



Restoring Regular Heart Rhythm

My experience with atrial fibrillation and homeopathy

by FRANCIS TREUHERZ, MA, RSHom, FSHom

I was intrigued to read a letter from Dr. Robert Signore in the Winter 2016 issue of *Homeopathy Today* on page 9. He writes that his father “developed a heart condition called *atrial fibrillation*. When this happens, the normal rhythmical contractions of the heart’s upper chambers are replaced by abnormal, irregular twitchings of the heart’s muscular wall.” Robert’s father was prescribed “the right medicines” by his cardiologist “but his heart still went into *congestive heart failure*.” His lungs filled up with fluid and his legs began swelling, which is known as *pulmonary edema* and *pitting edema*. Luckily, Robert received advice from homeopath Dr. Joel Shepperd, and the remedy *Ammonium carbonicum* rescued his father. I hope I never need this remedy, but I am very grateful for the knowledge of it.

For many years, I have been coping with atrial fibrillation with homeopathy. Mine is called paroxysmal atrial fibrillation (PAF) because it happens occasionally rather than persistently. It began when I was away from home at a residential conference on a university campus, and I had no idea what was happening to me. I was far away from people, having overslept in the dorm. I staggered down long corridors and open ground and collapsed in the reception area to be rescued by a paramedic. I was dizzy, sweating, and weak in the legs with a thumping chest and full throat. I could not stand up unaided and was desperate with uncertainty. I was taken to hospital and by the time I got there, they could not figure it out, as I was recovering.

It happened again and still does from time to time, but not as drastically. I can feel my pulse racing and measure it at 120 beats per minute, up from the normal 60.

Homeopathic help

Eventually I discovered *Iberis amara*, prescribed by my homeopath. The description from Boericke’s *Materia Medica* (see box on page 23) matches me exactly, except I

rarely feel pain or have mucus. Whenever I feel the onset of atrial fibrillation, I take *Iberis amara* mother tincture*, 20 drops in about 20 mls of pure water, as needed, maybe every 10 minutes for a few doses, and less often as the symptoms recede. As soon as I take that first dose, I feel an improvement. The speed of the heart slows down first, and then the irregularity normalizes. If I cannot take the remedy right away, the atrial fibrillation episode lasts longer and is more severe.

This remedy has not stopped the unpredictable occasional recurrences, so it has not cured. But it has never failed to stop the atrial fibrillation quickly on each occasion. Sometimes I need a nap afterwards, sometimes I am exhausted for another day, mainly I can carry on with my life and avoid allopathic drugs with their undesirable side effects. I keep a bottle of *Iberis amara* tincture in my briefcase, by my bedside, and at my regular places of work. I am also under the ongoing care of an excellent homeopath who treats me on a holistic level, as needed, so there is always hope that constitutional homeopathic treatment could reduce or stop the occurrences altogether.

Causes & risk factors

The causes of paroxysmal atrial fibrillation are not known to doctors—although there are some triggers, such as too much chocolate (what is too much!?) or coffee. I love bitter chocolate and abhor coffee.

Risk factors also include underlying heart disease, atherosclerosis, diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid problems, being overweight, advanced age, stress, and sleep apnea. (To learn more, visit stopafib.org, a patient-to-patient resource aimed at informing people about atrial fibrillation and helping them manage their triggers and symptoms.)

As doctors think atrial fibrillation is related to chaotic electrical impulses in the heart, ablation is sometimes used, which is an operation to change (or even destroy) the heart’s normal electrical functions. No thank you.

Allopathic medications to control heart rate and rhythm are commonly given to people with atrial fibrillation. Blood-thinning drugs (aspirin, warfarin) are also typically advised because of the risk of blood clot formation during atrial fibrillation, whilst the heart is pumping chaotically and blood may be pooling instead of flowing. Additional drugs are often given to address any conditions believed to contribute to heart disease or other risk factors (e.g., high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc.).

In my case, there may be underlying atherosclerosis, as my blood cholesterol levels were once high. While my GP advised a statin drug at the time, I decided instead to take *Ferula sumbul* tincture (prepared from the root of the *Sumbul* or muskroot plant) and prescribed by my homeopath, 20 drops in water twice daily for a few weeks, and subsequent cholesterol testing showed blood levels in the normal range. Interestingly, Boericke’s *Materia Medica* notes that *Ferula sumbul*

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is “A tissue remedy for sclerosed arteries” and “nervous palpitation.”

