

# **ON DEVELOPMENT OF HOMOEOPATHY IN LITHUANIA**

## **From the history of homoeopathy**

The science of Haneman's had followers in the entire world and in Lithuania as well. The first homoeopathy drugstore was set up in Vilnius, in 1864 and later in 1884 it was opened in Kaunas. At that moment the societies of homoeopathy followers were being found. The first Lithuanian book about the homoeopathic treatment was issued in Latvia, in 1907. A drugstore of Matulaitis and Macius was opened in Kaunas, in 1920. In 1984 this section was closed. In 1989 by the initiative of docent Kaikaris in the museum of Lithuanian medicine and pharmacy was set up a homoeopathic laboratory headed by Anele Ivašauskiene. In 1992 the work of the drugstore was reorganized. At present moment the homoeopathic drugstore is headed by pharmacist Onute Mikuleniene and the head of production is Regina Astrauskiene. The personnel of the drugstore take part and support the scientific and research work, the improvement of doctors and pharmacists; store the homeopathic literature which could be used by the doctors interested in homeopathy. In 1992 the association of Lithuanian homoeopaths - LHA was set up in Kaunas, the first predecessors of which are the societies of Vilnius homeopathy followers and supporters of homoeopathic treatment. In 1996 LHA organized the first courses for Lithuanian doctors. In 1999 the specialization of doctor-homoeopath was legalized. In 2002 the League of medical homeopathy was set up and this year it joined the ranks of International medical homeopath league.

## **The growth and current situation of homoeopathy**

Though having the tendency to grow the popularity of homoeopathic preparations is growing rather slowly. It is predetermined by several reasons: 1. Insufficient preparation of doctors-specialists. 2. Relatively small quantity of accredited doctors' specialists. Yet in Lithuania there are a little bit more than 100 hundred accredited specialists of homoeopathy. Evaluating the number and density of the population it is definitely not enough. 3. The society lacks the information about the essence of the homeopathy and principles of self-treatment. 4. The procedure of registration of homoeopathic preparations is relatively difficult. 5. There is no unanimous agreement and concept between the doctors and homeopaths and homeopathic organizations about the evaluation of the different concepts of homeopathy. For instance, some homeopaths accept only classical Haneman's homeopathy ignoring the importance and benefits of the complex preparations. The priority for the others is the homotoxicology, and for some others the concept of homeopathy branches. Until there is such disunity, there will be no favorable conditions for the homeopathy to grow. In the meantime on the market there is a big choice of homeopathic preparations of different companies. It is counted more than two hundred registered complex and mono component homeopathic preparations. Despite the abundance of registered preparations in fact on the market there is about one hundred homeopathic medicine only several of which takes the biggest market share. The most popular foreign companies like DHU, HEEL, and BOIRON made a lodgment on Lithuanian market 7-10 years ago. At present moment the complex and mono component preparations produced in Lithuania by company Aconitum became very popular. This company is distinguished by its orientation not only to the production of complex preparations but also it produces many popular mono component preparations (for ex.,

Echinaceae, Ignacia, Arnica, Nux-Vomica, etc.). Besides the production following the traditions of homeopathy were carried out by hand. In 2002 the complex homeopathic preparation for nerves soothing "Acosedum" produced by company "Aconitum" was awarded by the name of a best product of a year. In the year of 2004 the same award was granted to "Acotinum" – another pharmaceutical for smoking cessation. These prizes were founded by the confederation of Lithuanian industrialists which is headed by the president of the biggest industrial amalgamation in Lithuania "Achema group" and ex-prime-minister of Lithuanian government - Mr. Bronislovas Lubys.

