

## HISTORY OF HOMEOPATHY IN BELGIUM

Dr. Pierre Joseph De Moor (1787-1845) was the first Medical Doctor practising homeopathy at Alost in Belgium (1829 - West Flamish side). In 1832, Dr. Varlez (1792-1874) and Carlier (1797-1873) brought homeopathy to Brussels.

The first Organon appeared only in 1832 (Paris) in the same time that the first homeopathic Pharmacopoea (Leipzig); in 1934 Dr. Quin created the first english pharmacopoea (London); Hahnemann died in 1843.

The earliest journal as been published in Brussels in 1856. Dr. Jahr, one of the first follower of Hahnemann, was practising Homoeopathy in Paris but in 1870 (French-German war) he has to escape France and take refuge in Brussels. Belgian's doctors asked him to give lessons in Homoeopathy and to practice near the center of the city; in one year time he treated 12.000 patients. More than 50 belgian's doctors were educated in homeopathy by Jahr himself. In 1894, 70 doctors officially used homeopathy for their patients and 50 pharmacists were delivering the medications to patients.

Dr. Frédérick Foster Quin was the private medical doctor of prince Leopold (later King of Belgium). The first contact of the prince with homeopathy happens during one of his trip to Italy. Scientific curiosity push him to meet Hahnemann in Paris, they frequently meet during one year. This explain why the Begian King family is still treated with homeopathy today. It was Dr. Quin that introduced homeopathy in England, he was the founder of the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital.

During Jahr period in Brussels, many doctors were travelling to Brussels (by train) to learn homeopathy. In 1871, the decision to create a Society of Homoeopathic M.D. was taken in this train. Today the "Société Royale Belge d'Homéopathie - S.R.B.H." is still active for exchanges around the best use of homeopathy.

In 1926 the "Association Homéopathique Belge - A.H.B." was created for juridical purposes (the S.R.B.H. was created for scientific matters). The organisation of Congresses, the publication of the Belgian Homoeopathic Journal, the creation of the Belgian Homoeopathic School and the constitution of a Belgian Homoeopathic Library were activities of this association. In 1972 the A.H.B. was in charge of a World Congress in Brussels. In 1976 this association was replaced by the "Fédération Homéopathique Belge - F.H.B." that inherit all goods of the A.H.B.. During all this time the education in Homoeopathy was only possible in the Belgian School in Brussels. The amount of students was growing so fast that begin the eighties different schools were created in different Belgian cities (Gent - Antwerpen - Namur - Liège - Huy - Hechtel). During this period certainly fifty M.D. achieved their education in Homoeopathy each year.

In 1988 the "Unio Homoeopathica Belgica - UNIO" was recognized by the Belgian authorities. This professional union was necessary to defend homeopathy on a political level. Today 300 Homoeopathic M.D. are members of this union (the membership includes a professional insurance) and 4.000 M.D. are prescribing homoeopathic medications at least sometimes (Belgium have +/- 40.000 M.D.). During last years more and more homoeopathic M.D. organizes local groups for regularly exchanges on their

mutual experiences.

## **BELGIAN SURVEY of JANUARY 1998**

Use of Unconventional Medicine : always 2%; mostly 8%; regularly 18%; sometime 10%; once 4% = **42%** of **the belgian people** (+/- **10.000.000**) used **at least once** U.M. // From these 42% of the Belgian population **81%** used **Homoeopathy** (11% only once, 70% more than once); 38% Acupuncture (30-8); 27% Osteopathy (24-3); 25% Phytotherapy (22-3); 21% Chiropraxis (16-5); 12% Aromatherapy (10-2); 6% Handssetting (4-2); 6% Reflexology (4-2); 5% Holistic massage (4-1); 3% Auriculotherapy (2-1). **42%** of **the population** = 46% of the women population and 36% of the men OR 48% of the Brussels population and 44% in the north of Belgium and 37% in the south OR for the group between 36 to 50 years old = 48%, between 51 to 64 = 44%, more than 65 only 30% but 39% of the group between 15-35. In this users group, 94% were satisfied with this use of U.M.

Use of Conventional Medicine in this 42% : mostly 66,3%; only in severe damage 24,1%; never 5,3%; no answer 4,3%. The **complementary use of U.M. is confirmed.**

Within the not users group (58% of the population), 70% agreed for a possible use of U.M. in the future.

The general population agreed with a possible legal recognition of U.M. : Homoeopathy 74% pro, 4% against; Acupuncture 67%/5%; Osteopathy 67%/5%; Chiropraxis 63%/8%.

From the M.D. in family practice (20.000 in Belgium), 22,5% (4.500) use some U.M. and 3% (600) use mostly U.M.. In the practitioners group **59%** use **Homoeopathy**, 40% Acupuncture, 28% Phytotherapy, Osteopathy and Chiropraxis are not present here because mostly used by kinesiasts ; **use of Homoeopathy, 82% are women M.D., 52% are men** but for Acupuncture 45% are men and 21% are women. 40% of the M.D. are pro Homoeopathy, 31% against; for Acupuncture 63%/12%, Osteopathy 55%/19%, Chiropraxis 40%/28%.

There is no evaluation for veterinarians or dentists. Non-medically qualified people are not allowed to practice medicine in Belgium. U.M. is not possible in hospitals in Belgium.

Education happens in private schools with a common basic teaching program (from the European Committee for Homoeopathy).

M.D. are reimbursed by the social security systems, the fact that they are using U.M. or not is not considered for this basic reimbursement. Some private insurances reimburse since, 1 january 1998, 25% of the costs of the prescribed medications.

The evaluation of economic efficiency was never done. Homoeopathic medications are available by all pharmacists, at least 10 laboratories produce high quality (and controled) homoeopathic medications.

Our Professional Union regroups 300 M.D. practicing Homoeopathy (we have a mailing list of 500 people). There is no foundation or financed research in Belgium. Each member can be protected by different professional insurance (regrouped = very low price, the best guarantees).

The "Revue Belge d'Homoeopathie" is a scientific journal published every 3 month, political and Union's news are published every 4 month in a journal mailed to our members.

The goals for next years are : harmonized knowledges control for all Belgian Homoeopathic schools, involvement in Research and with European actions.