

## CLINICAL

# *Sanicula aqua*: three clinical cases and a heuristic

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**The cases presented are of three children who responded well to *Sanicula aqua*. I have used the exact words of the patients or their mothers. All 3 are: firstborn girls, tall and very thin with blue-green eyes. Two with recurrent otitis media with perforated tympanic membrane and smell of rotting fish, the third atopic eczema and asthma. The case analyses, materia medica of *Sanicula aqua* and the creation of a remedy heuristic are discussed. *Homeopathy* (2005) 94, 125–131.**

**Keywords:** *Sanicula aqua*; odour; chronic otitis media; atopic eczema; asthma; materia medica; heuristic

## Case 1. R.A.

Three-year-old girl with curly blonde hair and blue-green eyes, she is tall and very thin.

### First consultation 5th November 2003

Had febrile convulsions at 6 months, and then started with the otitis media from 10 months. By 11 months old she had grommets. From 1 year old she has always had ear infections one after the other and had more operations for grommets for glue ears. In August 2003 she was admitted to hospital with suspected encephalitis.

**Mother:** 'I am here because the E.N.T. specialist has suggested long term antibiotics, and I don't want that. She has already had so many antibiotics since she was 10 months old. ... She has had a cough for the last month and is coughing up a load of mucus.'

'...She is not a good eater, and she is getting very thin. She is on the 97th centile for height, but only the 50th centile for weight. ... She was breast fed for 11 months. She won't eat warm or cold food, everything has to be tepid. She wants dry food, like crispbread and carrots in separate bowls. She gets stomach ache when she eats ... more after milk in the morning. Her

bowels are very loose. She is always drinking and is very thirsty.'

'...Her ears run all the time, especially the left and her balance is not good ... she is worse if she is too hot, she is always stripping off her clothes. She wakes at night and sleeps on top of the covers.'

'... She throws herself on the floor and ignores me when she is upset. But she needs so much attention. She always needs me to be interacting with her ... When she is well, she can be happy and helpful and chatty and friendly.'

'... I have found that *Chamomilla* really helps her when she is teething, and it helps her moodiness a bit and sometimes it helps when she wakes from sleep crying and cries for an hour ... no, it does not help her ear infections. ... My husband's family are all doctors in South Africa and they are all against homeopathy.'

'... She had B.C.G. 12 hours after birth because that is the fashion in South Africa. She had measles at 18 months. Other immunisations were at the usual times and she was OK. She had the HIB booster 6 weeks ago.'

'... The first otitis media was bilateral but the last 4 have been the left side. When she has an ear infection the ears discharge lots of yellow-green pus constantly and it stinks ... like rotten decaying fish, and she has a slight fever, but not much. In between ear infections her ears discharge lots of wax, and it stinks—like sour milk, or like compost. The left ear has been running with lots of wax for 8 weeks now.'

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'... The cough this month is of clear mucus, <at night, <from excitement, <after lying down for a while. She coughs it out when she sits up.'

'... She says she gets stomach ache with most foods. She hates sloppy wet food and soup. She hates anything new. She loves raw vegetable, especially raw carrots; plain boiled white rice and plain boiled pasta. She adores fruit...'

'... She has a slump in energy between 11 and 12 and after nursery at 3.30 and from 7 pm. She is best after lunch. She is a thumb sucker and has a comfort blanket. After a sleep during the day she wakes up super-charged and raring to go.'

'... The pregnancy was wonderful, I didn't even have any nausea. I broke my ankle at 6 months. I played golf 3 times a week and I have never felt so well...'

