

# Homeopathy in Germany

*Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich and Sigrid Kruse discuss how homeopathy was introduced at the Children's University Hospital in Munich*

On a beautiful summer's day in Munich in 1994, Mathias Dorcsi and Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich asked themselves whether homeopathy could be used clinically within a paediatric hospital.

In 1986 Mathias Dorcsi, the founder of the Vienna School of Homeopathy, had moved from Vienna to Munich. His ambition was to introduce homeopathy into the university as part of a truly integrated form of medicine. He made contact with Professor Hellbrugg, the director of the Children's Centre for Rehabilitation at Munich University and a pioneer in social paediatrics, who had introduced many innovative methods including preventative medical check-ups for children. He had the idea to educate doctors in homeopathy. Mathias Dorcsi and Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich followed up the idea and offered weekend courses in homeopathy. So from 1989 to 1997 they taught 160 physicians the fundamentals of classical homeopathy. Clinical cases were an important part of the training and 300 patients were seen by the "students" during this time.

While teaching, Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich decided to allow homeopathy to be scrutinised by the critical eyes of clinical doctors and judged by scientific standards. She started looking for a suitable clinic in Munich, in which the paediatricians were open, curious and unprejudiced towards this proposal. Having collaborated very well for the past ten years, she presented the project at the Dr Von Hauners Children's Hospital of Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, one of the trend-setting clinics in Germany.

## Realisation of the project

In order to start a project, the following requirements had to be fulfilled:

- A relationship of trust with the University Children's Hospital had to



be developed. This was achieved by ensuring that the staff agreed to an externally-funded homeopath working alongside the staff.

- A suitable homeopathic doctor had to be found. Sigrid Kruse who had taken part in the weekend education sessions was an obvious choice. Mathias Dorcsi and Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich were the ideal team for supervision.
- The greatest obstacle was to find a sponsor to finance the project: the Karl and Veronica Carstens Foundation kindly agreed to sponsor the project for the first six years. This foundation has the aim of integrating complementary medicine, especially homeopathy, into clinical medicine.

So Sigrid Kruse started as a medical doctor in a normal ward with the aim of

qualifying as a paediatric specialist. The wise words of Mathias Dorcsi were always on her mind: "Don't impose yourself upon them, wait till you are called! And you will be called soon..." She constantly bore this in mind as she acquainted herself with the doctors and nurses, as well as the new environment.

## The first homeopathic treatment

After four weeks Professor Egger, Consultant Neurologist, called for Sigrid Kruse and asked whether homeopathy could help in a difficult situation. A seven year-old boy with profound physical developmental delay was admitted because of persistent crying and screaming. He was just like a new-born baby developmentally. The situation was unbearable for the child, the mother and all the other patients in the ward. Nobody could find rest and silence, especially at night. After excluding any treatable medical causes for this behaviour, a detailed homeopathic history gave the correct remedy.

The leading symptoms were as follows:

- sudden attacks of crying with bending backwards
- sudden pain attacks (according to his mother)
- carrying calmed him
- symptoms much worse at night.

These symptoms suggested that Chamomilla 30c could help. And it certainly did: for the first time in weeks, the child slept through the night. This impressed the mother, nurses and doctors. The unexpected and positive reaction to the remedy was the first big step in inspiring confidence in homeopathic treatment. Cases such as this with similar astonishing results helped reduce the initial rather sceptical attitude towards this complementary treatment.

### When and how is homeopathy used in the University Children's Hospital?

Homeopathy is now available to all wards of this University Children's Hospital. First and foremost is the desire or request for homeopathy treatment by the paediatrician or the parents. This means that out-patients as well as in-patients can receive additional homeopathic treatment on request.

First every child is medically examined and a diagnosis made. Then a decision is made about which therapy or combination of treatment would help the individual patient the most. In the cases in which homeopathy is indicated, there is a differentiation between acute and chronic disease.

#### Acute cases

These are usually treated in the emergency ward. The homeopathic remedy is chosen according to "tried and tested" methods: local symptoms, the modalities (what relieves the patient and what makes the symptoms worse) as well as the behaviour of the patient during the acute phases.

Good results have been achieved in the following acute disorders:

- fever,
- viral upper respiratory tract infections,
- gastro-enteritis,
- restlessness in babies due to teething, colic and wind,
- itching in chickenpox,
- insect bites.

#### Chronic cases

These always require a complete homeopathic history which takes one to two hours. The patient is then examined thoroughly and a video is taken. This is helpful in supervision when the homeopathy team meets to find the remedy suitable for this individual child in the specific situation. Supervision includes analysis of the main symptoms followed by the video which helps determine a holistic view of the patient. The interest shown for each individual child impressed allopathic colleagues and helped create trust in homeopathy and the team.

Positive results have been seen in the complementary homeopathic treatment of the following chronic conditions:

- allergic conditions like eczema, hay fever and asthma,
- recurrent ear infections,
- urinary tract infections,
- migraine,
- tic,
- bronchitis and other chest infections,



*Sigrid Kruse with a young patient*

- epilepsy,
- developmental delay,
- restlessness.

Requests for homeopathic consultations come from the ward for babies, oncology, surgery and our three intensive care units (neonatology, paediatrics and paediatric surgery).

