



Saccharum officinale or sugarcane

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ventional medicines and declined the proffered prescription for Metformin (a common diabetes treatment used to regulate blood sugar levels).

“So what are you going to do about it?” asked the doctor.

The patient said he would first consult the book *Waist Disposal* by Dr John Briffa, a leading authority on the impact of nutrition and other lifestyle factors on health and illness. Dr Briffa maintains there is no reason to eat carbohydrate foods such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, corn and most of all sugars. Instead readers are guided towards proteins and fats with plenty of vegetables and less sweet fruits. For example, nuts are a good snack and Greek yoghurt with berries makes a nutritious breakfast. Exercise is important but there is no need to embark on a programme of gruelling workouts that leaves you aching and exhausted. The book – and its sequel *Escape the Diet Trap* – contains much more detail than this brief summary allows, but the patient found Dr Briffa’s advice easy to follow, humane and even fun.

So apart from the advice gleaned from books, how did the patient manage to stick to his new diet and maintain a healthy lifestyle? Well, he consulted a homeopath. The reason why he did this was because his expanding waistline was not his only problem, for he also had a serious craving for sugar which was upsetting his metabolism.

If the patient’s family shared a bar of chocolate and had taken a piece each, he would finish it. He was forever raiding the biscuit tin. He hoovered down mangoes. He took sugar in his tea. He

adored honey, cakes, sweetened fruit yoghurts etc. And although he thought he was being health conscious by avoiding cola drinks, he was eating all the carbohydrate foods Dr Briffa advises against. This high-carb and sugar diet was making the man feel faint and angry and frantic to eat every few hours.

Homeopathic intervention

The homeopath prescribed *Gymnema* as a mother tincture, to be taken in water, 10 drops, two or three times a day for several weeks. Simply put, a mother tincture refers to a simple combination of a botanical extract with a specific amount of alcohol. Generally, a mother tincture contains the lowest possible potency of any particular homeopathic preparation.

Gymnema sylvestre is a herb native to the tropical forests of southern and central India and Sri Lanka. As it suppresses the taste of sugar it has been appropriately called gurma, meaning sugar-killer. When the leaves are chewed, it so affects the sense of taste that one cannot detect the sweet taste of sugar.

John H Clarke mentions this remedy in his *Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica*, published in 1925, where an account of chewing one or two leaves is described. The leaves are said to have had a bitter, astringent and slightly acid

taste. Immediately after chewing them it is said the sense of taste for sugar was lost and also the taste for bitters, with the effect lasting some hours. Everything else could be tasted, as the ginger in gingerbread but not the sweetness.

Later, when the patient was suffering a period of exhaustion, he again visited his homeopath who prescribed *Withania*, to be taken at the same dose and with the same regular frequency as the earlier remedy *Gymnema*.

Withania somnifera is a small annual shrub that produces small green flowers and orange-red berries when ripe. It is cultivated in the drier regions of India such as Punjab, Gujarat and Rajasthan. It is also grown in Nepal. The plant is from the nightshade family and is commonly known as *Ashwagandha*, Indian ginseng and poison gooseberry.

In homeopathy it’s used to regulate blood sugar, which aids in suppressing sugar cravings. It is also widely used to increase vitality, recover from chronic illnesses and in pain management for arthritic conditions.

Over a year, a combination of careful eating, homeopathy and moderate exercise saw a gradual improvement in the patient’s health. The low carb and high fat way of eating is now a permanent feature of his life. He now lives off the fat of the land, eating some meat, plenty of fish and eggs, as well as fresh vegetables. His waist measurement had been 40 inches but is now 36 inches, and may still reduce more. A very satisfactory outcome!

I remember this case very well, for the patient was me.

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About the author
Francis Treuherz has practised homeopathy since 1984, including part-time in the NHS from 1990-2003. As well as being a trustee of the British Homeopathic Association, Francis is a Fellow of the Society of Homeopaths and its Hon Secretary. During a long career he has edited the Society’s journal and taught extensively throughout Europe and America.