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INTRODUCTION

This work on *butterflies*, and the discovery of new remedies from the lepidoptera family, started in Marseilles (France) back in spring 2001, when a group of work colleagues and I started exploring and exchanging ideas on the subject.

Having been intrigued with the originality of butterfly prescriptions from fellow homeopaths abroad (JP Janssen in Holland and Chetna Shukla in India) the members of our study group (known under the acronym of CHUMS) began, cautiously, to prescribe butterfly remedies to our more fragile patients – **and, in my cases, to the more restless, hyperactive, agitated young characters in my children’s practice.**

It became clear to me after some time that the butterfly family was indeed an extremely useful tool in many cases, and only the fact that it was so little known in the world of homeopathy was preventing it from much wider application. I decided to undertake the task of research and provings, and so the project – to use butterfly terminology – took flight.

I would like to thank my friends, the CHUMS for their ideas and input, especially the work on the families which has contributed to the resulting Materia Medica. I am also grateful to the Academy of St Petersburg for their proving on the Brassica, and my French colleagues from Aix en Provence, Nantes and Marseilles who also partook in direct experiments – and without whose help this new book of new remedies would not have been possible. And lastly, I need to thank Clémentine, Pauline and Clément and Viviane the four medical students who have proved themselves indefatigable provers of so many of these butterflies.

This book records unique and ground-breaking homeopathic discoveries, and opens the way for new and exciting prescriptions.



Introduction

I, personally, have found the butterfly remedies particularly exciting amongst hyperactive children (ADHD), who form a significant proportion of my patients.

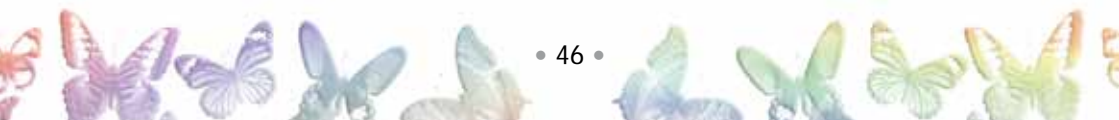
Using the Austrian internet site Remedia (<http://www.remedia.at>) as the source for our substances, we ventured into unknown territory and tested butterflies which have never been considered before.

We are satisfied that the prescriptions in this book are now ready to share with our fellow homeopaths, although, obviously many still need further verification and clinical confirmation.

The combination of the existing remedies with the results of our programme of new provings allows us to present the basis for a whole new 'butterfly prescription', and to better understand how and where these valuable remedies can add to our pharmacopoeia.



Acherontia atropos – The Death's Head Hawkmoth





Chapter 1

ACHERONTIA ATROPOS

The Death's Head Hawkmoth

This moth is easily recognisable from its skull markings visible both on the caterpillar and moth.

Case history

In September 2007 a 4 year old boy is brought to see me with atopic problems and a hymenopterous allergy – especially to bee stings. (THEME: BEES). In fact he has just come out of hospital following a bee sting next to a swimming pool, which resulted in Quincke's oedema and suffocation (THEME: SUFFOCATION).

The allergy specialist in charge of his case has taken him through a desensibilisation regime, and on top of the bee allergy he has discovered allergies to nuts (eg almonds, hazelnuts), and to dust mites.

He has also suffered many attacks of bronchitis in his early infancy, and reacted badly to the numerous vaccinations he was given then. After each one he developed a fever, and contracted a virus.

His family life is, to say the least, unstable. His father is no longer around, and his mother has had 3 live-in boyfriends since his departure, so he's never had a constant father-figure.



Acherontia atropos

His real father is now living with another woman, by whom he has 3 more children. The little boy visits them every fortnight.

He loves playing, he finds concentration difficult, and he enjoys stories about pirates and their emblem: the skull and crossbones. He regularly dresses up as a pirate, and keeps his sword by his bed... (THEME: PIRATE)

His alimentary preferences are strongly for honey, and sweet things.

This young boy fits the butterfly profile because of his multiple father-loss, which must give him a breakdown of security. His enjoyment of dressing up is also typically butterfly.

This led to me prescribing ACHERONTIA ATROPOS at 1M, because of his pirate fixation, as well as the beesting allergy – since this butterfly has a strong affiliation, in its natural life, with bees.

Reaction

The little boy calmed down and became more at ease. All the same, a period of desensibilisation was agreed, against hymenopterous venoms. A month later all allergic reaction seems to have disappeared, as has the bronchitis.

Comments

The link of this butterfly with bees is key. And with the young patient there is a pathological link with the Death's Head Hawkmoth. Put this together with the bees, the desire to dress up as a pirate, and the cutaneous allergic reaction, and the connection was obvious.

