

## Insomnia for Forty Years.

7<sup>th</sup> October, 2016

Female, 70 years, suffering insomnia since approximately last 40 years. Says she goes days without sleep. Feels tired but just can't sleep. Problem began one day when she was in her late 20's when a friend told her she should be sleeping 8 hours a night – this idea made such a strong impression on her that it has stayed in her mind till the present day. Prior to this her only difficulty sleeping was when away from home.

Has plenty of physical energy for her daily activities (she daily shops, cooks and delivers meals to the homes of her adult children), however, becomes anxious and stressed if has to undertake anything out of routine due to her mind not being clear, e.g. cater for a large group, or go for a job interview, give a talk etc. The longer she goes without sleep the more anxious she becomes. Conscious of a strong and prominent pulse beat in her throat when trying to sleep.

Avoids tall buildings due to a fear of heights. History of sexual abuse as a child. Remembers being lifted out of bed by an uncle but doesn't remember anything more. Doesn't want to think about it. Told me all this in a detached manner with no obvious emotion. Also mentioned that she has psychic ability, e.g. able to contact spirits.

Has been taking Diabex (metformin) for high blood glucose (6 years) and Micardis (telmisartan) for high blood pressure (3 years). Also mentioned not having had a cold or flu since 1974 !

See repertory below (using new TBR2<sup>i</sup> software) covering the symptoms of her insomnia. I selected *aggr. after vexation with anxiety* (1764) due the onset of the insomnia after her friend's comment.

Case of Insomnia	Rep 2	Rep 3	Rep 4	Rep 5	Rep 6	Rep 7	The Bönninghausen Repertory 2.1						
	Rubric						Bell.	Acon.	Bry.	Ign.	Nux-v.	Sep.	Op.
836	General - Sleep - Sleeplessness (insomnia) - in general						3	3	4	3	3	4	3
1764	Modalities - Mind - Vexation (disturbed, put-out, troubled), from - anxiety, with						3	4	2	4	4	2	3
666	Systemic - Cardiovascular - Pulse - Full						4	4	3	2	2	3	2
225	Regional - Trunk (torso) - Neck (& throat) - Neck - ventral (external & internal throat)						4	1	3	2	2	2	2

Rx : *Ignatia* 30 (L) 1/day. My remedy choice was mainly based on her impressionability and suppressed emotional state

October 2016

She reported that the first week was great. Getting to sleep easily and sleeping 3-4 hours straight – then waking and falling back asleep. 2<sup>nd</sup> week not so good, waking often. Last 3 days have been better and her eyes are no longer feeling heavy also feeling better in herself generally.

Rx : *Ign* 30 (L) 1/day to continue

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

Since last 2 weeks sleep again difficult. Eyes are very heavy but just can't get to sleep.

Since *Ign* no longer has pulsation in throat or any anxiety when trying to sleep. Just can't sleep.

Rx : *Placebo* 2/day

9<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Sleep has improved. Feeling much better in self.

Rx: Continued *Placebo* 2/day

9<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
 Sleep has regressed.  
 Rx : Ign 200 (L) 1/day

6<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
 Not been well last 3 weeks. Waking after 2 hours and just dozing for the rest of night. Also feeling bothered by the hot weather.  
 Rx: Stop and wait. Placebo to use if required.

17<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
 Husband in hospital with pneumonia. She has been extremely anxious about him and has been sitting up all night. Completely unable to sleep.  
 Rx: *Aconite* 30 (L) 2/day

20<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
*Acon* reduced anxiety immediately after first dose. However, only slept for 2 hours, 2 nights in a row. She experienced a panic attack after 3rd dose.  
*Time to re-assess this case.*

I realised that this patient was not entirely sleepless (couldn't have been *entirely sleepless* for 40 years). However, she rarely got into a deep sleep, mostly only in a very light slumber (i.e. dozing) whilst still aware of things going on around her. Any sleep was unrefreshing, and although she had good levels of physical energy during waking hours, she always felt mentally unclear, with a heavy feeling about the eyes. I also took into consideration her lack of reactivity (hasn't had a cold or flu for the last 42 years).

Case of Insomnia	Rep 2	Rep 3	Rep 4	Rep 5	Rep 6	Rep 7	The Bönninghausen Repertory 2.1								
	Rubric						Op.	Acon.	Sulf.	Bry.	Ign.	Lyc.	Stram.	Bell.	Sep.
819	General - Sleep - Semi-asleep state (between being awake & asleep)						4	4	3	3	1	1	2	1	1
821	General - Sleep - Unrefreshing						4	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	2
1764	Modalities - Mind - Vexation (disturbed, put-out, troubled), from - anxiety, with						3	4	2	2	4	2	2	3	2
1064	General - Generals - Reactivity (physiological) - lack of (lack of reaction), of the body						4	1	3	1	2	3	3	2	3

Symptoms below from *Opium Materia Medica Hahnemannica* supporting my prescription:

