

Case 1

Ms M. F., 39 yrs old, acute antibiotic-resistant middle ear infection

Ms F. comes to our emergency clinic. For the last 10 days she has been taking antibiotics for tonsillitis and acute ear pain. Yet she is still suffering from stabbing pains in the right ear and a sensation of a foreign object in her throat. No fever. On examination she has reddened tonsils, an undifferentiated reddened eardrum on the right as well as swollen lymph glands on both sides in the cervical area. No other findings.

Using the *Checklist for Acute Illness: Ear-Nose-Throat and Eye*, she notes the following symptoms:

- Right ear (P)
- Warmth in general: better (P)
- Warmly, from wrapping up: better (P)
- Open air: better (P)
- Resting while: better (P)
- Lying position: better (P)
- Swallowing: worse (P)
- Thirst (P)
- Sensation of foreign object in throat, as if from a splinter
- Coughing at night

(P) = polar symptoms

No additional information comes to light during the accompanying consultation. Repertorisation occurs initially only with the polar symptoms. If this proves insufficient to determine the remedy, we can include a particularly characteristic sensation or an unambiguous clinical finding – such as the sensation of a *splinter in the throat*, or the clinical finding of *swollen glands*.

Repertorisation

The repertory we use is the PC software program of *Boenninghausen's Therapeutic Pocketbook*, revised edition 2000 (see www.boenninghausen.de)

	Hep.	Cic.	Nux-v.	Bell.	Bry.	Sulph.	Rhus.	Sil.	Phos.	Colch.	Nit-ac.	Merc.
Number of hits	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Sum of grades	29	20	29	26	25	24	24	23	21	21	21	21
Polarity difference	14	13	14	11	13	5	3	6	6	16	4	4
ears, right (p) [110]	3	2	4	4	1	3	3	4	3	2	3	1
> warmth, in general (p) [90]	4	3	4	3	2	3*	4	3	2	1	1	1
> warmly, from wrapping up (p) [56]	4	3	3	2	1		4	4	1	3		2
> open air (p) [93]	1	2	1	1	2*	2	1		3	2	1	1
> resting, while (p) [117]	3	2	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	4	2	3
> lying position (p) [106]	2	2	4	3	4	1	1	1	1	3	1	2
< swallowing (p) [93]	4	1	3	2	4	4*	3	1	3	2	3	3
thirst (p) [99]	3	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	1	3	3	4
splinter sticking in part, sensation of [10]	2	2				2		3		1	3	
glands, swelling (tumour) of [91]	3	1	3	4	3	4	4	3	4		4	4
<i>ears, left (p) [106]</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>3/CI</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3/CI</i>
<i>< warmth, in general (p) [73]</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>< warmly, from wrapping up (p) [37]</i>			<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>< open air (p) [110]</i>	<i>3/CI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>	<i>3/CI</i>
<i>< resting, while (p) [102]</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>< lying position (p) [125]</i>	<i>3/CI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>4/CI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>> swallowing (p) [47]</i>			<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>thirst, absent (p) [86]</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>

Key: < = worse, > = better, (P) = polar symptom, [110] = number of remedies matching the symptom (e.g. < ear, right). Patient symptoms shown between the blue and red lines, opposite pole symptoms shown below the red line in italics. CI = Contraindication. Remedies with contraindications are shown with a grey background.

Two remedies, *Cicuta virosa* and *Hepar sulphur*, cover all symptoms. But *Hepar sulphur* has to be dropped due to two contraindications. A *contraindication [C]* exists when the opposite pole to the patient's symptom (italics) are covered by the remedy at grade 3-5 but the patient's symptom is only covered by the remedy at grade 1-2. The genius of such a remedy does not correspond to the patient's symptoms and is very unlikely to heal the patient, although it may cover all their symptoms. The contraindications for *Hepar sulphur* are the symptoms *open air: better* and *lying position: better*. The *polarity difference* of a remedy is calculated by first adding the grades of the patient's polar symptoms (P); then subtracting the sum of the grades of the opposite polar symptoms. For *Cicuta*: 17 – 4 = 13. The higher the polarity difference, the more specifically the remedy covers the patient's set of symptoms, assuming there are no contraindications.

Cicuta virosa is the first choice here because it completely covers the patient's symptoms and with a high degree of specificity – that is, with a high polarity difference. The second choice would be *Colchicum*, which also shows a high degree of specificity but does not cover the swollen glands.

Remedy and Progress

The patient is immediately given *Cicuta virosa 200 C*, and she also takes home *Colchicum 200 C* as a reserve in case the ear pain is not noticeably better within six hours.

Progress is astonishing: after six hours the complaints have almost completely disappeared. Two days later the patient reports an improvement of 95 %. The residual complaints soon disappear and the final check-up 10 days later is clear.