



UNIVERSIDAD CANDEGABE DE HOMEOPATIA

DISTANCE LEARNING UNIVERSITY

STAPHISAGRIA'S SHADOW

Author: Gustavo A. Cataldi

Emile Littre's Medical Dictionary defines Staphisagria (or Delphinium Staphisagria, Louse seed, Stavy acre) as a member of the Ranunculaceae family; triangular, **compact**, grayish seeds with a bitter and sour taste, a bitter brown layer, a bitter yellow layer, a volatile and a greasy oil made of albumin, an amylaceous matter, rubber, a sugary matter, dalphine, dalphinine, delphinoidine, delphisina, and staphisaina.

The plant's grains are **very strong**. Therefore, they are ground into powder or incorporated into a cream that is used to kill lice.

Patients sick with Staph evidence symptoms related to the "compactness" of the seeds.

Allen, T: weight on ethmoid bone, over the nose, feeling of compression on both sides of head.

Hering:

- Headache, feelings of compressed brain.
- Pressure on right side of forehead.
- Pressure on right temporal lobe and vertex.
- Feeling as if occiput were internally and externally compressed.
- Bewildering headache, especially at front.
- Pressure on superior eyelids.
- Painful pressure on right side under umbilicus.
- Pressure on bladder.
- Painful pressure on left testicle while walking.
- Feeling of compressed testicles.
- Feeling of pressure and constriction of throat cavity after anger, sour taste.
- Violent painful pressure on left shoulder.
- Pressure on external part of tibia.
- After great anger, body shaking, pressure on chest and dyspnea, fear

of choking, pressure on stomach, great tension on upper abdomen.

- Paralytic pressure on arms and forearms. Remember that arms are used when in action and that action is one of Staph patient's problems.

My patient Roberto, a 29-year-old lawyer who is asthmatic since he was eight, cured his asthma with Staph. During his consultation I asked about his childhood and he told me he had studied at a public school with children that were older than him who used to hit and ill-treat him. He said: "They were less intelligent than me, because of their social status, and I was angry with them. Everything was very unjust. I cried but sought for no solution. I never spoke with anybody about this, not even with my parents." He added: "I felt very powerless and angry. That's when my asthma first appeared."

The patient mentioned having a lot of "pressure" and I was surprised by the fear he mentioned: "I fear being in prison with asthma and not being able to take my medication."

"Prison" and "pressure" are very similar words and this is not casual for this patient's main symptom was disorders due to suppressed anger. Therefore, the compactness of Staphisagria's seeds can be transferred to the medical world.

Litre's definition also reads: the grains, which are obtained from the inside of the seeds, are drastically violent and give raise to Staph's aggressiveness; an inner aggressiveness that never comes out.

Marcelo, a 44-year-old patient that was cured with Staph told me during his consultation: "I am a quite calm person but, when facing certain situations, I keep back; I take karate classes and this helps me a lot; I hardly ever burst in anger." Roberto, the other patient, also took martial art (judo) classes which seem to be a good tool for these patients to manage their aggressiveness.

An English synonym for Staph is "stavy acre". "Acre" means sour and "stavy" is the adjective of the verb "to stave", which is defined by the Appleton-Cuyás Dictionary as follows: 1. to break staves (of barrels), open gaps, break in, smash, crush, to furnish with a stave or staves, to put, ward or keep off, to prevent in time. 2. to break or crush inward. 3. a narrow strip of wood forming part of the sides of a barrel, the slope of a hole; "to stave and tail" means to interpose with the staff, to stop.

The above definition evidences Staph's two aspects: one aspect evades and prevents aggressiveness and the other aspect refers to breaking inwards, smashing and crushing into pieces. It should be remembered that staves are sealed together to make the body of a container such as a barrel.

Kent makes reference to Staph patients' tendency towards avoiding fights: "A gentleman meets another gentleman at the station and they argue about something. The men commence to insult each other and one of them turns round and gives his back to the other one. Once at home, this man is suffering in silence but, however, he keeps the incident a secret. He is sleepless at night, tends to drowsiness and suffers loss of memory. During several days this man cannot sum nor subtract, makes mistake when writing and talking, his bladder is in pain, he is flatulent, etc."

The evasive behavior of Staph patients is full of inner aggressiveness, which leads to the symptom of "**fear of loosing self-control**" which is also present in Arg. Nitricum and Gelsemium. This statement is in contrast with

Gallavardin's idea of "lack of self-command."