'... She hates the wind blowing in her ears and cries, and puts her hands over her ears. She is hot like her father and has more energy in the evening and after a snooze. She was fine when we were skiing in Sweden and it was minus 32 degrees ... She is very restless in her sleep—she is like an electric eel'

'... She is very busy and restless and can't settle to play. She has temper tantrums—she lies on the floor screaming and kicking and waving her arms ... She is very touchy, very cuddly, she was never put down when she was little ... She needs to be carried or rocked all the time when she is ill. ... It has been like that since her first illness—it is the only thing that will quiet her'

#### **On examination**

R.A. is very restless, never stops moving. She whines a lot and keeps interrupting her mother and needs mum to interact with her a lot.

Lots of smelly wax both sides, tympanic membranes not red, healed central perforation on left tympanic membrane. No grommets seen.

#### **Homeopathic treatment**

*Poly Bowel Nosode* 30cH, 3 doses, 12 hours apart. Two weeks later begin *Sanicula aqua* LM1, 1 drop daily in water.

#### **Second consultation 7th January 2004**

There was no change for a week and then her stomach ache disappeared and has not come back. Her stools went pale. Her bowels have been moving every day and the constipation and diarrhoea are gone. She is eating better. At 2 weeks she had a massive ear infection. She had pain in her right ear and fever for 24 hours, then her eardrum burst and she started pouring out a huge amount of foul-smelling pus. It really stank. After a week of the pus mother took her to get antibiotics, but for the first time ever did not need to finish the bottle. She was having offensive discharges from all the outlets of her body—her nose, her vomit

and some diarrhoea. After a week the pus stopped and her perforation healed.

'... At 4 weeks we moved house and we all love it. She is sleeping better—I just put her in bed and she goes to sleep quickly—it is wonderful.'

'... My mother became seriously ill on the 27th December and was rushed to hospital. She nearly died, and I have been really worried since. She is home now. R is highly strung, like me. When I am irritable then so is she, and she plays on it and winds me up even more. When I'm relaxed, R is relaxed.'

'... She is calmer, happier, and much less clingy. She does not need me to interact with her all the time—she can just play by herself. She hears better. She has had no time off nursery school even with the ear infection. Everyone has said what a wonderful change there is in her.'

'... She still gets a bit hyperactive if Grandma gives her sweets or lemonade or a Big Mac.'

'... The wax is back to normal now and no smell. Her breath is normal—the stink has gone. Her tongue is no longer coated and she has put on some weight. She has lots of good happy energy.'

'... Since my mother has been so ill, I have forgotten to give the drops. She has not had any for about 10 days and I think she is beginning to slip back a bit in her mood, but she is still so much better than before. Her body seems to be self-regulating now.'

#### **Homeopathic treatment**

Re-start *Sanicula aqua* LM1 drops daily. Order *Sanicula aqua* LM3 and keep it till next acute otitis media or other acute illness. To return for review during next otitis media.

## **Case 2. U.R.**

Nine-year-old girl, she is tall and very thin and has greenish-blue eyes.

#### **First consultation 16 October 1997**

**Mother:** '...she has had bad breath for 5 years ... it smells like rotting fish—really offensive... all the time, every day, all year...also she has had trouble with glue ears and a perforated right eardrum for 5 years'

'... since she was a toddler she has had constipation (for 8 years) ...her hair has been very greasy for about 18 months'

'... she was a surprise... I was unmarried ... I was shocked for 2 weeks then I was delighted ... She is my first pregnancy—a normal delivery, but the liquor was discoloured.'

'... for the first 5 days she was fine, then she just wouldn't stop crying ... the only time she stopped crying was when she was breast feeding, otherwise she was crying—inconsolable for 3 whole months ... the only thing that helped the crying was being carried about quickly ... then she learned how to roll herself

over and it was like a turning point she—she stopped crying’

‘... she has been constipated since 9 months old ... she has 4 day gaps then there is a lot of straining with no effect for ages, then a hard stool comes out...’

