

Side impact protection system?

"No way...I'd rather die than drive a Volvo"

A tale of Bovista - remedy for warriors on the move

by Mary Aspinwall

A case history

James

Aged 35

Living with girlfriend and her two children aged 5 and 7 (from previous relationship). Has a stressful managerial job on renewable, temporary one year contracts

Presenting complaints

lots of tension / aches / pains with weakness

weakness worst in the wrist which could suddenly "go" when lifting something, this was always followed by a strained sensation for the next two days

general tiredness

bowel problems: loose stools and flatulence

mental symptoms: very irritable; poor memory

chest: oppressed sensation with breathlessness (smokes roll ups)

Lifestyle (about which James has no complaints)

drinks up to one and a half bottles of wine on a weekday; six or seven pints and a short at weekends; seven or eight coffees and three or four teas per day; loves dark chocolate and eats a whole bar most days

Medical history

Asthma

Stomach ulcers

Developed a stutter at 10 (which he still has occasionally)

Heavy drinking

Family history

Heart attacks (father's side) Chest complaints (mother)

Arthritis (mother)

Nervous breakdown (sibling)

Alcoholism (sibling)

Hare lip (sibling)

There was a common theme to the modalities for the aches and pains, they were all better for:

"finding the right place" or "clicking into place"

James also had insomnia and couldn't get off to sleep, he spent ages" twisting and turning ... I'm seeking the perfect spot"

The struggle

He had strong reservations about the way his life was going:

"I worry about getting older. I'm at the half-way point in my life. I don't want to be cozy and cuddly and drive a volvo; I'd rather be dead. I fantasise about becoming a New Age traveller. The freedom, the rebellion, the defiance, struggling against the sterility of how people live. It's harder now to move, to be free. I'm enjoying my job, but that's only a one year contract.

The prison

I've got Julia (partner) and I feel I should be with her, but I see her as a bit of a jailer to some extent. We've talked about it and I've told her I wanted us to become New

Age travellers, but she said 'No Way'. I see the relationship as a prison really, but I have to have one. Not being able to move, feeling settled down, I half want to and half don't want to." These preoccupations echo the search for the perfect spot and raise a new theme of fighting which James then elaborated on:

" Two weeks ago I had a violent dream and woke up energised, as if I was in a fight"

Choosing the rubrics

It was difficult to find a rubric which adequately conveyed the idea of "finding the perfect spot", so I opted instead for a large general rubric:

Generals; MOTION, general ameliorates (185 remedies)

James mentioned his desire to be rebellious and struggle defiantly against the status quo and says that he was energised (rather than scared) by his violent dream. I therefore choose the rubric:

Mind; FIGHT, wants to (11 remedies)

I wanted to highlight James' central dilemma by contrasting this desire to fight with his feeling that he was imprisoned by his relationship and therefore unable to do so.

Ideally this should have been a Mind; DELUSION rubric but there was none. I remember Sankaran saying that he felt that dreams and delusions could be used interchangeably and whilst I was not totally sure I agreed with him I decided to repertorise to see what came up. In the Complete Repertory there was no rubric for imprisonment, only arrest. Murphy did have a rubric for imprisonment, but it only contained two remedies (Bovista and Cervus brasiliensis aka Campestris). It seemed likely to be a deficient rubric, but I decided to include it, since the Materia Medica is always the final arbiter. Hence I took: D; DREAMS, imprisonment (2 remedies)

Since I had not managed to find a "perfect spot" rubric I at least wanted to include the physical symptoms to which that modality applied, because this need to find the perfect spot was also so central to the mental picture and James' dis-ease. Since that modality applied to both his shoulder and knee I decided to take: Extremities;

TENSION; Joints (37 remedies)

The materia medica for Bovista rang true to the case.

Later a review of the rubrics containing the remedy Bovista using Mac Repertory's

remedy search facility showed how well the remedy covered James' numerous ailments:

His wrist symptom

EXTREMITIES; WEAKNESS; General; rheumatic* single remedy

EXTREMITIES; WEAKNESS; Hand; afternoon* single remedy

His long-standing stammer

SPEECH & VOICE; SPEECH; stammering**

SPEECH & VOICE; SPEECH; stammering; children, in* (single remedy)

EXTREMITIES; WEAKNESS; Upper Limbs; taking hold of something*

His history of stomach ulcers

STOMACH; PAIN; burning; extending; throat, to*

ABDOMEN; FLATULENCE*

ABDOMEN; PAIN; burning**

GENERALITIES; PAIN; ulcerative; internally*

His flatulence:

ABDOMEN; FLATULENCE*

His respiratory problems:

RESPIRATION; ASTHMATIC**

RESPIRATION; WHEEZING**

His tiredness:

GENERALITIES; WEARINESS*

It also covered...

His search for the perfect spot:

MIND; ANXIETY; driving from place to place*

MIND; FEAR; driving him from place to place*

His simple language " I feel like a big sponge just taking everything in and giving nothing out":

EXTREMITIES; ENLARGEMENT; sensation of*

MIND; DELUSIONS; body; enlarged*

MIND; DELUSIONS; body; parts; enlarged*

MIND; DELUSIONS; enlarged*

GENERALITIES; SWOLLEN sensation*

His mental symptoms:

MIND; ANGER, irascibility**

MIND; IRRITABILITY***

MIND; MEMORY; weakness, loss of*

MIND; MEMORY; weakness, loss of for what he has just done

Phatak notes it is characterised by laxity especially if felt in the joints. Nervous and weak jointed. Adapted to stammering children.

