

Dear Homeopathic Schools, Organizations, and CHC Exam Candidates,

In our ongoing efforts to work with and serve the homeopathic community, the CHC would like to inform you of upcoming changes to the CHC exam. At the beginning of 2007, the CHC exam committee began an effort to improve and simplify the case analysis exam. Committee members discussed ways to make it easier for candidates to answer in the time allotted, and to make it simpler for reviewers to grade. Sample exams with more specific questions were drafted and tested; recently certified homeopaths, long time practitioners, educators and CHC board members completed trial case exams to evaluate this simpler and more concise approach. We are happy to say that we believe this process has been very helpful and successful, and we are moving forward with using this new style of specific questioning for part of the exam.

**Starting with the March 2008 exam the case analysis essays will be replaced with 2-3 case vignettes with short answers questions.** The format is much the same for the candidates in terms of reading a case and subsequently analyzing it. This portion of the exam is still open book and open computer. The change is in how the candidate relates ideas about the case. The way that answers are written will now be more concise. Instead of writing a full essay, the candidate will be asked to answer a series of short answer questions appropriate to the case. This will be quicker to complete, allowing the candidate to summarize ideas about the case without having to write full sentences and paragraphs in an essay form, while still conveying the same information. (Note that full, articulate discussion of case work for each candidate will still be reviewed later in the certification process during the evaluation of the 5 submitted cases of his/her own work.)

Here are examples of the kinds of short-answer questions each candidate will be asked to complete after reading the case. The questions may vary slightly depending on the specific case, but will be similar to these:

- \* List 7 symptoms or themes that you feel most clearly represent the case, in order of the importance you assign to them. You can describe a theme using a sentence or just a few words as in bullet points.
- \* List 5 rubrics that relate to these 7 symptoms or themes you have noted. You may choose to combine multiple rubrics on one line to be used as one rubric. Enter a rubric or rubric combination in each of the 5 lines below.
- \*List 3 remedies that you feel could be indicated in the case based on these symptoms/themes and rubrics. Write either the remedy name or the repertory abbreviation for each remedy here.
- \*Choose one remedy that you think is indicated most clearly of the options you considered.
- \*List 5 reasons why you think this remedy is the most clearly indicated, associating those reasons to the aspects of the case you emphasized in the first question above.

Other types of questions that may be asked could include requests to identify the predominant miasm, etiology or a strange, rare or peculiar symptom.

As you can see, the information being communicated about the case is the same in these short answers as it was in the full essays. In order to prepare candidates for the exam, as always we point them to the CHC Prep Guide, which will have an addendum describing these changes in the current edition and then be incorporated for later additions. We have included an example for an exam case, as it was before and as it will be stated going forward. Please notice how the same information can be communicated either in a full sentence essay or in short answer form. The preparation to write this short answer style of case exam is therefore the same: learning to see the case clearly and

communicating thoughts will serve candidates well on either style of case exam. **Remember that the reviewers are never looking for a specific "right" answer, only for a reasonable one that shows good analytical thought and understanding of homeopathic philosophy, materia medica and case assessment.**

For information about the CHC exam, and any changes or updates, please see our website:

[www.homeopathicdirectory.com](http://www.homeopathicdirectory.com)

### **EXAMPLE of a case showing difference between new and old format**

Here is an example of a case and a successful and unsuccessful candidate response. This is written in the full essay style we have used in the past. This is taken directly from the CHC Prep Guide.

*The subject is a 36 year old woman whose chief complaint is heel spurs. She is an attractive woman wearing a purple shirt, tie-dyed shorts. She has fair skin, brown hair and pale green eyes.*

*She says:*

*"I don't know why I have heel spurs. The arches in my feet are falling, and calcium is forming on the bone. It started about 4 years ago. They hurt like a knife stabbing into my foot - but it is random, never sure when it is going to hurt. Nothing seems to trigger it, and the pain doesn't last long, so I haven't tried putting ice or heat on it. The pain is sharp like a thorn on the inner edge of the foot. It is worse on the left foot, but the right foot is catching up. Sometimes it happens when I am standing up, or it can be when I am walking or sitting, and occasionally, it even bothers me in bed at night or when I am taking a shower.*