‘... she had chicken pox at 4, then from 4½ the bad breath, and from 5 the glue ears and perforated eardrum’

... she is very tidy—she makes her bed as soon as she gets up without me asking her to—she has the tidiest room in the house—she gets really cross and shouts if her sisters mess up her room

**UR:**... ‘I am very cold and I am very very cold in the winter’

... ‘I hate milk and butter and yoghurt and cream and cheese.... I love vegetables and sweets and curry and spicy things and stuffed olives and slices of lemon and pepperami pizza, and I eat kiwi fruits with the skin on’

Family History: Cancer: Father, Paternal Grand-Father, Paternal Great-GrandMother, and lots of Father’s relations.

#### Homeopathic treatment

*Sanicula aqua* 200c one pill, one dose.

#### Second consultation 16 January 1998

**Mother:** ‘... it is a miracle ... the smelly breath was gone after a few days ... it began to get better the next day ... it has recurred, just for 1 day, 3 or 4 times.’

‘... she felt warmer inside the day after the remedy and still feels warmer ... at 2 days she felt so hot at school.’

‘... her energy seems so much better—she doesn’t slump after school or from 6 P.M.—she has been going to bed later because she is not tired.’

‘... she has been less irritable and shouts less if water gets into her ear at hair washing.’

‘... bowels open easily every 2 or 3 days.’

#### Homeopathic treatment

*Sanicula aqua* 200c drops when required.

#### Third consultation 27 November 1998

**Mother:** ‘... she was OK till 6 weeks ago ... she got a sore throat and the bad breath came back ... there was no improvement with the remedy drops and no improvement after Amoxycillin ... the bad breath is just as bad as before—I think it is even worse now.’

‘... her hair has gone greasy again and it smells kind of dirty even after it is washed.’

#### Homeopathic treatment

*Sanicula aqua* 1M, one dose, and *Sanicula aqua* 30c pills, as required and frequently for next acute illness.

#### 5th August 2002

Mother brought her youngest daughter for treatment and tells me about U ... she has been so great ... no bad breath ... the glue ear cleared up, the perforated eardrum has healed up. She is so well ... I just give her the *Sanicula aqua* pills whenever she gets a cold or sore throat and she gets well quickly.

#### Case 3. A.M.

Three-year-old girl, she is tall for her age but very thin with fair hair and green-grey eyes.

#### First consultation 1st March 1996

**Mother:** ‘... She has had eczema since she was 3–4 months old. It started on the folds of her arms and legs but then spread all over. She has an allergy to eggs. The itch is bad ... worse 4–7 pm and 9 pm till 2 am, worse if she gets hot but also worse in the cold of winter. ... She goes to bed at 7 then wakes scratching at 11 and between 2 and 3 in the morning. ... The only thing that helps is putting Chamomile in her bath—otherwise her eczema got a lot better at the sea when we went on holiday.’

‘... She is my first child ... The pregnancy was awful. I had nausea from 3 months and it carried on most of the pregnancy. I was so tired, every day felt like a week and every week felt like a month.’

‘... She hates the cold, she always wants to come back in instead of being out sledging in the snow ... She likes all sorts of cereals and potatoes and fish. ... She ate sand when she was little’

‘... She is scared of sudden noises like jet fighters zooming over and scared of the dark. ... When she wakes up at night scratching she comes into our room—she comes and snuggles ... She is very stubborn when she wants her own way but she gets hurt easily if she is told off even if her father is telling her off in a joking way—she just sobs.’

#### Homeopathic treatment

*Silicea terra* 30cH then *Psorinum* 30cH. No effect.

#### Telephone consultation 20th June 1996

*Sanicula aqua* 200cH one dose prescribed.

A severe aggravation for the next 2 weeks requiring antihistamine syrup at night and Hydrocortisone cream on the worst patches of eczema. Almost daily phone calls from mother.

#### Telephone consultation 19th August 1996

She has shown a slow but steady improvement after the bad first 2 weeks. The itch is definitely less and she is scratching much less and sleeping better. The eczema is clearing from her face and neck and back but is still red on her elbows and groins.

