say. Despite her chronic complaints she hardly visited doctors for advice on any of them.

## Initial Consultation: April 30, 2013

"My chronic headache brought me here. I have been suffering from headaches for many years. It is really painful and majority of the time it is severe. It is like four or five days a week I have a headache. It started when I was in college and has never gone since then. For the last six years or so it has been really bad. I don't recollect any change in my life that made it worse since the last few years. Maybe it started because of irregular life and stress when I started college. I was missing my meals at that time and overloaded with studies. I was stressed about my studies. Headaches started like twice or maybe once a week for many years. But in the last few years it has been like a constant headache. Nowadays it is hard to manage because I have lots of vomiting because of the headache. And you know what is worse, sometimes it doesn't relieve the headache and I have more than one vomit per day. Frequent vomiting makes me weak and tired. My daughter is in college and my son goes to high school. They both have different schedules daily and it is hard for me to take good care of kids and family.

"No one in my family ever had headaches. I have had it for a pretty long time. Things that trigger it would be missing meals, anxiety, tension, going in hot weather or even in hot summers at heated houses. If I have been cooking for many hours and staying in a hot kitchen it leads to a headache. Any change in the pillow as well leads to a headache. Sometimes I have headaches since the morning, like when I wake up with some noise or something happens, and I just wake from deep sleep then it starts. I guess I have lots of things which cause my headaches (laughs).

"I feel my scalp is sensitive too, because when I brush my hair and if I do it hard it may increase the pain.

"I keep managing myself and do my routine. I don't like being in pain all the time. I am not healthy and happy. I want to enjoy being with my kids but most of the time I am alone in my room. Because staying quiet in a room relieves me when I am in severe pain. My head feels heavy and congested. Even when I don't have headaches my head feels heavy because if I had a severe headache episode for three to four days then it takes time. It takes time to get better. If I hold my head or cover with a scarf or something softly it makes me a bit comfortable.

"I can't tolerate windy days. If I go out when it is windy I will surely start having a headache. I think I have a long list of things that are not suitable for me.

"Sometimes it starts gradually, or some days it just starts with severe pains but it always takes days to relieve. Usually, it lasts for three days and gradually goes down.

"I have not had any medication for my headache because I tried in the past but things have not helped me so far. So, I stopped going to doctors. I have painkillers for headaches but it only helps half of the time. And even though I am better after that as soon as its effect is gone, I have the same severe pains.

"For the last few years, I have vomiting with pains that made my life worse. I vomit food or sometimes only sour water. Mostly it is with severe headaches. My whole head is aching, but I observed it starts from the back of head, yes mostly. Sometimes it is just the back of my head and many times half of my head. But when it gets worse then mostly the whole head is aching. I get tense about my kids, their studies, how I can help them to do well in their tasks and such things. I am anxious about my daily work because my husband is re-



ally a demanding person. Mornings are worse because a severe headache starts as a wake up and lots of work at that time. If breakfast is not ready on time or the house is not clean, it makes him upset with me. At times he is domineering too, which I don't like at all. I am an open-minded and flexible person, and I am always on my toes to offer things the way he likes them but he is never happy.

"As a couple I was never given freedom to express myself or my opinions or my likings. My husband never put both of us at the same level. Never respected my thoughts. He is not like a friend to me. I decided to divorce him because he doesn't value me. I am waiting for my kids to be independent, and I will surely leave him, that is final. Let me think how I feel with all such things!!? Yaa, I feel I am wounded mentally; my emotions are attacked and I feel broken from within.

**Arnica is a very good remedy for all types of physical injuries, slow healing and stubborn wounds, but I have also seen it work very well on mental and emotional injuries**

"Talking about my skin, it gets red, hot and sore often. Hot sunny days are worse for me. If I had to go out and I stayed outside for a long time then for sure I would have redness all over, like exposed parts, face, neck and arms. It stays there for the whole day. My skin feels sensitive, burning and at times itchy after that.

"And I have had three patches for the last year. One is on my back just where my neck ends, on the upper back right side and two are on my left forearm.

"I don't recollect anything that makes these appear. They are like little elevated slight red patches. It doesn't itch much but I feel slight pain and burning sometimes. I observed some days they are a bit big and more painful.