Having a history of type 2 diabetes may be another factor in my case. When my blood sugar levels rose to the point of being diagnosed with metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes, I was first prescribed the remedy *Gymnema sylvestre* and later the remedy *Withania somnifera* (10 drops of tincture in water, 2 to 3 times per day over several weeks) by my homeopath. These remedies, along with a radical diet change and weight loss, have cleared up the diabetes. (Read my story, “A Sweet Solution for a Sugar Addict,” in *Homeopathy Today’s* Spring 2016 issue.)

More homeopathic help

Other remedies may assist in cases like mine:

- *Crataegus* mother tincture (made from hawthorne berries), for example,

could help if taken for a few weeks as, according to Boericke’s *Materia Medica*, it: “Acts on the muscles of heart and is a heart tonic. ... Arteriosclerosis. Said to have a solvent power upon crustaceous and calcareous deposits in arteries ... Pulse accelerated, irregular, feeble, intermittent.”

- *Cactus grandiflorus* (night blooming cactus) tincture could be indicated for heart irregularity and palpitations with vertigo, especially if there is the feeling of constriction in the chest or heart “as if from an iron band,” according to Boericke’s *Materia Medica*.

- *Ginkgo biloba* tincture is generally regarded as a heart tonic that is also good for the brain and memory in maturity. Some people use it for its blood-thinning properties instead of allopathic blood-thinners (such as aspirin and warfarin), but medical monitoring and supervision is always necessary in such cases. Interest-

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ingly, *Ginkgo biloba* is also cited by homeopath Frans Vermeulen in his *The Ultimate Prisma: Synoptic Reference 1*, as being good for some symptoms that may occur in atrial fibrillation: Chest: Palpitation of heart in evening in bed, worse lying on left side and motion, better from motion of legs, and some offensive perspiration in axilla.

Professional supervision required

Of course, heart problems are serious conditions that benefit from medical monitoring. And do not try this at home, but consult a qualified homeopath in your locality.

Grateful acknowledgements and thanks to my homeopath, Subrata Banerjee, who practices in Calcutta, India, and Chelmsford, UK, for his wise prescriptions and care.

**Note: Mother tincture refers to a botanical extract with a specific amount of alcohol. In these examples, it is given based on homeopathic indications and is considered the lowest potency of any particular homeopathic preparation.*

Iberis amara

This homeopathic remedy is made from the seeds of the Bitter Candytuft, a member of the *Brassicaceae* family of plants. Below are its homeopathic indications, as quoted from the chapter on *Iberis amara* in *Pocket Manual of Homeopathic Materia Medica* by William Boericke, MD (1927).

Generalities. State of nervous excitement. Has marked action upon the heart. Possesses great efficacy in cardiac diseases. Controls vascular excitement in hypertrophy with thickening of the heart’s walls. Cardiac debility after influenza. Liver region full and painful. White stools.

Mind. Sad and sighing; fearful and trembling. Irritable.

Head. Vertigo and pains around heart. Constant hawking of thick, stringy mucus until after a meal. Hot, flushed face. Vertigo, *as if occiput were turning around*; eyes feel forced outwards.

Heart. Conscious of heart’s action. On

turning on left side, stitching pain as of needles through ventricles felt at each systole. Palpitation, *with vertigo and choking in throat*. Stitching pains in cardiac region. *Pulse full, irregular, intermittent*. Worse, least motion and in warm room. Sensation of weight and pressure, with occasional sharp, stinging pains. Dropsy, with enlarged heart. Violent palpitation *induced by slightest exertion, or by laughing, or coughing*. *Darting pains through heart*. *Cardiac dyspnoea*. Dilation of heart. Wakes with palpitation about 2 a.m. Throat and trachea fills up with mucus. Cough causes redness of face. *Tachycardia*.

Extremities. Numbness and tingling in left hand and arm. Whole body sore, lame and trembling.

Aggravation. Worse, lying down; on left side; motion, exertion; warm room.

Relationship. Compare: *Cact.*; *Dig.*; *Amyl.*; *Bell*.

Dose. Tincture and first potency.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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