

The Use of Nosodes in Homeopathy

'Nosodes' is the term used for a specific group of remedies widely used in homeopathic prescribing. They have been an essential part of the European homeopathic tradition for over two hundred years. Results from clinical trials and data collection in homeopathic practice show a long track record of safety for these products.

Typically, homeopathic medicinal products originate from plants, animals, organic and inorganic substances. The first step in the preparation of a homeopathic medicine is the preparation of the 'mother tincture', its most concentrated liquid form. The second step is a process of systematic serial dilution and 'succussion' (vigorous shaking with impact) known as 'potentisation'. The more physically dilute the solution, the higher the potency.

Nosodes are made from disease products of human or animal origin, or from pathogens or from products derived from the decomposition of animal organs, cultured micro-organisms or body fluids containing pathogens or pathological agents. They are prepared according to standard methods of manufacture for homeopathic medicinal products. The Pharmacopoeias in current use include additional rules to produce safe, non-infectious starting material by different sterilisation methods. The subsequent serial dilution adds further safety and renders them as safe as other homeopathic remedies. Nosodes are manufactured and prescribed in higher potencies (i.e. more dilute) only.

The track record of safety of these products is reinforced by clear and regulated manufacturing processes, ensuring that they are safe and meet the EU definition of a homeopathic product: 'any medicinal product prepared ... in accordance with a homeopathic manufacturing procedure described by the European Pharmacopoeia or, in the absence thereof, by the pharmacopoeias currently used officially in the Member States'.

Nosodes are prescribed by homeopathic doctors, practitioners and veterinarians world-wide for the treatment of acute as well as chronic diseases. Remedies made from the supposed causative agents or products of a disease are usually prescribed to a patient suffering from that same disease. They may be used to treat residual problems when an illness has been overcome in earlier life and to reduce hereditary problems. This school of homeopathy is known as Isopathy.

In 2005, a survey of homeopathic doctors found that 95% considered nosodes to be important in their clinical practice. Similarly a 2005 study reported that nosodes had been of vital importance for successful homeopathic treatment of chronic ailments in an average of 33% of patient cases. Nosodes also play an essential role in the successful homeopathic treatment of farm livestock.

Nosodes have a clear place in the European regulatory context. For patients, practitioners and professional organisations, they will continue to play an essential role in homeopathic treatment.

For further information and references please see ECHAMP Position Paper (2006) 'Nosodes in Homeopathy: Significance and Viral Safety'.