

HOMOEOPATHY FOR PHOBIAS: A REPERTORIAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Background: Phobias, a subgroup of anxiety disorders, are characterised by intense and irrational fear of a specific object, situation or activity, leading to marked distress and avoidance behaviour; their distribution varies by age and gender. Phobias affect women roughly twice as often as men [1]. Suicide and a greater likelihood of comorbidities are recognised complications. Onset is usually rapid, typically around 10–17 years of age, the rates decline with maturity, and the fear persists for more than 6 months.

Aims and Objectives: To compile the rubrics of the various types of phobia and the remedies listed under them in the Synthesis and Complete repertories, so that the repertorial approach can assist in selecting the similitum.

Materials and Methods: The Mind chapter, rubric 'Fear' and the phobia-related rubrics were searched in the Synthesis and Complete repertories [3,4] and classified according to the DSM-5 categories: specific phobia, social anxiety disorder and agoraphobia.

Conclusion: Numerous homoeopathic remedies are listed for phobias, but the choice is patient-specific, taking the mental and physical symptoms into consideration, as homoeopathy treats the person individually and holistically.

Keywords: Phobia, Homeopathy, Fear, Anxiety, Anxiety disorder, Specific phobia, Social anxiety disorder, Agoraphobia, Synthesis, Complete, Repertory.

Abbreviations: ICD – International Classification of Diseases; DSM – Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; SAD – Social Anxiety Disorder; Complete repertory gradation – Bell-4, Bell-3, Bell-2, Bell-1.

INTRODUCTION

The word phobia is derived from the Greek word PHOBOS, meaning "aversion", "fear" or "morbid terror". Phobia is an anxiety disorder characterised by an extreme and ongoing fear of a certain object or circumstance. Extreme emotional alterations have been attributed to damage to the cortical regions of the limbic system, such as the frontal lobes and the cingulate cortex.

ICD-11 classifies phobic disorders under mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders, while DSM-5 categorises them into specific phobia, social anxiety disorder and agoraphobia [1].

CAUSES

1. Environmental factors

- **Direct / classical conditioning** – exposure to the phobic stimulus.
- **Vicarious acquisition** – seeing others experience the phobic stimulus.
- **Informational / instructional acquisition** – learning about the phobic stimulus from others.

2. Genetic factors

- More frequent in first-degree relatives.

TYPES OF PHOBIA

Specific phobia

- Develops as a result of a bad early-life experience with a thing or circumstance.
- Treatment: exposure therapy.
- Five types: animal, natural environment, situational, blood-injection-injury and other.

Social anxiety disorder (social phobia)

- People who fear social situations out of concern for how others may see them are said to have social phobia.
- Treatment: counselling, medication, or a combination of both.

Agoraphobia

- Fear of a situation based on the perceived difficulty or impossibility of fleeing from it.
- Treatment: counselling, medication, or a combination of both.

FEAR AND ANXIETY

Fear and anxiety frequently overlap, but the distinction between them helps to identify the subtle difference between disorders [1].

Table 1: Distinction between fear and anxiety

FEAR	ANXIETY
Response to a known, external and definite threat.	Response to an unknown, internal, vague threat.
Emotional reaction to a currently perceived danger / threat.	Reaction to a threat that may come about in the future (alerting signal).

SYMPTOMS

Fear of an object, situation or activity; inability to control the fear; marked distress; panic; low self-esteem; gradual restriction of day-to-day activities; tremors; sweating; nausea; vomiting; goosebumps; rapid breathing; dizziness; fear of going insane; uncontrollable crying; loss of control; and increased heart rate [1]