Clark adds: "This globular fungus, which, according to report is eaten in Italy before it is ripe, becomes filled , while ripening, with blackish dust that breaks the husk which contains it with a slight noise." Corresponding to this signature , "bloatedness", "puffy condition of the body surface" and a sense of "enlargement", flatulent distension and noisy passage of flatus are leading features of the Bovista pathogenesis.

I prescribed Bovista 30c bedtime and rising. James returned one month later.

"The day after I took the remedy it felt like I had sand in my eyes they were gritty.

I'm very sensitive about my eyes and I hate people being near them. When I woke up next day they were stuck together. The discharge was brownish yellow and went hard.

That lasted two days. When it cleared I felt I could see so much more clearly, everything was brighter afterwards. I started seeing more, noticing more. Bovista has the following rubrics:

EYE; AGGLUTINATED*

EYE; AGGLUTINATED; morning*

EYE; FOREIGN body, sensation of*

EYE; OPENING lids; difficult; morning*

therefore this was probably a proving-cum-spring-clean.

"I feel OK today. I've been up and down. Some days neurotic, full of aches and pains, generally left-sided. For the past week I've had a new, muscular, pain in my left foot.

It feels sore. My heart feels like there is a dull throb in it. My shoulder is sore and still better for finding the right position. I feel so much better for not drinking coffee. More alert, but I'm really tired so I've arranged to take time off. My stomach is fine and the flatulence is better. My digestion feels more natural, normal. I'm waking early at

about 6.30-7am feeling very restless. Some days I could sleep all day. My sinuses are better, I'm less sniffy and snotty. I've had wheezing in the chest, but only

occasionally. I'm trying to cut down on smoking. My cough is a bit better. My sense of smell is better and I've become conscious of a sticky musky smell. Last week I had

a pain in my chest on the left side. I panicked thinking it was a heart attack or a blood clot. I've had it before, a long time ago. I've had violent, bloody horrid dreams about

war. I was involved. It was in a tropical climate. Women were fighting as well. The colours were very strong reds; yellows; greens ...very bright. I woke up scared,

amazed I had remembered it. I dreamt I was travelling around Ireland with new age travellers. It was pleasant but the farmers were annoyed with us. Then we went to England and the police chased us. I fantasise about being a new age traveller rather than actually doing it. I like the idea of not being tied down. Being rebellious and questioning.

I went to a pub with some friends on Friday until 6-7am, I felt OK till 3am but then I was just continuing for the sake of it. I just want to go away and sleep for three days. I don't want to be brain-dead anymore. I'm drinking and smoking less. I've started to read again, watching less TV. I still feel imprisoned, but feel more selfish. I just want to do what I want to do. I want to change my lifestyle. I'm less irritable; not losing my temper so quickly. I'm a bit calmer, less fiery, less sarcastic. I'm less argumentative. I don't just blurt out the first thing on my mind. I make fewer snap judgements than before. I generally find that helpful. I'm not as grumpy, but I worry about the ache around my heart. My knee is better, less stiff. Still better clicking into place. My wrist is an awful lot better. The cold bothers me less than it did. I do feel different."

I felt the remedy looked promising, but I was moving my practice to Ireland. I recommended a local homoeopath to James and said I would forward his notes, once I heard from her. Just in case he didn't get around to seeing the person I'd recommended I left him a handful of Bovista 30c with strict instruction for him not to repeat them unless the same symptoms returned strongly. He never contacted the other homoeopath. It is only recently that I heard news of James via a mutual acquaintance. His girlfriend had sold her marital home and they had bought a new place together. Shortly after moving in they conceived their first child, which was delivered at home in a birthing pool. I rang to speak to James and asked permission to write up his case, at the same time I did a brief follow-up. In two years he had not felt the need to repeat the remedy. All his aches and pains were gone. He and my other far-flung clients bring home to me that although the hardest thing is to do nothing, often it is doing nothing that brings the best results. He was delighted to be a father, waxing lyrical about his new son. He (and his partner) sounded relaxed and happy. Whilst we were speaking he didn't stammer. The only complaint that still troubled him was a slight chestiness. He was still thinking about giving up roll-ups. Needless to say he hadn't succumbed to the siren cry of the Volvo. As I was about to say farewell, James mused: "Your in West Cork aren't you ... a lot of New Age travellers there..." I asked the medical herbalist, Bridget Meagher, who works at The Natural Healing Rooms with me, to do some sleuthing on Bovista for me.

The remedy is made from the spores of *Lycoperdon Bovista*, a fungus, its common name is (warted) puff-ball. In Roman times Bovista was used to staunch blood and the gypsies of Alsace and Lorraine also used it for this purpose. Laplanders used dried puffballs to cure pain, by heaping torn pieces of them as close to the seat of pain as possible and lighting them. In burning they blistered up and the watery discharge this produced carried off the pain, apparently quite successfully. The mother tincture was used as a sedative for treating nervous afflictions. The spores are irritating to eyes and nose. When burnt the smoke has a slightly narcotic effect and so it was used to stupefy bees. A 14th century herbalist described it as more perfect than people could imagine. The "perfect" word again. It comes from the family Gasteromycetes. The hymen remains completely enclosed in a continuous wall of peridium (from the Greek peridoe meaning "I wrap around") The prison? This membrane has two layers. The outer is whitish and scaly the inner tough and papery. On maturing the outer layer becomes greyer and cracks. It also becomes detached from the bacil and then is rolled about by the wind. Until it finds the perfect spot. They are found singly or in groups

of 2 to 3 in open pastures Like New Age travellers ! and especially like light sandy soils.

Culpepper noted that Bovista was ruled by Mercury in Aries, astrologically. It therefore epitomises the warrior on the move. My thanks to Bridget Meagher for her help.

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