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SPIDERS

- Not as scary as you think
- Amazing remedies heal bites

A Spider From Down Under

Treating fire with fire: Spider bites respond to spider remedy

by ALASTAIR GRAY



IT'S SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. AUTUMN. SPIDER SEASON HAS JUST come and gone here. This year they have been everywhere. Golden orb spiders in the trees. Funnel webs in the ground and sometimes at the bottom of the pool. And then the white-tails—well one is above my bed looking at me right now. Spiders sit there watching. Some come at us legs raised. They lurk in the shower curtain. They hide behind picture frames. They freak us out with their unexpected arrivals. And sometimes, usually as a last resort, they bite.

J.T. Kent, one of the great old homeopaths, wrote that the best homeopathic remedy for a spider bite is *Arsenicum*. I've tried *Arsenicum* for spider bites, but haven't always gotten the best results. Recently, I've been experimenting to determine the best medicines to help with adverse reactions to white-tailed spider bites, which are common in Australia and New Zealand.

Baby suffers after spider bite

A white-tailed spider bit a seven-month-old child while he was playing in the garden. Three days after the bite, the mother brought the child to see me. The boy had an infected blister on his left foot. The whole foot was purple, red, and swollen, and a line of red infection extended up the leg. While not in distress, the child seemed doleful and unresponsive, and he was not

himself. He had a rash, a mild fever, and wasn't sleeping. The mother wasn't panicking; she had gotten my number from the White-tailed Spider Support Group in Sydney. She'd applied Manuka honey to the bite and bandaged it. In addition, she'd put Paw Paw cream on the rash covering the boy's body.

In a situation like this, we might consider any of the commonly used homeopathic spider bite remedies, for example, *Arsenicum*, *Ledum*, *Apis*, maybe *Tarentula* or *Crotalus horridus*. Perhaps, if the infection and the sepsis worsened, we might consider *Pyrogen*.

I gave the remedy *Lampona cylindrata* or white-tailed spider 30c, one dose. The mother reported that the effect was miraculous. The child had slept on the drive home, and within hours, he was playing with his siblings. The fever broke, and the next day the wound itself burst with a flood of yellow and black pus. The mother was ecstatic, and her father, a doctor, was astounded by the result. When I have shown the video of this case to other doctors, all have remarked that this would be a case for hospitalization and that severe cellulitis (a spreading bacterial infection in the skin and underlying tissues) could have developed. The case completely resolved with the "isopathic" prescription of the homeopathically-prepared remedy made from white-tailed spider.

Same treats same

When we take a substance that is responsible for causing a disease and use that substance to treat the disease itself, as in this case, we call it isopathy. Isopathy is based on the principle of "sameness," whereas homeopathy is based on the principle of "similarity." In homeopathy we



BY REBECCA SPONG

Spider Bite Finally Heals—Three Years Later!

Julia Twohig from Australia reported the following case in the journal *Homeopathic Links* (1998) after participating in a proving (a homeopathic “drug trial”) for *Latrodectus hasselti* (homeopathically prepared redback spider).

“Three years ago I was bitten by a white-tailed spider. Over the course of time, the lesion left by the spider bite has flared up and continued to spread onto my hand and other fingers. No treatment has been able to clear the bite, not even the potentized remedy (*Lampona cylindrata* or white-tailed spider). Within an hour of taking the proving remedy (*Latrodectus hasselti*), the bite began to itch and came up in a blister with a watery discharge. It went away after a few hours and since then has completely cleared for the first time. One year after the proving, I had a slight irritation of the site of the original bite. I took one dose of *Latrodectus hasselti* 30c. I’ve had no further problems.”

In this way, homeopaths discovered that the remedy *Latrodectus hasselti* could be used to treat spider bites. *Latrodectus hasselti* is just one of several remedies useful for spider bites (see article on page 24).

prescribe a substance that causes symptoms in a healthy person that are similar to the symptoms of the person being treated; in isopathy the substance being used to treat a patient is identical to the etiological or causative agent. For example, using *Ledum* (a remedy made from marsh tea) to treat a bee sting is an application of the homeopathic principle; using *Apis* (a remedy made from the honeybee) to treat a honeybee sting is an application of the isopathic principle.

Homeopaths often begin to discover the symptoms that a substance will heal by

small, usually about one-half inch in length. Young white-tailed spiders are black on their back, and white on the abdomen. As they molt throughout their lives, they become darker and only the tail remains white.

bitten, such as headache, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, muscular pains, and chills.

Occasionally, a person may develop local tissue necrosis with a deep rolled ulcer involving fat, skin, and muscle. When caused by spider venom, such

Now the bite of the white-tailed spider won't kill you, but it will mess with you.

studying poisoning incidents or by observing the effects of a bite or sting. I began my investigation of the remedy *Lampona cylindrata* by using it to treat white-tailed spider bites.