**Telephone consultation 8th November 1996**

**Mother:** ‘It is like a miracle. The eczema continues to clear—it has gone from her face and neck and body and is clearing from her groins and upper legs. She hardly scratches at all.’

**Telephone consultation 29th August 1997**

**Mother:** ‘The miracle continues—there is just a little patch of eczema behind both knees and on her left elbow. She doesn’t scratch. She has grown a lot and blossomed and other people have remarked on the change in her.’

**Telephone consultation 6th February 1998**

It is now 21 months since she had *Sanicula aqua* 200c and she is still OK.

**Subsequent homeopathic treatment and effect**

In May 1998 she began to get wheezy and was diagnosed with asthma.

There was no amelioration from the isopathic remedies Mixed Tree Pollens 30cH or Mixed Grass Pollens 30cH or Rape Pollen 30cH.

On 21st August 1998, I prescribed *Sanicula aqua* 12cH one pill daily.

Four weeks later the asthma was much improved and the peak expiratory flow rate was 150 L/min (normal for age and height). The eczema slightly aggravated. Treatment: decrease frequency of *Sanicula aqua* 12cH to once a week.

This helped in general and her eczema and asthma was quiet till spring 2000. In June 2000 *Sanicula aqua* was repeated in 200cH potency. She has remained well on occasional doses of 200cH.

**Analysis**

**Case 1**

Symptoms suggestive of *Chamomilla*:

1. The amelioration of teething and moodiness by *Chamomilla*.
2. The modality of amelioration from being carried quickly.
3. The desire for being rocked and amelioration from rocking.

Yet *Chamomilla* did not seem to help the otitis media or smelly ear discharges, ‘the chronic of *Chamomilla*’ is required.

A search of Reference Works Library F for the words ‘chronic’ and the word ‘chamomilla’ in the same sentence—gives 8 remedies including *Sanicula aqua*: (*cham.*, *grat.*, *sanic.*, *coff.*, *hell.*, *mag-m.*, *puls.*, *staph.*). Combined rubric of all rubrics which pertain to fishy odours from orifices and discharges (Table 4) contains *Sanicula aqua* among the 48 remedies. The final 4 rubrics cover the physical expression of the pathology through the ears (Table 1 and Graph 1).

**Case 2**

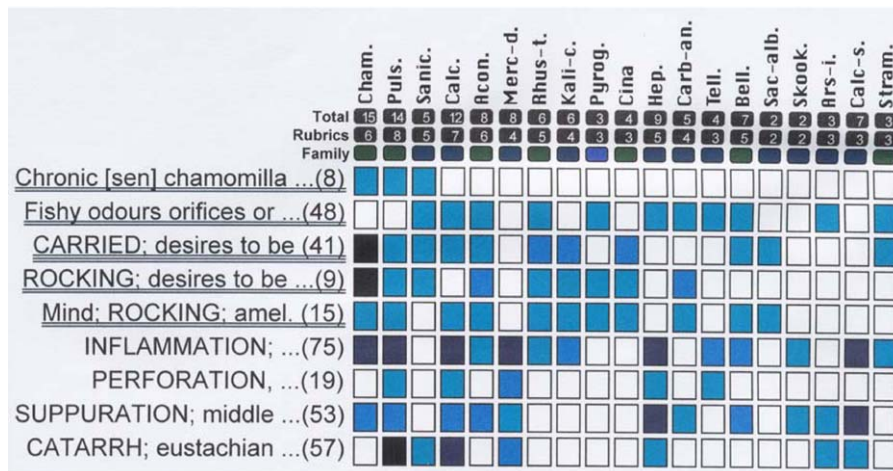
Symptom suggestive of *Chamomilla*: amelioration from being carried quickly. Symptoms suggestive of *Arsenicum album*: fastidious for her age, lacking in