The characteristics of the *Acherontia atropos*

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

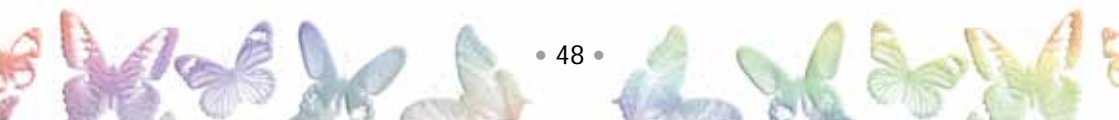
Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Sphingidae

Subfamily: Sphinginae

Genus: *Acherontia*

Species: *Acherontia atropos*



Acherontia atropos

As with all Sphingidae, the Death's Head Hawkmoth has a massive fusiform body, with feathery antennae and wings which, when unfolded flat, form a "roof" to the abdomen at a characteristic angle. The caterpillars possess a horn (scolus) at the end of their abdomen, on the eighth segment. The front of their body has the vaguely Sphynx-like marking which gives the Sphingidae their name. They have miniscule, virtually invisible bristles.

The adult moth bears the famous skull-shaped marking on the dorsal part of its thorax, and its body is covered in thick black and yellow hairs, like a large hornet. The skull-shaped marking has given it a reputation for bringing bad luck, and is responsible for its evil symbolism in films like *Silence of the Lambs* and *An Andalusian Dog*.

The European species is the heaviest (1.5 g for a female that has a 60 mm wingspan), and, the second largest moth, after the Large Night Peacock. Its body measures about 6 cms in length, for an average wingspan of 13 cms. The larvae also becomes very large – up to 15 cm – by devouring various foodstuffs between July and October, notably potato leaves. Evidence of its infiltration into a potato patch can be seen by the droppings it leaves behind, of some considerable size. Like many of the sphingidae family, the larva burrows down into the earth for its chrysalis stage. The shiny chrysalis is a dark brown, slightly reddy colour.

Migration patterns

The species can be found in the Mediterranean basin, Africa – as far flung as the island of La Réunion – and in part of Asia. The European variety winters in the south, and migrates in summer up as far as the borders of Scandinavia. They have become rare in urban or intensively farmed environments.

The adults emerge from September to October, ready to start their flights south.

Reproduction

After their early summer migration northwards, the females lay their eggs on the underside of about 50 different plant species, but they particularly favour the potato plant, which their caterpillars, once born, will start to devour with great ferocity. After 20 days of growth, during which they shed their skins four times, the larva burrows into the earth, transforming into a chrysalis in an underground chamber, reemerging as an adult in a period varying between 20 days and two months.



Acherontia atropos

Bees and honey

This large moth adores honey. It finds hives or nests and penetrates them through the entry hole. Insensitive to venom and protected by its bristly coat and wing scales, it is able to shrug off attacking bees by rapidly fluttering its wings on its way to the comb. Once there, its short, solid horn easily pierces the full cells. However, occasionally, gorged on honey, it finds itself unable to get out through the narrow entrance, whereupon it is suffocated by a band of irate bees. In such cases the body is then covered in propolis in order to evict the decomposing intruder.

Actually, stories of hives being destroyed by Death's Head Hawkmoths are fairly anecdotal in Europe, since they have become very rare: victims of insecticides and light pollution from urban lighting, which plays havoc with their natural night navigation systems. This even seems, for reasons as yet unknown, to upset their reproductive cycles (possibly having a significant impact on their hormones...) On the African continent however, where they do not face such threats, they still represent a real apicultural enemy.

It is the only moth in the world which is capable, when it is attacked, of producing an aggressive squealing sound (up to 280 hertz), emitted by expelling a strong gust of air across a small vibrating blade situated at the opening of the pharynx of the adult and caterpillar.

The key paediatric symptoms of ACHERONTIA ATROPOS

1. Feeling abandoned

As with all butterflies.

2. Link with honey and bees

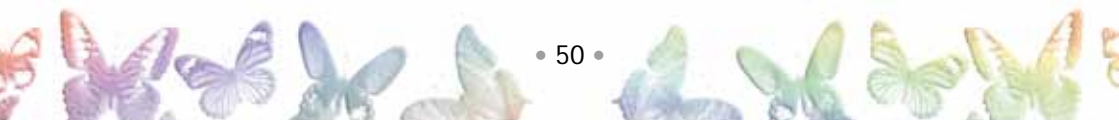
These children can have allergies to bee stings. They can also be mad about honey.

3. Cutaneous symptoms

Often urticaria or eczema. Also Quincke's oedema.

4. Good remedy for mercurial, restless children, link with pirates

These indications are found in butterfly children who suffer from attention deficit disorder. They also love pirate stories and dressing up.



Acherontia atropos

5. Suffocation

All the provers have shown signs of suffocation. (As we know, this moth can die by being suffocated in a bee hive...)

In conclusion: knowing about butterflies in general, and ACHERONTIA ATROPOS characteristics in particular, can lead to its prescription in very precise cases.

It is interesting to note the common points between this moth's life cycle and the two existing provings.



Acherontia atropos – The Death's Head Hawkmoth caterpillar