- 12 Cloudiness of the head (immediately). [D<sub>4</sub>]
- 13 Dullness in the head, with a dry hot feeling in the eyes, and inclination of the eyes to shut, without sleepiness, with a sensation as if he had not slept the previous night. [Cbz]
- 26 More disposed to elevated contemplations all night, without sleep. [G<sub>2</sub>]
- 27 All inclination to sleep disappeared (after taking opium the previous evening),.... [O<sub>7</sub>]
- 30. Weakness of mind. [G<sub>35.1</sub>]
- 31 The mental faculties depart. [B<sub>22.5</sub>]
- 33 Obtuseness of the mind. [B<sub>35</sub>]
- 165 On the neck distended veins, and violently beating arteries. [M<sub>57.1.4</sub>]
- 474 In place of sound sleep it easily induces a morbid slumber. [T<sub>16.2.7</sub>]
- 483 Sleep with consciousness; he hears everything about him, but cannot rouse himself; waking after two hours. [C16]
- 526 Restless, sleepless night. [M<sub>15.1</sub>]
- 527 In spite of drowsiness he cannot go to sleep, with slow pulse. [G<sub>35.1</sub>]
- 618 Invigoration [Kräftigkeit]. [M<sub>15.1</sub>]
- 632 The patient has visions. [M<sub>53</sub>]

Rx. *Op* 0/1 1/day

Patient did not return. She sent me a card around 6 weeks later saying, 'Thank you for all your help. Feel much better.' I gave her a call recently and she told me she is still doing well. No problem with sleep.

## Discussion.

Although Opium covered all the symptoms of my first repertorisation, I did not initially consider it a match for this patient, the main reason being, although it is listed as a 3 for insomnia, I was under the impression *Opium* characteristically produced a deep comatose like sleep i.e. the exact opposite to insomnia. After *Ignatia* however, she increasingly talked about her eyes being heavy and her mind clouded causing difficulty functioning by day. By night she said she would simply lie awake without thoughts or anxiety, apparently always conscious of her surroundings, never falling into a proper restful sleep. I had my suspicions that, though unaware of it, she must at the very least be spending some part of the night dozing lightly. I therefore decided to examine the sleep state produced by *Opium*.

The words used in English translation of *Opium* in *Materia Medica* relating to sleep are *slumber* from the German (*schlummer*) and Latin (*sopor*). *Stupefaction* is also used in relation to the sleepy drowsy mind state. English definition of these below from *Cassell and Company, Encyclopaedic Dictionary*<sup>ii</sup>:

### Slumber, slomber

German – *der schlummer or der schlaf* = sleep

- 1.To sleep lightly, to doze
- 2.To sleep
- 3.To be in a state of inactivity, sloth or negligence; to be or lie dormant.

### Sopor

Latin- *sopor*=sleep

A deep sleep from which can with difficulty be awakened.

### Stupefaction

Latin-*stupefacio*

A stolid or senseless state; dullness, torpor, stupidity.

In the *materia medica* of *Opium* the above words are used to describe varying degrees of sleep produced by this narcotic substance, the resulting effect depending on the size of the dose and the level of intoxication. Seemingly, the effects range from a light sleep state of semi-consciousness to a deeply intoxicated, stupefaction. Here are some examples from those listed in *Materia Medica Pura* reproduced here from our not yet published MMH:

- 469 Waking sopor [Wachende Schlaf- Trunkenheit]. [H]
- 470. Incomprehensible chattering in the sopor. [H]
- 477 Soporuous stupefaction [Schlummer-Betäubung]. [D4]
- 478 The sleep caused by opium passed into an unusual stupefaction [Betäubung]. [R19.1]
- 479 Such a stupefied slumber [betäubender Schlummer] that an answer cannot be got from him. [S57.1.2]
- 480. Very sound sleep with rattling respiration, as after apoplexy (aft. 6h). [L8]
- 481 During almost constant slumber, with half-shut eyelids, he has floccilation and feels all about him. [R1.1]
- 482 Stupid sleep without any consciousness, with rattling on the chest. [K9]
- 483 Sleep with consciousness; he hears everything about him, but cannot rouse himself; waking after two hours. [C16]
- 532 Restless night, sopor alternating with wakefulness, much raving hot skin and stupefaction, during which he lies in a heap. [M15.1]
- 506 Sleep disturbed sometimes by pleasant, sometimes by horrible dreams, degenerating either into sopor or an apoplectic death with convulsions. [M57.1.5]

Descriptions like 'waking sopor' and 'sleep with consciousness' tend to imply the individual is neither completely awake nor completely asleep but rather in a state between the two. This sleep is not a proper peaceful sleep, not at all refreshing and during the waking hours a feeling of drowsiness, dullness and a

feeling of intoxication are present, resulting in an inability to think, react and function in an appropriate manner. I came to realise this was a good match for my patient's state of chronic insomnia.

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<sup>i</sup> Dimitriadis, George, The Bönninghausen Repertory, Second edition, Hahnemann Institute Sydney, 2010

<sup>ii</sup> The Encyclopædic Dictionary, Cassell and Company, Limited, London, Paris, New York, Melbourne, 1902