**Table 1** Rubrics Case 1, R.A.

| Rubrics Case 1, R.A.                                 | No of remedies |
|--|----------------|
| Chronic (sen) Chamomilla*                            | 8              |
| Fishy odours orifices or discharges                  | 48             |
| Mind; ROCKING; desires to be rocked                  | 9              |
| Mind; RICKING; ameliorates                           | 15             |
| Ears; INFLAMMATION; middle ear, tympanum, myringitis | 75             |
| Ears; PERFORATION, tympanum                          | 19             |
| Ears; SUPPURATION, middle ear, tympanum              | 53             |
| Ears; CATARRH  | 57             |

Rubrics selected from The Complete Millennium Repertory by Roger Van Zandvoort. Repertorisation using MacRepertory Professional Version 3.0, graph analyses performed using the ‘expert’ analysis strategy at factory settings; material medica searches using Reference Works Professional Version 3.0 Library F.

\* (sen) means that the words on either side occur in the same sentence.



**Graph 1.** Repertorisation Case 1, R.A.

vital heat, amelioration from being carried quickly, the odour of rotting fish and constipation with hard stool. From my previous study of *Sanicula aqua* I knew that it has similarities to several polychrests including *Arsenicum album*. Other rubrics reflect her ear pathology and constipation (see Table 2 and Graph 2).

**Table 2** Rubrics Case 2, U.R.

| Rubrics Case 2, U.R.                | No of remedies |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Fishy odours orifices or discharges | 48             |
| Mind; CARRIED; desire to be         | 41             |
| Mind; FASTIDIOUS                    | 52             |
| Ears; PERFORATION, tympanum         | 19             |
| Ears; CATARRH; Eustachian tube      | 57             |
| Rectum; CONSTIPATION; general       | 515            |
| Stool; HARD                         | 254            |

**Case 3**

The mother reported amelioration of the itch from Chamomile in her bath. Symptoms suggestive of *Silicea terra*: pica (sand), obstinacy yet sensitivity to reprimand, fear of noise, fear of dark, amelioration at the sea, lack of vital heat and thinness. Yet there was no response to *Silicea terra*. The second prescription of *Psorinum 30cH* (also ineffective) was based on a simple heuristic: thin and chilly child with eczema, there may be a miasmatic obstacle to cure—try *Psorinum*.

Around this time I attended Dr Jonathan Shore’s 1996 Scottish Seminar where I learned of his clinical tip ‘the chronic of *Chamomilla* is *Sanicula aqua*—a remedy that resembles *Silicea terra*.’ I read the materia medica of *Sanicula aqua* which seemed to fit the case and I prescribed it for A.M.

The lower 7 rubrics in Table 3 and Graph 3 show the case analysis I performed at that time: they reflect her emotional state, physiological reactions and skin pathology.

The second rubric is a Reference Works search for the words ‘eat’ and ‘sand’ in the same sentence and contains *Sanicula aqua* among the 48 remedies. In this case there is no fishy odour from an orifice or discharge.

**Table 3** Rubrics Case 3, A.M.

| Rubrics Case 3, A.M.                                   | No of remedies |
|--|----------------|
| Chronic (sen) Chamomilla                               | 8              |
| Eat (sen) Sand   | 48             |
| Mind; OBSTINATE, headstrong                            | 128            |
| Mind; SENSITIVE; reprimands, criticism, reproaches, to | 29             |
| Mind; FEAR; general; noise, from                       | 55             |
| Mind; FEAR; general; dark                              | 64             |
| Generalities; AIR; seashore air; ameliorates           | 31             |
| Generalities; HEAT; vital, lack of                     | 233            |
| Skin; ERUPTIONS; eczema                                | 195            |