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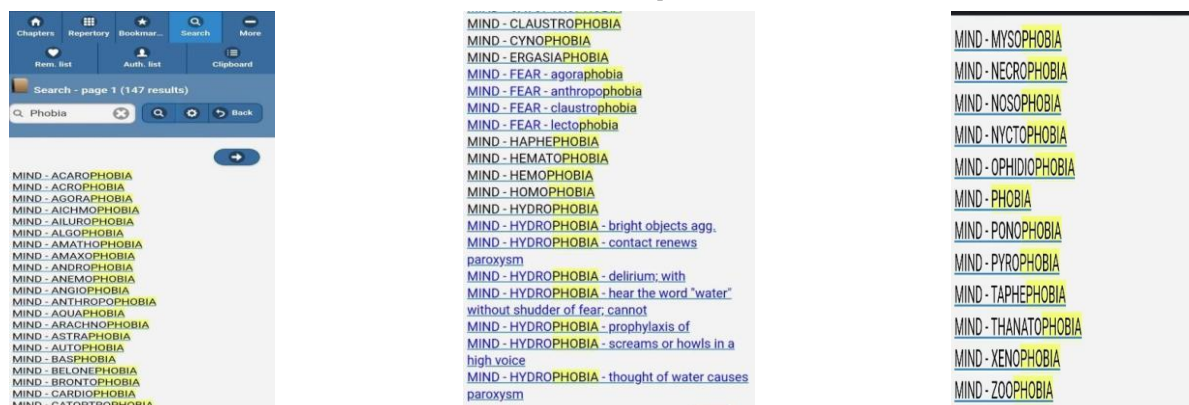
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REPERTORIAL APPROACH

The rubrics related to phobia were studied in the Synthesis repertory (mobile application) [3] and the Complete repertory [4].

A search for the word “phobia” in the Synthesis application returned 147 results (Figures 1–3). The rubrics under Mind; Fear were arranged according to the DSM-5 types of phobia and are presented in Tables 2–7 with the remedies listed under each



Figures 1–3: Phobia-related rubrics (147 results) in the Synthesis repertory mobile application.

Table 2: Specific phobia – Animal type

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Acarophobia	Fear of itching or of small crawling insects (mites, lice) that cause itching.	Mind; fear; bugs, insects	ABEL, CALC, PHOS
Zoophobia	Fear of animals.	Mind; fear; animals, of	ABEL, BAC, BELL, CALC, CARC, CHIN, HELL, MED, STRAM, TUB, VERAT
Arachnophobia	Fear of spiders.	Mind; fear; spiders, of	CARC, scorp
Ophidiophobia	Fear of snakes.	Mind; fear; snakes, of	ABEL, ALUM, LAC-C, LACH, NAT-M
Ailurophobia	Extreme / irrational fear of cats.	Mind; fear; cats, of	sulph, TUB
Cynophobia	Fear of dogs.	Mind; fear; dogs, of	BAC, BELL, BUFO, CALC, CAUST, CHIN, HYOS, LAC-C, NAT-M, PULS, STRAM, TUB

Table 3: Specific phobia – Natural environment type

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Acrophobia	Irrational / extreme fear of heights.	Mind; fear; high places	ARG-N, AUR, AUR-M-N, AUR-S, CALC, CARB-AN, COCA, GELS, HYOS, SULPH
Astraphobia / Brontophobia	Fear of thunderstorm / lightning.	Mind; fear; lightning, of Mind; fear; thunderstorm, of	bell, cycl, dig, dpt, lach, phos, phys, sil BOR, BRY, CALC, CARC, COLOC, GELS, GRAPH, IGNIS, LAC-C, NAT-C, NAT-M, NIT-AC, PHOS, RHOD, SEP, STAPH
Aquaphobia / Hydrophobia	Aquaphobia: fear of water not related to illness or physical condition. Hydrophobia: fear of water related to the late stage of rabies infection / physical symptoms.	Mind; fear; water, fluids, of Mind; hydrophobia	BELL, CANTH, cupr, hoch, HYOS, LACH, LYSS, PHOS, PHYS, SABAD, STRAM HYDR-AC, HYOS, LACH, LYSS, STRAM, TANAC, XANTH
Anemophobia	Fear of wind / drafts.	Mind; fear; wind, storm, of	CHAM, LAC-C, RHOD, SEP
Pyrophobia	Fear of fire.	Mind; fear; fire	bos-s, CUPR-ACET, PSOR, RHUS-T

Table 4: Specific phobia – Blood-injection-injury type

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Aichmophobia / Belonephobia	Intense fear of sharp objects / fear of needles.	Mind; fear; pins, pointed, sharp things, of	HEP, SIL, SPIG
Hemophobia / Hematophobia	Fear of blood.	Mind; fear; blood, of Mind; blood or a knife, cannot look at	ALUM, NUX-M, PLAT ALUM, NUX-M, NUX-V, PLAT

