

Dr. Jocelyn Proby is an English Osteopath who also uses techniques derived from Ida Rolf's work. The various European and American osteopathic traditions use manipulation to assist and increase the body's own vital processes, perhaps by helping it to release stored muscular energy or by jogging one of its various systems into greater or less activity -- a Homeopathic approach.

The distinction Homeopathic-Allopathic, which Dr. Proby mentions, was first coined by the great 19th century German clinician Hahnemann. Homeopathic treatment restores the body's balance by administering treatments, chemical and otherwise, which increase the undesirable symptom. The idea of this approach is to "wake up" the body's own natural stabilizing energy, which will then deal with the problem. An example might be taking a hot bath when you have a fever.

Allopathic treatment, on the other hand, deals with an unpleasant symptom by treatment which produces the opposite effect. An example might be the use of digitalis (an extract of the foxglove which causes lowering of blood pressure) to treat individuals with excessive blood pressure.

Naturopathy, which Dr. Proby also mentions is similar in many ways to homeopathy except that it restricts its techniques, particularly chemical, to those which occur in Nature.  
(ED.)

SOME THOUGHTS ON  
THE PROBLEM OF

# IMMUNITY

By Jocelyn C.P. Proby

I believe that it is time for us who live and carry on our work in the osteopathic, naturopathic and homeopathic tradition to do some serious thinking on the whole subject of vaccination and immunization as now practiced by doctors and health departments in all parts of the world. We are traditionally opposed to these things, but we cannot but be aware that in being so opposed we are in conflict with current scientific and medical opinion, with powerful commercial interests, with governments and even with the law. I believe that fundamentally we are right in looking with suspicion on all, or most, of these procedures, but if we are to convince others that we are right, it will be necessary to state our case more convincingly and more scientifically than we usually do and to indicate better ways of doing what orthodox vaccination and immunization is doing or claims to be doing. This will lead us into some very deep water, but even if it is only

for our own satisfaction, I think we should at least be seeking for answers to a number of questions.

The first question which comes to mind in any given case is: What exactly is the substance which is being administered?

This is not generally a question which is easy to answer, because the preparation of vaccines and sera has become highly technical and complicated, the immunity which it is sought to produce is sometimes of the active and sometimes of the passive variety, and in some cases the ingredients are supposed to be living and in other cases dead. There are also wide differences in the mode of preparation and the mode of administration. Thus, while animal tissues or animal sera are generally used, it is not always in the same way; some preparations are applied to the skin, as in the original smallpox vaccination, some are injected in one way or another, and some are designed to be taken orally. In the classical case of smallpox vaccination there is reason to think that the nature of the substance has changed very radically since the time of Jenner, and that it is now far removed from the "cow pox" which he regarded as a protection against smallpox. Indeed in many forms of immunization treatment the word "vaccination" would seem to be a misnomer if it implies that a calf or cow has been used in the preparation of the substance used. The method of administration would also seem to be a matter of great importance in assessing the desirability of a particular procedure. In a general way external application would appear to be less objectionable than injection and administration per mouth to be preferable to either.

However, in connection with all the substances and methods used, certain objections can be raised. One objection is that in a general way all forms of mass medication are wrong because no two people react in the same way to the same thing, and what may be harmless to one person may be dangerous or inappropriate to another. Another objection is that we do not really know what the effects are on the tissues and fluids of the body of putting into it substances derived from animal tissues, especially diseased animal tissues. It may very well be that the ultimate, if not the immediate, effects are very harmful, and indeed it is almost impossible not to believe that some of them are not so when we consider how they are prepared. Moreover, putting things into the body by injection, especially if it is done directly into the blood stream, is very far from being a natural procedure, and it is by no means certain that it does not sometimes do harm and have effects which are not realized, especially on the cardiovascular system.

The second question is: Are these preparations really effective for the purpose which they are supposed to fulfill?

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This, too, is not an easy question to answer in any given case. There are a great many different opinions and a good deal of evidence which appears to be conflicting, and a lot of statistics and the interpretation which is given to them are open to suspicion. For instance, anti-vaccinists have pointed out that, in the case of smallpox, it is not the countries with complete vaccination so much as the countries with good hygiene and sanitation which have the lowest incidence of the disease. Also, although the incidence and severity of some diseases for which there is an immunizing treatment have apparently declined, the same may also be said of other diseases for which no such treatment exists. The views of persons who have lived and worked, either as doctors or as administrators, in primitive, overcrowded, and undeveloped parts of the world and have been brought face to face with the most terrible and destructive epidemics, are by no means in agreement as to the efficacy and desirability of the immunizing or curative vaccines which are in common use. Some of them seem to have become anti-vaccinists as the result of their experience, while others declare that they could not possibly have checked, prevented, or controlled serious epidemics without the appropriate vaccinations and serum treatments. To me it would seem that the efficacy and desirability of a great many of these treatments are unproven, but that it is difficult to deny that some of them are to an extent effective in preventing, controlling, or curing some diseases, although they may be doing so at a certain cost and may be less good and less effective than other methods which might be used. One reason which I have for so feeling is that one can hardly escape from the conclusion that similar forms of treatment applied to animals do have very definite effects. Experienced sheep breeders, for instance, do lose fewer lambs if they give certain injections in a routine way, and masters of foxhounds now do not need to breed as many puppies as formerly because, if they inject against distemper, they do not lose so many in the rearing and training period. This does not, of course, necessarily mean that these injections may not have serious disadvantages; but that they are effective in preventing or controlling certain diseases, it is difficult altogether to deny.<sup>1</sup> For a number of reasons it is harder to reach a

