**About homeopathy**

*"The physician's high and only mission is to restore the sick to health, to cure, as it is called."*  **Samuel Hahnemann**

Homeopathy is a t traditional and safe system of medicine that stimulates the patient’s natural self-healing potential. Treatment is individualised; different people receive different treatments even if they suffer from the same disease. It offers a high degree of patient satisfaction.

The word ‘homeopathy’ comes from the Greek words *homoios,* similar, and *pathos,* suffering. Homeopathy was developed more than 200 years ago by the German medical doctor, Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843). His approach was holistic: a homeopathic assessment takes account of the patient’s actual symptoms and in addition considers the patient’s physical build, temperament and genetic predispositions. All such factors contribute to the entire picture.

**The Law of Similars**

Hahnemann discovered the Law of Similars, whereby the sum of the symptoms is treated according to the principle of similarity (like cures like). A basic principle of homeopathy is that substances capable of causing disorder in a healthy person are used as medicines to treat similar patterns of disorder experienced by ill people. This stimulates the body’s defence against such symptoms and thereby mobilises the patient’s self-healing capacity.

**Homeopathic medicinal products**

Typically, homeopathic medicinal products are based on source materials of vegetable, animal, human and mineral origin. From these, a suitable pharmaceutical agent or a dilution is made, which for vegetable and animal materials is known as a ‘mother tincture’. The mother tincture is serially diluted and ‘succussed’ (shaken vigorously and impacted). From solid substances, a ‘trituration’ is made – the pharmaceutical agent is ground and diluted with lactose. The trituration is then serially diluted up to a certain level of dilution, after which it is also serially diluted and succussed. This process of serial dilution is known as potentisation. Different potencies (dilutions) of the same agent are indicated for different symptoms. The more dilute the agent, the higher the potency.

**Using homeopathy**

Treatment approaches range from classical homeopathy, which is highly individualised and where the practitioner matches the remedy to the individual patient's symptom picture, to complex or clinical homeopathy, where single or combination preparations are selected on the basis of a more clinical or conventional diagnosis. Homeopathy can be individually prescribed by a doctor or practitioner or selected for self-medication for everyday ailments.

Homeopathy has a long-standing tradition in Europe. Three out of four Europeans are familiar with homeopathy and 29% of Europe’s population use it for their own healthcare. Some 130,000 doctors work with homeopathy in the EU and there are approximately 30,000 specialised homeopathic doctors in Europe.