**Materia Medica of Sanicula aqua**

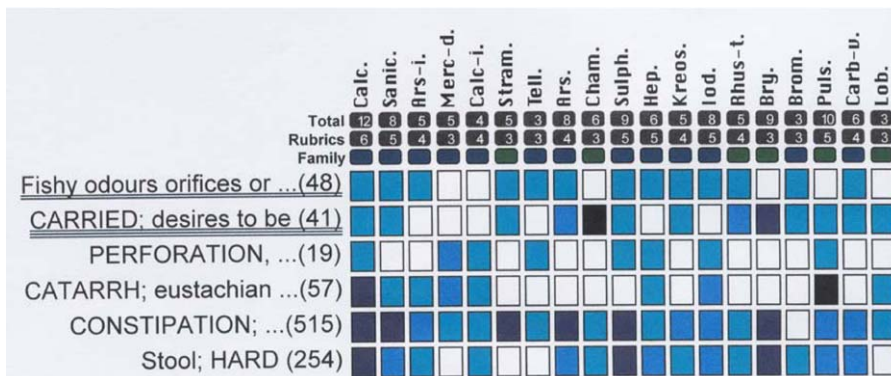
The remedy is a mineral water from a spring in Illinois, USA, introduced by Grunlach. It contains: sodium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, sodium bromide, sodium iodide, sodium phosphate, borax, calcium chloride, calcium bicarbonate, calcium sulphate, magnesium chloride, silica, aluminium oxide, lithium carbonate and iron bicarbonate.

**Associated remedies**

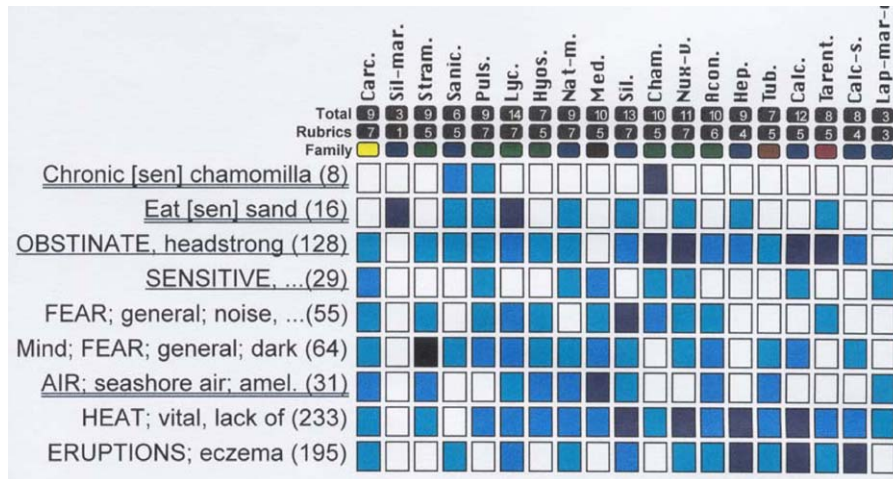
*Chamomilla*, *Silicea terra*, the *Natrums*, the *Muriaticums*, *Calcarea carbonica*, *Magnesia carbonica*, *Medorrhinum* and *Tuberculinum*.

**Mind**

Desire to be carried quickly, this ameliorates the acute physical symptoms or emotional state. Restless, love to be carried around quickly and rocked, yet fear of downward motion. Highly capricious, they ask for things then throw them away when offered—they don’t know what they really want. There is an aversion to being touched or being looked at and being interfered with or examined. A marked and rapid alternation of moods—from cross to playful; they are irritable, cross, obstinate and contrary. These children require a great deal of energy and attention from their mothers.



**Graph 2.** Repertorisation Case 2, U.R.



Graph 3. Repertorisation 3. Case 3, A.M.