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<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that a very large proportion of the animals which we breed are bred for the purpose of being slaughtered for food. This means that if we have kept them and treated their ailments in ways which are suppressive or harmful in the long run, they may never reach an age at which this becomes apparent. Yet if the animals which we are eating are fundamentally subnormal in health the result on our own health is likely to be bad.

definite conclusion about similar treatments used on human beings, but it would not be surprising if some of them do act in the same way. It would seem, for instance, that the pestilences which used to occur in many parts of the world and which seem to have been one of the factors which kept the population within bounds, are less frequent and less severe than they used to be. It would appear that this must be due largely to modern techniques of hygiene, health control, and government generally, of which the forms of treatment and prophylaxis which we are discussing form a part. It is generally argued that the part which they play is of paramount importance, but this is a matter about which there is much conflict of opinion and evidence.

The third question is: If, and in so far as, these treatments are effective, how do they operate?

It has always seemed to me that a great deal of modern vaccine and serum treatment is based on a misunderstanding of the homeopathic system and a crude application of it. The homeopathic principle is very old, much older than Hahnemann, but without going into discussions about Isopathy, Paracelsus or sympathetic magic, it does appear that the law of similars is a real law which can be made to work in therapeutics if you know how to go about it. The homeopaths have long used nosodes (remedies derived from disease material) both in the treatment of certain diseases and for the purpose of prophylaxis. Now if the homeopathic use of nosodes is sound and effective, there are a number of inferences to be drawn. (1) Modern serum and vaccine treatments have certain affinities with homeopathy and though they may constitute an aberration, distortion or misapplication of it, in so far as they do work, it may be because they are to a certain extent in line with the homeopathic principle. (2) True homeopathy is free from a lot of the objections which may be advanced against modern serum treatment. For example, there is not a lot of animal material mixed with what is administered and the amount used is very small and has been subjected to the homeopathic potentising process. (3) There would appear to be some signs that, without perhaps understanding what they are doing, some modern immunologists may be moving somewhat in the direction of homeopathy, both in respect of dosage or attenuation and method of administration (per mouth) and perhaps in other ways, too. If this is so it would be a great advantage if this movement could become more rapid and more conscious. Indeed, in the light of the above inferences, it would be a great step forward if anti-vaccinists, and particularly homeopaths, could do more to demonstrate the effectiveness of homeopathic methods of prophylaxis and to convince others of it so that these methods could be introduced in place of those at present used.

On the other hand, if we look at the matter from the old-fashioned naturopathic rather than the homeopathic point of view, we must admit the possibility that the apparent success of preparations now being used is due to the fact that they are acting suppressively. The naturopathic idea that acute disease can be (and often is) treated suppressively and driven back into the system instead of being eliminated, without doubt, has truth behind it. We have all seen cases of chronic disease or slow and incomplete convalescence following the treatment of acute conditions by powerful drugs, serums, and antibiotics. Also another point needs to be considered in connection with some of the prophylactic treatments in common use, namely, how far is their action really specific? There is some evidence that if the body is asked to deal with any kind of toxin or infection it may be stimulated to produce inflammatory or other reactions which will render it immune, at least for a time, to other infections. In this connection it is interesting to note that Dr. Still, the founder of Osteopathy, who was opposed to vaccination, believed that people could be protected from smallpox during an epidemic by being blistered with cantharadin or Spanish fly, and he based his belief on actual experience in many smallpox epidemics. If, in fact, it is possible to produce a general immunity reaction, even for a short time, by the use of some harmless substance or even by some sort of artificial fever, this opens up new possibilities in prophylaxis.

The fourth question is: What is the real nature of immunity, what causes epidemics and how should natural immunity be acquired so that epidemics can be controlled or prevented?

This, too, is a difficult question to which to give a complete and satisfactory answer. We would all like to feel that immunity is synonymous with good health and that if the body is in a good physical and chemical condition with all its glands and organs functioning as they should, it will be immune to infection or will, at least, react easily and favorably to any noxious thing which attacks it from the outside. That this is fundamentally the right way of looking at things, I do believe; and we can indeed see the principle at work in ourselves and in our patients. We know from experience that there is, at least, a relative immunity to many forms of acute disease among people whose bodies are in a good physical and chemical condition. We also know from experience if we are in the habit of treating people by "natural" methods that the so-called "healing crisis" is a real thing and that it often leads to greatly improved health if it is dealt with wisely.