Here's another example of an isopathic prescription of the white-tailed spider remedy. A woman came to see me with an ulcer the size of a 50-cent piece on her right shin. Seven months beforehand, a white-tailed spider had bitten her while she was lying in bed. She reported that the wound would close up and heal for awhile only to break open again a week later. The bite area was red, swollen, painful, and continued to open up into a necrotic ulcer (i.e., an open sore with dead and dying tissue around it). I gave her three doses of *Lampona cylindrata* 30c over a two-week period. The wound closed up, filled in from the inside, lost its color, and resolved after two weeks. Three years later she's had no further problems.

Tales of the white-tail

Several kinds of white-tailed spiders exist; the common species seen in Australian homes is *Lampona cylindrata*. They are

White-tailed spiders are not web bound, they're hunters. They move swiftly to catch their prey. They can be found in wardrobes, clothes left on the floor, sheets, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and behind curtains. However, they normally live nomadically in gardens, under rocks, in ground litter, and amongst other foliage. They're most active at night and live off insects and other spiders. Their nomadic nature leads them into homes where they are most commonly found during spring to late autumn. Populations of *Lampona cylindrata* range across Australia and New Zealand.

This spider's bite is nasty

Now the bite of the white-tailed spider won't kill you, but it will mess with you. I have treated numerous people in both Australia and New Zealand for bites to the cheek, thighs, ears, buttocks, and so on. Redness and burning pain at the bite site, followed by swelling and itchiness is common. Welts or blisters may develop. A near-painless bite can progress to painful blistering and inflammation, followed by blue-black ulcerations. A person may experience systemic symptoms after being

ulcers are medically known as necrotizing arachnidism. Ulcer recurrence may last for years, and amputation has been required for severe necrosis. Necrotizing arachnidism appears to be due to locally acting necrotizing toxin in the spider venom. It may also be associated with secondary infection; approximately 25% of cases are said to test positive for *Staphylococci* bacteria.

The spider experts disagree

Virtually everyone Down Under is aware of the white-tailed spider and its reputation for creating serious tissue destruction. Yet many academics and medical researchers contend that necrotizing ulcers from spider bites are misdiagnosed or over-diagnosed (since few people can actually confirm whether or not a spider bit them, let alone which spider), and that stories of the bites and ensuing ulcers are overblown and sensationalized. Many experts say white-tailed spider bites may cause severe pain, itching, and mild ulceration but not necrotic ulcers. A recent study monitoring the medical outcomes of more than 100 verified white-tailed spi-

der bites found not a single case of necrotizing ulcers (confirming the results of an earlier study). Other studies of actual spider bites have been inconclusive.

Anecdotally, however, patients report severe symptoms including the worst kind of necrotic ulcers that are extremely resistant to any treatment. It was for this reason—the white-tailed spider bites' reported ability to create potent and debilitating symptoms in healthy people—that I decided to conduct a trial or homeopathic drug proving on the white-tailed spider. [See White-tailed Spider Proving at right.] Homeopaths are very curious about poisonous and venomous substances because, when prepared homeopathically, such substances may be very useful remedies in the treatment of a wide range of conditions (consider the important homeopathic remedy *Lachesis*, made from the venom of the bushmaster snake).

Not all occasions for prescriptions of *Lampona cylindrata* have involved those people who have received a bite from a white-tailed spider. Homeopaths have prescribed *Lampona* based on the symptoms it created in the drug trial, such as headaches and eye troubles. However, far more cases using the remedy have been reported in relation to the bad effects of white-tailed spider bites.

More bites treated

For example, a young girl was bitten on the left hand at the base of the fourth and fifth digits by a white-tailed spider, and at first, it looked like a mosquito bite. Within a half-hour, however, it turned red and began to ache, and she felt sick and panicky. Her mouth became intensely dry, yet she wasn't thirsty. One hour after the bite she became very groggy and tired, and she struggled to hold her head up. She had no feeling in her fingers and felt really "out of it." A homeopath gave the remedy *Lampona cylindrata* 30c. Within two hours of taking the remedy, the child could feel her fingers again. She took four doses of 30c for three days and then stopped. She felt much better, and the symptoms subsided.

In another situation, a 36-year-old woman was bitten on the back of the left hand by a white-tailed spider. Two days later, she visited a homeopath. The bite mark was visible, and the surrounding tissue was raised, red, itching, burning, and hot to touch. She felt weak, shaky, and hot.

She had glassy eyes and a red, flushed face. The homeopath gave three doses of the remedy *Lampona cylindrata* 30c at 30-minute intervals before good improvement began. The improvement continued with no further dosing, and she completely recovered

A remedy from Down Under

If you've tried several other remedies for a bite or a wound that won't heal and you're getting nowhere, try a remedy from Down

Under—*Lampona cylindrata*. If you're traveling to Australia or New Zealand, pack this remedy in your first aid kit—it could save a vacation. And remember, *Lampona cylindrata* may be useful for more conditions than just white-tailed spider bites and lingering effects of spider bites. If you see symptoms similar to the ones described in the box below, consider this remedy.