In the neonatal ward there have been good results with brain haemorrhages and with babies born to drug-abusing mothers. Homeopathy helped with side-effects caused by chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In the last 12 years there have been frequent requests for help in pain management on the surgical wards and with anxiety caused by trauma. The homeopathic team has helped improve wound healing.

#### Research on homeopathy

After seeing such good results in individual cases, the team was curious whether they could do a study in a controlled way. They decided to perform observational studies rather than full clinical studies as these hampered the patient-doctor relationship the least, choosing the following conditions to study: bedwetting, recurrent urinary tract infections, migraine, tics, certain types of developmental delay, brain haemorrhages in newborn and premature babies, drug withdrawal problems and certain side-effects of chemotherapy.

The results of these studies are prom-

ising but there is a need for more comparative studies. It is very important to find a study design which respects both homeopathy and scientific requirements.

#### Summary

During the past 12 years homeopathy has been successfully integrated into the University Children's Hospital of Munich. This complementary method has become an accepted part of the optimal treatment for children.

In 2002 Sigrid Kruse was given an award by the Karl and Veronica Carstens Foundation for the first successful integration of homeopathy into a university paediatric hospital.

When the financial support of the Karl and Veronica Carstens Foundation ran out after six years, the search was on for a new sponsor. Surprisingly, the health care insurances AOK and TK jumped in and are still financing two positions for a medical doctor with education in homeopathy. This shows clearly that the optimal therapy for the little patients at the University Children's Hospital includes homeopathy – even in the eyes of the insurers.

Homeopathy is part of a wide range of possibilities in finding the best therapy for the individual child with the least side-effects in this very specific situation. Positive results in many individuals have demonstrated that homeopathy is an important option because it is predictable, observable and repeatable.



*The intensive care unit at the Children's Hospital*

Photo courtesy of Sigrid Kruse

The team's guiding statements are:

- Meeting the patient as an individual in the detailed homeopathic history.
- Deep knowledge of homeopathic remedies and their action.
- Personal commitment to the patient.
- The young patient is the focus of our medical actions and procedure.

In finding the best remedy for the individual patient in their daily work, the team follows the guidelines of Mathias Dorcsi, founder of the Vienna School of Homeopathy:

- Using a deep knowledge of the disease process.
- Analysis of the case.
- Individualising treatment for the patient.
- The homeopathic remedy itself is of the utmost importance.

### Future plans

The team is dedicated to two main aims to:

- further establish homeopathy in children's hospitals;
- perform well-planned studies at the university clinic in order to convince even the more sceptical doctors of the value of this additional means of therapy.

In order to achieve these aims they need more capacity and financial support. To encourage private and company sponsoring they founded GLOBulus e.V., a registered association: Association for the Promotion of Medical Homeopathy in Paediatric Clinics.

### Case study: little Ludwig

On the 2 April 2001 little Ludwig was transferred to our neonatal (premature baby) intensive care unit at the Dr Von Hauner Children's Hospital. One of twins born at 29 weeks of pregnancy, he was now almost four weeks old. On the fourth day of his life he had a severe brain haemorrhage. As a consequence of the bleeding he then developed raised pressure in the brain, a condition known as hydrocephalus. There were clear clinical signs that surgical intervention was needed immediately: the fontanelle (soft spot on the head) was bulging, the head circumference was increasing at a rate of a centimetre a day, and the pulse was slowing indicating impending brain damage. Usually a shunt is required to reduce the pressure on the brain. Everything was prepared for the operation while alongside this Sigrid Kruse

was requested for a homeopathic consultation because of good results in similar cases in the past.

In this frightening situation the distraught parents agreed thankfully to a complementary homeopathic treatment. Dr Kruse took a very detailed history and decided that the most suitable remedy was Arnica, which had proved in the past to be very helpful in internal bleeding, especially in brain haemorrhages. Arnica helps absorb collections of blood in the body. Ludwig was given 200c on three consecutive days alongside intensive medical care. To everyone's delight and surprise Ludwig stabilised. The distension of the head slowed and the soft spots (fontanelles) became normal. The shunt-operation was cancelled.

The next remedy following Arnica was *Latrodectus mactans* (Black widow spider) 12c, three times a day for six weeks. The toxicology of the Black widow's venom demonstrates a clear effect on blood clotting. Ludwig was often restless and would wake suddenly. These are characteristic symptoms of *Latrodectus mactans*.

The child became progressively more stable, began to drink and was able to go home with his twin Axel, one week after the expected date of delivery. To encourage normal development, Ludwig was given *Helleborus niger* (Christmas rose) 6c, as a follow-up remedy, three times a day for eight weeks. In the team's experience *Helleborus niger* has shown to be a very important remedy in children with delayed physical and mental development.

At eight months Ludwig and his brother Axel were assessed developmentally and found to be normal. At the age of 13 months they started to walk, discovering their environment and chatting happily the whole day long.



Mira Dorcsi-Ulrich studied medicine in Tübingen, Germany. She has been practising paediatrics since 1973 offering homeopathy in her own practice in Munich since 1983. She is actively involved in the supervision of the patients treated by the project team at the Children's University Hospital.

Sigrid Kruse studied medicine in Tübingen. She acquired her PhD through study of conventional treatment versus homeopathic treatment in acute otitis media in children. Since 1995 she has led the Department of Homeopathy at the Children's University Hospital in Munich.