Table 4 Rubrics combined

| Fishy odours orifices or discharges—Rubrics combined            | No of remedies |
|---|----------------|
| Mouth; ODOUR, breath; general; fish brine, before asthma attack | 1              |
| Smell; ODOURS, imaginary and real; fish, of fresh               | 1              |
| Male; CONDYLOMATA; fish brine odour, with                       | 2              |
| Male; CONDYLOMATA; fish brine odour, with; glans                | 1              |
| Male; PERSPIRATION; offensive; fish brine                       | 3              |
| Male; PERSPIRATION; offensive; fish brine; coition, after       | 1              |
| Female; MENSES; offensive; fish, like spoiled                   | 4              |
| Skin; EXCRESCENCES; condylomata; offensive; fish brine, like    | 1              |
| Taste; FISHY  | 7              |
| Taste; FISHY; herring, like                                     | 2              |
| Taste; FISHY; herring, like; brine                              | 1              |
| Taste; FISHY; herring, like; pickled                            | 1              |
| Stomach; ERUCTATIONS; fishy                                     | 1              |
| Rectum; MOISTURE; general; fishy odour, with                    | 2              |
| Stool; ODOUR; fishy   | 1              |
| Urine; ODOUR; fishy   | 4              |
| Male; EJACULATIONS, seminal discharge; odour; fishy             | 1              |
| Female; ODOUR fishy, no discharge                               | 1              |
| Extremities; PERSPIRATION; general; fishy, heels                | 1              |
| Generalities; DISCHARGES, secretions; briny, fishy odour        | 14             |
| Generalities; DISCHARGES, secretions; offensive, fishy          | 29             |

**Fears**

Dark, downward motion (like *Borax*), falling—children cling to mother, robbers, someone behind them, something bad will happen, being medically examined—resists.

**General symptoms**

A syctic remedy with exuberant discharges. Orifices and all discharges are highly offensive with the odour of rotting fish or strong blue cheese. A chilly patient aggravated from cold with time modalities of noon to 5 and 9 pm to midnight. There is exhaustion and failure to thrive from poor assimilation of minerals and

Table 5 Unique Rubrics of *Sanicula aqua*

| Unique Rubrics of <i>Sanicula aqua</i>  |
|---|
| Vertigo; KNEADING bread or making similar motions   |
| Generalities; MOTION; agg.; during; arms, of; kneading bread or making similar motion         |
| Vertigo; RIDING on horseback; aggravates; dark, in  |
| Head; FONTANELS; closing premature, prior to birth  |
| Head; HARD; baby, in, no sign of suture or posterior fontanel                                 |
| Mouth; HEAT; tongue; stick it out, has to, to cool it   |
| Teeth; PAIN; pulled out, as if; left in their sockets, and                                    |
| Stool; SQUARE; carved with a knife, as if   |
| Expectoration; CHEESE, like; large, sinking in water  |
| Back; SPINE, complaints of; gliding over each other, as if; lumbar region, rocking in a chair |
| Generalities; FOOD and drinks; bread; desires; fresh only                                     |
| Generalities; FOOD and drinks; milk; desires; cold; icy                                       |

Table 6 Comparison of first consultations

| Word count | Year | Case |
|------------|------|------|
| 257        | 1996 | A.M. |
| 339        | 1997 | U.R. |
| 855        | 2003 | R.A. |

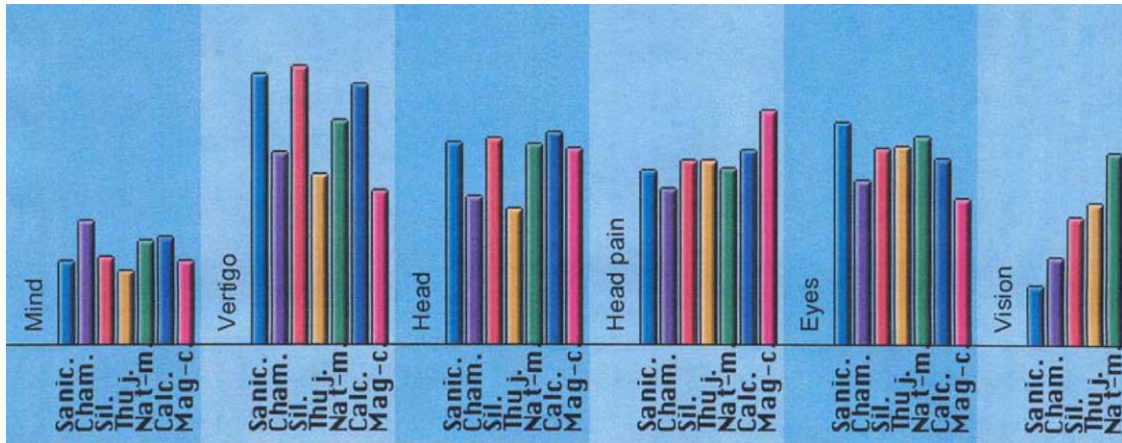
nutrients with a desire for: bacon, ham, ham fat, milk, sweet, salt (Table 4).