One great disadvantage of the germ theory of disease as now generally accepted is that it concentrates attention on specific organisms and viruses and does not answer the question of how they arise or where they come from, why some people

harbour them and some do not, and why some react favorably to them and some unfavorably. In the realm of treatment, too, the parasitic germ theory leads to the idea that the important thing to do is to kill "germs" or neutralize them in some way. It is apt to be forgotten that the patient is much more important than the disease and that it is the vitality, condition, and reactions of the patient which bring about prevention or cure in the long run. It is by no means certain that it would be a good thing, as orthodox immunologists appear to think, if a number of "shots" could be devised which would "protect" the population from all common diseases.<sup>2</sup> It is a sound maxim of treatment that it should aim at assisting body processes when they need to be assisted rather than to prevent them taking place or interfering with them. It is a good thing to produce "immunity" and "cure" if it can be done by means which so assist the body that it does not contract the particular disease or is able to overcome many of the current immunizing procedures and drug, serum, and antibiotic treatments can be said to act in this way. There is good reason to think that if they do act for the specific purpose for which they are devised, namely to prevent some particular disease or destroy some particular organism or virus, they are doing it at a considerable cost to the patient and that the trouble may in fact be being swept under the carpet rather than gotten rid of, leaving the patient in a fundamentally less sound condition than he was in before. There can be very little doubt that acute infectious diseases have become, on the whole, less frequent and less destructive of life than they used to be, at least in our western communities, but it is also true that there is far too much subnormal health and an increasing incidence of malignant, organic, mental and nervous disease. I believe that the naturopaths are right, or at least partly right, in seeing a connection between these two tendencies. In so far as the decline in acute disease is due to improved hygiene and sanitation, to better living habits and to better nursing and care, it is all to the good; but in so far as it is due to the suppression of acute reactions by drugs, serums, and antibiotics, it is to be deplored.

Another unfortunate result of the present preoccupation with bacteria and viruses is that it produces an attitude of mind both in the population and in the medical and nursing professions which may be described as one of diminished personal responsibility. If people are ill they are increasingly unwilling to put any of the blame on themselves or their habits of life but prefer to attribute their troubles to some germ

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This may apply particularly to the common childhood diseases most of which confer immunity on those who contract them and have often been regarded as ridding the body of hereditary and acquired disease taints.

which has attacked them without reason; doctors and nurses on their part tend to rely more and more on vaccines, serums, and drugs for the prevention and cure of acute diseases and if such are not available or do not appear effective they are virtually powerless. The most striking example of this is in the case of animals. It is apparently quite inconceivable to the veterinary profession or the Ministry of Agriculture that there could be any treatment for foot and mouth disease except a vaccine. As no vaccine which they consider satisfactory is available, they complacently insist on slaughtering thousands of valuable animals. This makes it practically impossible for anyone to discover rational methods of preventing, treating or controlling foot and mouth disease.<sup>3</sup> Techniques for assisting patients to get through the quite natural crises and difficulties of acute disease, based on a sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology and diet, are at a discount and tend actually to be forgotten. Most of us have some experience of treating acute disease by such methods as osteopathy, hydrotherapy, homoeopathy and the like and we know that it can be done, though one can have anxious moments as well as surprisingly easy and satisfactory results.

In this connection it must be remembered that the early reputation of many of the unorthodox schools was built up on the successful treatment of acute diseases and epidemics, and this leads one sometimes to wonder whether the fear which still attaches to some of them is really justified. I make this suggestion in all humility because I really cannot back it with personal experience of any great account and it is well known that epidemics destroying a large percentage of the population can, and sometimes still do, sweep over whole areas in

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Sir Albert Howard, the pioneer of organic farming, claimed that his cattle showed almost complete immunity to foot and mouth disease although exposed to infection in a part of India where the disease was rife. More recently (1968) organic farmers and farmers using homoeopathic prophylactic methods have claimed relative, though not necessarily complete, immunity to the disease. Other farmers in the British Isles and in other parts of the world have given particulars of old methods of treating the disease in times and places where the compulsory slaughter was not introduced or not fully operative. Some of these accounts would appear to point to the conclusion that isolation and rational treatment of animals actually affected is quite sufficient to get rid of the disease very quickly and that animals which contract the disease need not be ill for any long period or be put back in development or condition in any serious way.

in such places as India, China and Africa. Yet I believe we are entitled to ask whether the high mortality in such cases is really necessary. Certainly it seems possible that when dangerous epidemics occur, especially among primitive and poverty-stricken people, the high mortality may be due to ignorance, neglect or malnutrition, as well, perhaps, as to the panic which is engendered; for all of us know that if a sick person is very frightened and hopeless and believes he is going to die, he is, in fact, very much more likely to do so. It may even be that immunization campaigns may sometimes achieve a certain success less from what they actually do than from the confidence which they create in the minds of all concerned. Is it not therefore possible that if we understood a little better how to marshall and direct the vitality, and the physical, mental and spiritual forces of patients in dangerous acute crises, they would come through quite safely? For the alarming symptoms and general breakdown of vital functions which tend to occur do really represent the attempt of the patient's vitality to fight its way through and bring about cure, and if we understood what the body is trying to do, we ought to have enough skill to help it in ways which may be no less effective for being very simple.

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