* *Lampona cylindrata* is available from Helios pharmacy in the U.K.—www.helios.co.uk.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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WHITE-TAILED SPIDER: A HOM

by ALASTAIR GRAY

People bitten by white-tailed spiders can develop mild to severe symptoms—pain, blisters, welts, ulceration and more. Since I'd seen homeopathically prepared white-tailed spider, *Lampona cylindrata*, work wonders on actual white-tailed spider bites, I was inspired to test the remedy further.

To do this, I conducted a homeopathic proving in 2000. A proving is similar to a drug trial. In a proving, however, a remedy is tested on healthy people, not sick people, and volunteers receive a homeopathically prepared substance. Symptoms experienced by the volunteers are carefully recorded. Proving often reveal information about a substance that can't be obtained from poisoning or toxicological reports, allowing us to begin to understand the full scope of a substance's healing capabilities.

Using the strictest homeopathic methodology, 12 volunteers participated in the trial of *Lampona cylindrata*. The homeopathic remedy was made from a whole spider, and the pharmacy prepared a 30c potency for the proving. Two doses of the remedy were given each day for three days or until the prover started to develop symptoms.

Unlike the intense physical symptoms that can develop after being bitten by a white-tailed spider, more subtle symptoms were seen with the homeopathic proving. This is to be expected; homeopathic provings don't typically produce pathological changes since provers take a highly diluted substance for just a short period of time. A complete symptom picture of any given remedy in the homeopathic materia medica includes symptoms from the homeopathic proving plus toxicological information (e.g., for this remedy, symptoms from those who've been bitten), and clinically cured symptoms.

The following symptoms and themes emerged from the proving:

- Visual disturbances; "I feel like I am hallucinating."
- Feelings of being long and squashed.
- Sensitivity to all water, noise, music, smells. Sounds seemed so loud, increased, exaggerated, and intensified. Senses more acute. "Any noise makes me irritable."
- Feeling confused, lost, and disoriented. Vague, spaced-out feeling; light-headed. Time seems to be running slow.

HOMEOPATHS INVESTIGATE SPIDERS

As Alastair Gray remarks, "Homeopaths are very curious about poisonous and venomous substances because, when prepared homeopathically, such substances may be very useful remedies in the treatment of a wide range of conditions." In fact, homeopaths have conducted provings (homeopathic "drug trials") of a number of remedies prepared from specific spiders or from their venom, and many of these provings have been conducted in recent years. Homeopathic remedies prepared from spiders or their venom include: *Aranea diadema* (papal-cross spider), *Aranea ixobola* (cross spider), *Aranea scinenencia* (grey spider), *Atrax robusta* (trap-door spider), *Lampona cylindrata* (white-tailed spider), *Latrodectus hasselti* (redback spider), *Latrodectus katipo* (New Zealand spider), *Latrodectus mactans* (black widow), *Loxosceles reclusa* (brown recluse), *Mygale* (black Cuban spider), *Tarentula cubensis* (Cuban spider), *Tarentula hispanica* (tarantula), *Tegenaria domestica* (common house spider), and *Theridion* (orange spider).

Some homeopaths say that the proving symptoms/indications of homeopathic remedies prepared from spiders often share some general characteristics such as: busyness, activity, and movement; hurriedness; sensitivity to music and vibrations; jealousy; and feelings of isolation or depression.



BY REBECCA SPONG

PATHIC PROVING

Hectic and frantic. Stressed.
Tired. Exhausted. Exhaustion and headache.
Poor concentration.
Feelings of being isolated.
The desire to kill. Compulsion to steal. Defiant, naughty.
People in the trial were better from walking, from cleaning, and from activity.
Some feelings of being anti-social.
Fear that "some one is doing voodoo on me."
Feelings of suicide if ignored by others.
Head symptoms: Tension from above the forehead. Intense boring pain in right temple. Tension and heaviness over left eye. Background headache with congested feeling in head. Very heavy feeling in left temple. Stabbing pain on the left side of head. Band around head. Sharp pain that feels as if it is pinched.
Eye symptoms: Eyes are burning. Shooting pain in the right eye.
Mouth symptoms: Metallic, bitter, or disgusting taste in the mouth. Tongue feels as if it is burning.
Digestive symptoms: Stomach cramps. Nausea, bloating, diarrhea.
Chest symptoms: Heart palpitations, with sinking feelings in the chest. "My heart felt like someone had grabbed it like an orange and let go and then grabbed it again."
"My body feels so tired, limp, and heavy." General symptoms of numbness.
Difficulty sleeping.
A crawling sensation in the nostrils.

Other homeopaths and I have verified these symptoms since the proving in 2000. In addition to using the remedy for white-tailed spider bites, we've also used *Lampona cylindrata* in other, chronic cases. For example, patients suffering from numbness, a metallic taste in the mouth, a feeling that someone is doing voodoo on them, and the impulse to kill have all responded to prescriptions of white-tailed spider. You can read more about this proving in *The American Homeopath*, Volume 9, 2003, or by searching the "Proving" section at www.dynamis.edu, or by ordering a booklet from me at alhomeoz@ihug.com.au.

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