**Important other symptoms (Table 5)**

Late learning to walk, emaciation from above downwards, low back pain ameliorated lying on a hard surface, a hot tongue, has to stick it out in fevers, sweaty head during sleep, burning heat feet in bed—desire to uncover, stools: huge, receding, square, or loose and green.

**Discussion**

In Case 1, R.A., I perceived an ‘obstacle to cure’. She had had frequent and long courses of several broad spectrum antibiotics from the age of 10 months,



**Graph 4.** Concept graph comparing *Sanicula aqua* with associated polycrests.

before the age when she would have established a normal stable bowel flora. For this reason I began her treatment with a Bowel Nosode. Since the related Bowel Nosode to *Sanicula aqua* has not yet been firmly established, I prescribed the *Polybowel nosode* (made from mixing all 10 Bowel Nosodes at 9c potency—higher potencies are made from this mixture). I began *Sanicula aqua* LM1 potency 2 weeks later to allow enough time for her bowel flora to re-establish but I did not wait any longer as I anticipated that she might soon develop another otitis media requiring further treatment with antibiotics. These clinical strategies were recommended by Dr Russell Malcolm.

*Sanicula aqua* has many unique rubrics in the repertories. I have selected some of these which may prove clinically useful in other cases (Table 5).

The cases illustrate the development in my case taking over a period of 7 years. I now interrupt patients far less often than I did. The spontaneous flow of symptoms has resulted in an increase in number and a greater richness and clarity of symptoms for case analysis (Table 6). All three mothers were tall, perfectly made-up, neatly dressed, extremely concerned about their firstborn children, gave the impression of just managing to stay in control but being very close to the end of their coping capabilities, and loquacious.

The mineral waters are a diverse group of remedies which do not easily lend themselves to building themes or concepts of a ‘family’ of remedies. This may be because of fundamental differences in contents and properties between geo-thermal waters and those flowing at ambient temperatures. All waters share

symptoms with the symptoms of their contents and related remedies (Graph 4). Other symptoms in common are non-specific weakness or lethargy.

Few mineral waters have had formal provings. *Skookum chuck* and *Gettysburg aqua* have been proved, *Bath aqua* proving in 6cH and 30cH potencies by this author.<sup>1</sup> *Sanicula aqua* (an ambient temperature spring) has the greatest number of symptoms in the repertories. The materia medica of the other waters consists of symptoms from drinking the water or from cured cases. It may be that building reliable symptom lists and heuristics from cured cases is a way forward in our understanding of the mineral waters.

#### Heuristic for *Sanicula aqua*

- Like *Silicea terra* but *Silicea terra* doesn’t work.
- Infant colic, teething, itch ameliorated by *Chamomilla*.
- Odour of rotting fish or strong cheese from orifices or discharges.
- Perforated eardrum which will not heal.
- Sycotic case—exuberant thick discharges.
- Symptoms/keynotes of several polycrests.

#### Reference

1 Sevar R. The water of the Cross Spring in Bath—a homeopathic proving. *Hom Links* 2002; **15**(3): 183–188.