"Occasionally I feel swollen in the mornings and as the day passes it goes away. At the same time, I feel more discomfort with these elevated patches. Maybe some food will make them bigger, but I am not sure. It is slightly red and looks dark brown as if healing, but it stays.

"I always try to be regular with my meals because it affects my headache and overall health. I mostly enjoy home-cooked simple food. I mostly don't drink enough water. Actually, I don't feel thirsty. Sleep is sound mostly. But when I am tense, I am sleepless. After being awake for some time, I go to sleep because physically I am very tired so eventually, I manage to

sleep. I don't recollect any dreams, but I mostly dream about my routine and kids. The rest is all good."

### Initial Assessment

Her chronic headache is severe. It is almost constant and nothing relieves it significantly. She has headaches most days. These have to be addressed, especially the frequent vomiting. The constant stress she is feeling has to be considered as a triggering factor for the headache. Occipital headaches are mostly caused by tension. The bumpy patches of skin are also to be considered. They appear like eczema to me. Overall, she seems like a sensitive person with sensitivity to the people around her as well as environmental conditions like heat and sun.

### Repertorization

Repertorized manually using *Synthesis Repertory* by Frederick Schroyens.

Mind – Grief

Mind – Anxiety, waking on

Mind – Memory, weakness say, of what she is about to

Mind – Moaning

Head – Pain, accompanied by, vomiting

Head – Pain, excitement, emotional; after

Head – Pain, heated, from becoming, fire or stove by

Head – Pain, sleep, roused from, on being

Skin – Burning

Generals – Heated, becoming

Overall, her personality is mild, gentle and soft spoken. She seems deeply affected by the bad behavior of others. She is a sad and disappointed individual. On the outside she appears happy, friendly, talkative and cheerful. In reality, she is in deep grief, which is why the rubric "Grief" was selected. She doesn't want to come out of sad thoughts nor does she want to try to make situations better in her life. Moaning is there, all the time. She is an anxious person, and tension causes physical complaints like headaches. Heat is an aggravating factor for all complaints, especially the head pain. Staying near a fire or cooking makes her worse, which is why the rubric for aggravation by heat seems important. Her skin is very sensitive and burns, another factor of her oversensitivity.

### Analysis

Materia Medica sources used: Kent's *Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy*; Boericke's *New Manual of Homoeopathic Materia Medica with Repertory*; HC Allen's *Keynotes: Rearranged and Classified with Leading Remedies of Materia Medica and Bowel Nosodes Including Repertorial Index*; Phatak's *Materia Medica of Homoeopathic Medicines*.

At first this seems like a case of chronic headaches and skin complaints, but after talking to the client further information unfolded, adding to the totality of her symptoms. Her mind is not at ease, and it is important to have a healthy mind to



have a healthy body. She feels sad and wounded and has been in the same state of mind for years. The mental-emotional component must be taken care of for a complete cure of her physical complaints. Her complaints have been present for more than 20 years but have worsened over the past few years. Looking at these mental symptoms, she may need *Argentum nitricum*, *Psorinum*, *Arnica montana*, *Ignatia*, *Glonoinum*, *Ruta grav*, *Rhus toxicodendron* or *Natrum sulphuricum*.

The remedies I considered based on the repertorization were *Arnica montana*, *Argentum nitricum* and *Rhus toxicodendron*.

*Arnica montana* covers the majority of mental and physical symptoms. She has a weak memory while narrating her symptoms, which is covered very well by *Arnica*. Her feeling of being wounded emotionally is there. *Arnica* is a very good remedy for all types of physical injuries, slow healing and stubborn wounds, but I have also seen it work very well on mental and emotional injuries; and she is emotionally injured. I was hopeful to see profound recovery on the emotional level.

Her headache symptoms, the congestion of her head and the enlarged feeling of her head, are covered well by *Arnica*, as well. So are the vomiting and slow recovery from headaches. Skin sensitivity, eruption on the back and forearm are also important symptoms of *Arnica*.

*Argentum nitricum* could be the first choice as well. It is a very good remedy for chronic complaints. It covers all mental-emotional symptoms: loss of memory, nervous and anxious personality. However, the typical hurriedness and impulsiveness of *Arg-nit* is not seen in this case. Irritability is missing as well. Melancholy is covered by this remedy. The nervous headache is a key symptom of this remedy. Headaches with vomiting and bilious vomiting are there. But *Arg-nit* is usually relieved after vomiting which is not the case here. A feeling of an enlargement of the head is present in this case but *Arg-nit* feels better with tight bandaging or pressure whereas this client feels better with soft covering on the head.