Staph patients get sick and "go to pieces" due to anger. The following symptoms are mentioned by Hering:

- Things made by others or by oneself cause great indignation; lamentation of consequences.
- Disorders due to indignation and vexation.
- Hepatic colic after anger.
- Abdominal colic after anger.
- Amenorrhoea as a consequence of mortification after severe anger.
- Faint voice as a consequence of weak vocal organs after anger.
- Feeling of pressure and constriction of throat cavity after anger, sour taste.
- Cough after vexation or indignation.
- One-side paralysis after anger.

Maybe the **aptitude for swallowing**, especially when **talking** makes reference to the "anger" this patient is continually dealing with.

Vexation may be symbolically present during the first intercourse of a woman, which may lead to cystitis in newly-wed brides. Staph is indicated in these cases.

Staph avoids the aggressive manifestations that arise from dignity and pride.

This could be related to a fear mentioned by Clarke and that should be added to this repertory: **fear of shadow**.

Cirlot (Symbols Dictionary, p. 416) mentions that the sun is the spiritual light and that shadow is the negative "double" of the body for it is the image of the bad and **inferior** part of it. Among primitive cultures it is generally believed that shadow is an alter ego; a soul. This is reflected in the folklore and literature of advanced cultures. Frazer has already stated that primitive men frequently consider their shadow -or their image reflected in water or a mirror-, as their soul or a vital part of themselves.

Therefore, let us analyze what Joseph Henderson says about "Man and His Symbols" by Carl Jung: "shadow holds a very important role in analytical psychology. Dr. Jung stated that the shadow is the rejected, frightening, and even terrifying, part of an individual.

M. L. von Franz states in the same book: "when an individual attempts to see his own shadow, he realizes (and maybe is ashamed of) the qualities and impulses he denies but, however, he can clearly see in other people: things such as egoism, mental laziness and sentimentality; fantasies, plans and unreal intrigues; negligence and cowardice; disordered appetite for money and possessions; in summary, all forgiving sins that could be considered not important; things that nobody would realize and that other people would also do."

Staph patients are afraid of their shadow for it is their suppressed side. Their disordered appetite for money and possession is evidenced by **greediness**, **ambition** and **lust**. Gallavardin mentions the mental laziness of Staph patients as

they are **“incapable of meditating and of undertaking important intellectual jobs”**. Staph patients are also **coward, conceited and talk of themselves in public. Egoism** is present in the essence of the remedy as well as illusions: **illusion of humbleness and lowliness of others. While Staph patients feel grand; objects feel small; they have the illusion that their body is grand.**

According to Kent, Staph patients feel like if **worms** were **creeping on them** and this denotes their excessive self-esteem. However, their “shadow” appears in dreams, as is usual according to Jung: Staph. patients have **humiliation dreams**. In addition, and despite the illusions, Staph patients are **unhappy and feel sorry for themselves.**

This fear for the negative side can lead Staph patients to feel **consciousness anxiety** and **salvation anxiety** and to have **excessive scruples regarding religion**. Therefore, many of these patients find shelter within religion.

Let us continue analyzing the shadow issue: Thorwald Dethlefsen and Rüdiger Dahlke stated in their book *The Healing Power of Illness*: “Our shadow causes anguish. This is quite understandable as everything we do not wish or approve of originates in our shadow for it is the sum of everything we do not want. Shadow includes all what we are strongly convinced that should be banished from this world for it to be saint and good. But on the contrary, shadow has all what is missing in this world and in our world for it to be saint and good. Shadow brings us a certain illness or makes us incomplete as life is inexorable leading us to be whole. Shadow causes illness and facing it is the cure. This is the key to understand the healing power of illness.

If we take into account that Gallavardin says Staph is a “sovereign remedy for those who fear for their health” and that Hering mentions “sad feelings on one’s own illness”, it is understandable why Staph patients are afraid of this shadow that causes illness. Staph shares this **health anxiety** with Caladium, Calcárea carb., and Lycopodium; all remedies related to the fear for the shadow.

This **fear** and the illusion Staph patients have **of being hounded by someone walking behind** them are related to the following statement by Gallavardin: Staph patients walk hurriedly and feel afraid because they believe someone is following them; these patients are always looking back. The inseparable shadow hunts Staph patients and their past is always present.” Allen, T. stated: “anxious thoughts and past events appear as if the past were the present and this causes anxiety and anxious perspiration to the patients.” This symptom is very interesting as Staph patients **confuse future with past** and **present with past.**

Staphisagria reflects the essence of the illness as it grows in shady places in France, Italy and Southern Europe where the sun cannot reach it.