Immunology and homeopathy. 1. Historical Background

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Abstract

Homeopathy was born as an experimental discipline, as can be seen from the enormous amount of homeopathic data collected over more than two centuries. However, the medical tradition of homeopathy has been separated from that of conventional science for a long time. Conventional scientific wisdom dictates that homeopathy should have no effect above placebo but experiments on ultra-high dilutions of solutes together with some clinical data suggest the intriguing possibility that it might do in some circumstances. Today, an osmotic process between disciplines, previously seen as in conflict, is facilitated because over the last few decades homeopathy has initiated the methods of current medical science and a substantial number of experimental studies—at molecular, cellular and clinical levels—are available. One area of dialogue and of common progress is that of inflammation and immunity, probably because these are closely related to the traditional ‘vital force’ of the body’s self-healing power. In a series of papers we review the historical origins of homeopathy, the laboratory and animal models related to the field of immunopharmacology, the clinical evidence in favor and against the use of homeopathy in the inflammatory diseases and the hypotheses regarding its action mechanism(s). Finally, we will enlighten the specific characteristics of the homeopathic approach, which places great emphasis on identifying a cure for the whole organism.