*Rhus toxicodendron* may be a possible choice. It covers the majority of symptoms and all of the chosen rubrics, too. Anxiety, sadness and helplessness are covered by this remedy. She likes to be in a quiet place when affected. However, she wants to be still while *Rhus tox*'s headache is better from motion. The restlessness of *Rhus tox* is missing in this case. *Rhus tox* has weakness of memory but mostly for recent events, while her memory fails her when it comes to remembering what she has already said or what she was about to say and it takes her some time to find the right words. Anxiety about her children is there. Great sensitivity to cold wind is also covered well by *Rhus tox* and so is hot and burning skin. Damp and rainy weather is not tolerated well by *Rhus tox* which is not the case here, but she may be helped by the remedy in future if symptoms call for this medicine.

I didn't want to repeat the dose because she was improving and I wanted to see what else the remedy would do

### Evaluation

After studying each symptom and the high-ranking remedies in the repertorization, I found that *Arnica montana* covers everything perfectly and I decided to start with this remedy. Treating a chronic case, I may be using other remedies at a later time. I selected the 1M potency because I want effects on the mental as well as physical level and 1M was a good choice for this case.

The recommendation to the client was one dose of *Arnica montana* 1M.

**Follow-up:** June 15, 2013

**Observations:** Looking fresh. Cheerful and smiling as always. This time she sounded more confident. She was not struggling to recollect words or what she was about to say. Her face was not red, though it was a hot afternoon.

"The frequency of my headaches has gone down. I think now I have more days without headaches. It is still there and as painful as it was but I can say there is improvement in frequency. I have three or four days without pain. Vomiting is still there but I think it is less frequent. I feel a little better on congestion and I used to experience heaviness and congestion after severe episodes of headache, that is also better. My skin eruptions on my back and forearm are still the same. No change. I can say there is slight improvement in burning sensation. The rest all is fine."

### Assessment

I concluded that the remedy was acting. The pain had improved. I was expecting some signs of improvement at the mental level and did observe it in her memory. I didn't want to repeat the dose because she was improving and I wanted to see what else the remedy would do.

**Follow-up:** August 2, 2013

"I am doing great. My headaches are much better. Now maybe once a week or so. In the last 20 days I have not had any vomiting. Majority one sided headaches and severity keep changing the whole day. For two to three hours it is severe and after that it is a mild or dull headache.

"When it is severe I can't comb my hair, it makes it more painful.



"The elevated patches on my back and hands are almost flat now and I hardly feel anything in them. Discoloration is the same.

"I had a severe cold episode three weeks ago. I had a runny nose and plenty of sneezing. The headache was there with it but was more like a frontal headache because of my nasal obstruction. I think it was unmanageable for two days. I was constantly sneezing and had a lot of watering from my nose. At night my nose was blocked so I could hardly sleep. I have not had any medication for that. Actually, I was about to call you for that but on the third day it was under control. And gradually gone in two or three days. Usually, I never have a cold. This was something new for me."

#### Assessment

She had plenty of sneezing and nasal discharge, which would be expected in the process of curing chronic complaints. After that episode her chief complaints improved markedly. Overall, she was more confident. Still, she had thoughts of divorce.

I could have repeated the remedy at this point but I decided to wait until the next follow up.

#### Follow-up: September 5, 2013

"I am doing well. My headache and skin are improving but for a while now I observed my skin patches are not getting better. The swelling is less now but not gone completely. The headaches are like once or twice in maybe ten days. They are not as severe as they used to be. No vomiting at all. Actually, it is not that severe which leads to vomiting. I don't think tension and anxiety cause headaches now; I am not at all tense or anxious nowadays. Managing things with ease."

#### Assessment

The symptom totality had changed. There was no vomiting, no burning skin and the improvement at the mental level called for other remedies. I could have repeated the same remedy or complemented its action with another at this point. However, repertorizing the present picture still indicated *Arnica montana*, so I did not change the remedy at that time.

*Arnica montana* 1M, one dose was given.

