

# Preface

The concept of this book comes from experience practicing homeopathy in various countries in Africa. The rural clinics I worked in Ghana, Malawi, Kenya, Eswatini and Mozambique were often done under a tree somewhere, and local people would turn up during the day for treatment. Despite the many different countries and cultures, the challenges of rural life are not very different and there was a lot of similarity in the conditions being seen and the situational factors of life.

Homeopathy originated in Europe in the first 2 decades of the 19th century and it spread in the mid-19th century to North and South America and also to India. Since then, it has become integrated into the health systems in many countries and today, India has some of the most interesting developments in homeopathic practice. The research and clinical experience coming from India and also some countries in South America, including Cuba, have shown how well homeopathy has adapted to different cultures and socio/economic situations.

Most people in the world take a pragmatic approach to healthcare. If it works, they will use it. If it is affordable, they will use it. Medicine should seek to be accessible, effective, and affordable. Homeopathy is based on a unique principle of cure, termed *like cures like*. What can cause can cure. A substance that can create symptoms in healthy people will cure similar symptoms in sick people. It is the scientific basis of homeopathy. The scientific method of evaluating the potential curative power of a medicine involves giving several people very minute doses of a substance and analyzing its impact on body and mind over a few weeks. This process is called a *proving*, taken from the German word, *prüfen* meaning to show, examine or look into. This information is collated together to assess the collective impact on those participating and becomes the foundational knowledge of the action and therefore healing power of a medicine, based on the *Law of Similars*. More information is then taken from other sources, including toxicology, traditional knowledge, and other sources to create a complete picture of what a substance may be able to cure. The final judge though is in its curative action, in its clinical application.

More is written on this in many homeopathic philosophy books. However, you do not have to believe in homeopathy for it to work. Because it works according to a natural law, it will work anyway. Most people are willing to give the benefit of the doubt to new forms of medicine and are simply happy to see it work. Any form of medicine must stand the test of time. Homeopathy has two hundred years of testing and experience behind it, from all over the world. It has passed the test.

Experience in very different contexts – from urban clinics in the UK and USA, to rural walk-in clinics and mobile clinics in many countries in Africa and in India has made it clear to me that homeopathy can be adapted to many different situations. However, it does require some modifications in how we look at the practical and professional challenges of practice in difficult cultural situations.

Africa, for example, as a continent has little homeopathy outside South Africa. Most countries have an active traditional medicine culture, although it is often disparaged and isolated from the more sophisticated and educated classes, who have tended to adopt the model of Western medicine to a large extent. Even in poorer, rural communities, people will take whatever medicine is offered, and if it is Western medicine given free at a local government clinic, then they will take it. In fact, the abuse of anti-biotics and other drugs is a real issue in much of Africa. However, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria and some other countries have homeopathic practitioners and South Africa has a

long tradition of homeopathy. Our experience has seen that homeopathy can work well in both rural and urban environments in Africa and can complement existing traditional medicines as well as the adopted Western model of medicine.

The book was originally designed for students and practitioners of homeopathy in Kenya and especially for those working in clinical situations in which decisions on how to approach each case needs to be very flexible and decisions need to be made quickly at times. However, I also wanted the book to be available to both interested *lay* prescribers of homeopathy and medical professionals, to those who may be new to the subject but who are looking at homeopathy and natural medicine perhaps for the first time. As the book has expanded, I wanted it also to be a useful therapeutic guide to more experienced students and practitioners to re-establish a solid foundation in homeopathic knowledge and clinical practice. Homeopathy should not be too difficult. I hope the book achieves all these objectives and the art of homeopathic medicine is revealed for the amazing healing system that it is.