Table 5: Specific phobia – Situational type

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Amazophobia	Fear of driving a vehicle, either as a driver or as a passenger.	Mind; fear; riding, when; carriage, in	AUR, BOR, LACH, PSOR, SEP
Catoptrophobia / Spectrophobia	Fear of mirrors / fear of an appearance, form or thing seen in a mirror.	Mind; fear; mirrors in room, of	CANTH, LYSS, STRAM

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Claustrophobia	Fear of narrow places.	Mind; fear; narrow place, in, claustrophobia	ACON, AMBR, ARAN, ARG-N, ARS, AUR-M-N, CALC, CIMIC, DULC, DYS-CO, IGN, LAC-D, LYC, NAT-M, NAT-S, PLUT-N, PULS

Table 6: Specific phobia – Other types

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Algophobia	Extreme fear of physical pain.	Mind; fear; pain, of	ALL-C, ARN, COFF, LACH
Ponophobia	Fear of overwork, of becoming fatigued, or of pain.	Mind; fear; suffering, of	ALL-C, FL-AC, HEP, LACH, SYPH
Amatophobia / Mysophobia	Abnormal and persistent fear of dust / fear of dirt, contamination or germs.	Mind; fear; dirt, of Mind; fear; disease, of; contagious, epidemic, infection	alum-s, chin-s, cinnb, gink, mang-s, oscilloc, syph ARS, BOR, CALAD, CALC, CARC, SULPH, SYPH
Nyctophobia / Noctophobia	Fear of dark / night.	Mind; fear; dark, of	CANN-I, PULS, STRAM
Angiophobia	Fear of angina; fear of choking.	—	—
Cardiophobia	Fear of heart disease / heart attack.	Mind; fear; heart; disease, of	APIS, ARN, AUR, CALC, GRAPH, KALI-AR, LACH, LIL-T, PHOS, SPONG, uran-n
Autophobia	Fear of being alone.	Mind; fear; alone, being	ARG-N, ARS, CROT-C, HYOS, KALI-BR, KALI-C, LYC, NAT-C, PHOS, STRAM
Haphephobia	Fear of being touched.	Mind; fear; approaching; others, of; touched, lest he be Mind; touched; aversion to being	ARN, CHIN, TELL ANT-C, ANT-T, ARN, CHAM, CINA, KALI-C, TARENT
Necrophobia / Thanatophobia	Fear of dead organisms or things associated with death / fear of death or the dying process.	Mind; fear; death, of	ACON, ACT-SP, APIS, ARN, ARS, BELL, BRY, CALC, CANN, CAUST, CIMIC, COFF, DIG, ELAPS, GELS, KALI-C, KALI-I, KALI-N, LAC-C, LACH, LAT-M, MANC, MERC, MOSCH, NIT-AC, NUX-M, NUX-V, OP, PHOS, PLAT, PULS, RHUS-T, RUTA, SEC, VARIO, VERAT
Nosophobia	Fear of developing a life-threatening disease such as cancer or AIDS (hypochondria: worry about all types of sickness).	Mind; fear; disease, of	CALC, KALI-C, LAC-C, NUX-V, PHOS, SULPH, SYPH

Table 7: Social anxiety disorder (social phobia) and agoraphobia

Phobia	Meaning	Rubric (Mind; Fear)	Remedies
Xenophobia	Fear of strangers.	Mind; fear; strangers, of	aur-m-n, BAR-C, CARB-V, CUPR, SOL, THUJ (+29)
Homophobia	Dislike / fear of homosexual people.	Mind; fear; homosexuality, of	cench, hydr-ac, manc, musc-d, nym, PULS, STAPH
Anthropophobia	Fear of people.	Mind; fear; people, of, anthropophobia	AMBR, BAR-C, BELL, CIC, HYOS, LYC, NAT-C, PULS, RHUS-T
Agoraphobia	Fear of places and situations that might cause panic, helplessness or embarrassment.	Mind; fear; agoraphobia Mind; fear; crowd, in	ARG-N, GLON, KALI-P, LYSS, SEP ACON, AMBR, ARG-N, AUR, AUR-M-N, BELL, CARC, KALI-AR, LYC, NAT-M, NUX-V, PETR, PULS

CONCLUSION

There are numerous potent homoeopathic remedies that can treat phobias, but the choice is patient-specific, taking the mental and

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physical symptoms into consideration, as homoeopathy treats the person individually and holistically

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