#### Follow-up: October 20, 2013

"My skin is looking great now. My sensitivity to heat, or hot days, I am more comfortable. But now these patches are itchy. The itching can happen anytime, I have not observed when it is worse. The patch looks drier now and the color is more like purple reddish. Some days they have dry flakes. The headache is much, much better. In the last 25 days I have not had a

headache at all and when I had it last time it was for two days or so but I was managing well at that time."

#### Assessment

The remedy was working the way I expected. She was doing great, recovering perfectly from her headaches. But her skin now showed a different set of symptoms. It was itching, which I interpreted as a good sign. I did not repeat the dose. I wanted to wait for more itching or some big changes in her eczema.

#### Follow-up: November 10, 2013

"I am really disturbed. Not going well at all. My skin is dry all over. That dryness leads to itching and I scratch everywhere. That dryness leads to itching and I scratch everywhere. It feels so hard that it bleeds. I keep scratching everywhere. It feels like pricking sometime in my patches. Mostly my upper body and hands are itchy. Three patches itch the most. I have to scratch them, and I end up making them worse. I want to resist because otherwise it will not heal. I feel they look a bit bigger in size now. I sleep well nowadays but wake with itching all over. Mornings I have more itching. Evenings are better. I feel thirsty nowadays. I am drinking lots of water. The rest is good."

#### Assessment

She was fine as far as the headaches were concerned. The skin was now showing new symptoms. The eczema patches were bigger and itching. She was experiencing itching on the upper body and hands, which was worse on waking and scratching didn't relieve it. She was thirsty, which she had not mentioned before. Mentally she was improving but now appeared restless. After repertorizing again, *Rhus toxicodendron* was selected. It covered all presenting symptoms.

*Rhus toxicodendron* 200c was given, once every two weeks

#### Follow-up: December 10, 2013

"My skin patches are almost gone now, especially on my back. Two patches on the hand are still there but healing. Itching is there but only when I wake up in the morning. As I am busy with my work, I just forget it. And the itching which I had last time all over the place is gone completely. The headache is fine. Heat or getting in too much heat doesn't affect me now."

#### Assessment

Overall, she was doing great. In the majority of the past follow ups, she had talked about divorce plans. This was the first time she did not. Now she was asking her family for the help she needed and seemed more communicative with her husband. I did not repeat the remedy but let it continue to work.



## Arnica montana, which is often regarded as an acute remedy for physical trauma, is also a deep acting polycryst

**Follow-up:** January 20, 2014

"I am fine. Headache is rare and it's very mild if I have it. My skin is doing great and the patches are healed. I don't have any complaints with it now but it has deep dark marks. They are brownish. Sometimes I experience itching in my feet and it is the same as what I had before on my upper body. It is not constant, comes and goes on its own."

### Assessment

She was recovering well. A sense of well-being was there, her vital signs were perfect. Her improvements were going in the right direction. The first improvements were her headaches and vomiting and then the skin. Recovery from within outwards and from the top down with her feet itching at this point. Everything went in the right direction and she was doing great.

*Rhus toxicodendron* 200c, once a month.

**Follow-up:** March 1, 2014

"I am doing great. Everything is recovered. No complaints right now. Hope it continues the same way. My only concern is pigmentation of these patches. It is much better, almost close to clear. Hope it goes completely."

### Assessment

She did not need any further medication at this point. She was asked to come for regular follow-ups so I could recommend a remedy should she need one. I advised her to take homeopathic medicine for whatever acute complaints she might develop, as it is advisable for a complete recovery. With time the pigmentation cleared as well.

**Consultation:** January 10, 2018

"I have a scabies infection. My whole family got infected. But I think I have a minimal infection compared to them. It is only on the back of my palms. Both hands."

### Assessment

I treated all family members successfully for their scabies infection. The client's infection was mild and improved within a few days of medication (*Rhus tox* 200c once a week for four

weeks). I had a phone conversation on September 18, 2024 and she confirmed that she has not had a headache since then.

### Conclusion

This case showed me how *Arnica montana*, which is often regarded as an acute remedy for physical trauma, is also a deep acting polycryst. I tried my best not to be prejudiced when differentiating remedies and followed my repertorization to make a final decision. The reward was improvement on the physical and mental level.

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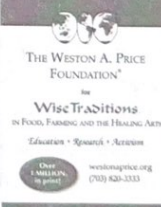


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