In the biggest cities there are one or several specialized homeopathic drugstores which could produce unitary homeopathic medicine according to the individual orders of doctors' homeopaths. It gives the possibility to individualize the treatment according to the constitutional type of a human being and other features. All homeopathic preparations could be acquired only at the drugstores. This is because they belong to the group of medicine, i.e. the law regulations for the pharmaceutical activity are valid like for all other drugs. As well as homeopathic pharmaceuticals considered as all other pharmaceuticals, their registration as well as marketing matters are the subject of regulation by the State Medicines Control Agency of Ministry of Health of Lithuania. During the last several years a new order was valid that defined that the homeopathic medicines could be sold only pharmacists that have the higher pharmaceutical education and passed the 36 hours homeopathic course of improvement of post diploma study organized by Kaunas Medical University. Not finishing this course the pharmacists could not sell the homeopathic medicine even if they have the master degree in pharmacy. But today a new law correction on pharmaceutical activity come in force and this rule was repealed. Though the homeopathic medicine in Lithuania could be acquired without the recipe, i.e. by the patient himself, very often such medicine are prescribed also by the doctors of general practice or some other fields. The right to prescribe homeopathic medicine can have any working doctor having the doctor's practice though if you want to become an accredited doctor homeopath it is necessary to finish the doctors' improvement courses at Kaunas Medical University (KMU). This certificate does not grant any additional rights or qualification, but it reckons in the hours necessary for the doctors to extend their license of physician. Recently the order of preparation of homeopathy and other post diploma courses is much tightened. According to the new order the courses organized by a public organizations or professional associations including and homeopathic organizations are not reckoned and there is no official acceptance if they are not approved by KMU or Vilnius University. It means that, for instance, after hearing the course organized by homeopathic association, hours necessary to prolong the license or to raise the qualification won't be reckoned in. From the point of view of traditional medicine this order could be excused as the qualification of lecturers of Kaunas Medical University and other higher schools have no doubts. But the homeopathic teaching suffer losses as at the Universities there are almost no experienced specialists of homeopathy who could prepare and accredit the teaching programs and to guide such courses.

The league of Lithuanian medical homeopathy proposed to prepare homeopathic teaching programs according to the experience of EC and especially such countries as Germany which achieved a lot in this field and is the most experienced. The market of homeopathic medicine in Lithuania is strongly controlled and regulated by the state institutions which from one side stop the popularization of it but on the other hand it limits the possibilities

to misuse the homeopathic treatment and make treatment mistakes. This system differs very much from such countries like USA, Canada, England where homeopathic preparations are sold even at the specialized food shops and there is no need for the personnel to finish not only the specialized accredited higher school courses but in general to have a higher pharmacological education. By the way there are also countries where it is permitted for the persons without higher medical education practice in homeopathy. The registration of homeopathic medicine in Lithuania also is much more complicated and more strict requirements are being applied for documentations than in some western countries. There is no other except laboratory of pharmaceutical manufacturer "Aconitum" that can provide laboratory testing of homeopathic products. This laboratory developed its HPLC methodics and can identify the concentrations up to D4 (or 10<sup>-10</sup> – 10<sup>-8</sup> g). Currently in Lithuania there are several homeopathic organizations unifying the homeopathy specialists of various branches: the centre of Homeopathic medicine, association of Lithuanian homeopaths, and the league of medicinal homeopathy, association of Homotoxicology and antihomotoxic therapy. Though these organizations have many common aims and regulations, but they unify doctors, homeopaths, pharmacists of various deviations and even specialists from other fields as they have a little bit different standpoint to diverse homeopathic branches and streams. This year the league of Lithuanian medical homeopathy (MHL) became a member of International medicinal homeopathy league (LMHI). The representatives of it on 4-8th of June, 2002, took part in the 47-th LMHI homeopathy congress in Moscow, and this year on 22-26th of April - in 48th congress in Graz. L. Akramas, vice-president of Lithuanian medicinal homeopathy league, national vice-president for Lithuania from LMHI, president of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical market institute, editor of TV program and magazine "The ABC of health" and journal "News of medicine and pharmacy", clinical pharmacist, physician.

In Lithuania at recent moment the regulation on pharmaceutical activities undergoing new edition. Following this regulation homeopathic pharmaceuticals supposed to be registered under simplified registration procedure. Unfortunately the new edition of the regulation deprive the right of therapeutic indications (and general indications inclusively) to be placed on the label of pharmaceutical product.

Our attitude of mind the therapeutic indication is specific name of disease describing nosologic item (e.g. bronchitis acuta, pneumonia etc.). That is why we assume that general indications (e.g. heart drops, nerve drops/nerventropfen etc.) can not be treated as therapeutic indication. Unfortunately our authorities executables are certain not to allow any information on purpose of medicine to be placed on the packaging of homeopathic pharmaceuticals. Our point of view is that low potency pharmaceuticals should be given the possibility of an information on their purpose (general indications) to be placed on their packaging cause following the traditions of homeopathy low potency pharmaceuticals aren't obviously acting following constitutional type of human being. Following one of provisions of the regulation above mentioned it is maintained that only information submitted on the packaging of said homeopathic pharmaceutical product registered under simplified registration procedure it is allowed to be placed in advertising. That means that we can not submit neither information on use of components in homeopathy practice nor their properties and production methods as well as any other information.

Simultaneously simplified registration procedure applied to the traditional herbal pharmaceuticals but no advertising restrictions to those products applied – advertising based on general rules.

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## **REFERENCES**

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