*I want it to stop hurting. My physician prescribed Naprosyn (an aspirin like drug commonly used for pain relief in bursitis, arthritis, etc). My knees creak when I am walking up the stairs. I bruise VERY easily. I have lots of stiffness, knees cracking and creaking – my physician says I am developing arthritis. I have circulatory problems with varicose veins on my legs - they really ache if I stand for a long time. I can't stay in one position long - 5 minutes at the most. I get restless - like I should always be doing something. There is pain at the end of my spine often - like my tail bone is sore. I didn't use to have problems like this. I think it is just in the past couple of years all this has been happening. I can't remember exactly when I started to notice it.*

*I get pains in my chest sometimes when I am stressed. They feel sharp, especially when I am worried about my kids. I have a young daughter who is mute - she is 4 now, had an accident that damaged her throat, and I am overprotective with her. Also have a daughter who is 7. I worry about them. Sometimes I worry that I will have a heart attack. Since my younger daughter's accident, I have had these chest pains almost every day. It is like a sharp twinge all across the upper half of my chest. I went to a specialist to have it checked, but nothing was found. It is kind of like the pain in my feet – it comes quick and feels sharp, but I don't know when it is going to happen. It is hard to yawn - like I can't get enough breath in. I don't feel out of breath other times, just this weird thing when I yawn.*

*Sometimes my fingers get numb. I had carpal tunnel syndrome when I was pregnant with my younger daughter, and since then my fingers sometimes feel numb. I often notice it when I am waking up in the morning in bed.*

*I NEVER have a moment alone. It is frustrating. I can't leave the kids for 5 minutes. When the kids are in school it is easier. In summer I never have a break. I feel bad, guilty when I am not doing anything. Like I shouldn't just do nothing - should be doing something - working on the PC. I like to watch science fiction.*

*I am quite afraid of heights - I have to have a railing there. I don't like closed spaces, don't like it when the kids are surrounding me, touching me. I just want everyone to leave me alone. I love the evening when the kids are in bed. After all day with them, I just want to be left alone, sit in front of the*

*TV and zone out. I don't like to be touched. I never get to do anything by myself. I have never lived alone, never had my own space, my own room. I love to walk. I like to walk the dog by myself, with no one else along to need anything from me - I feel better after a walk. I feel pestered a lot. The kids demand so much from me. They always need something from me. I can never have a few minutes peace.*

*My husband doesn't listen to me - he tunes me out, drives me crazy. We fight a lot. It is as if he just doesn't hear me. I ask him to help but nothing happens - I end up saying 'Fine - I'll do it myself'.*

*I don't like spiders. Very afraid of them all my life. I worry about putting my hand in the garbage disposal to push things down or free something that is stuck - I worry that somehow the switch could get turned on and it would grind up my hand. I often build scenarios of what could happen in any event - I end up imagining the most terrible things that could happen.*

*I hate stuffy rooms - I want open windows and blinds, need lots of fresh air. I have always liked the smell of fresh air. I crave peanut butter, and like hot and very spicy foods. I am always thirsty and drink tons of herbal iced tea.*

*My sleep is good, though I am a very light sleeper and get up to check on my daughter often. It was such an awful experience with her in the hospital 2 years ago - it is still fresh in my mind. Her injury caused a BIG change in our lives. Life just throws you a loop sometimes.*

*My periods are very regular, some cramps with my period. I get very snappy before my period, it gets better after the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> day of flow. We use condoms for birth control. Sex is a problem, my husband wants it a lot more than me - once a month would be fine for me. I am afraid of getting pregnant again.*

*I don't really know anything about my family history. I was adopted and my adopted parents don't know anything about my birth parents. Sometimes I wonder about them, but I have never wondered enough to actually try to track them down."*

-----end of case -----

### **EXAMPLE ANSWER IN ESSAY FORMAT USED IN PAST:**

This candidate has successfully presented a reasonable assessment of the case, with articulately stated discussion and remedy choices that are likely to act.

“This woman comes in with physical complaints of heel spurs and chest pains (both with sharp, quick stabbing pains that are sudden and brief), numbness in her fingers on waking and pain in her coccyx. She has falling arches, restlessness, creaky knees especially on going up stairs, and demonstrates weakness in the circulatory system with easy bruising and varicose veins that are worse standing. There is a pattern of physical wear and tear here that seems a little surprising to me for a woman in mid-30s.

She reports that many of her complaints have come on in the past couple of years, and reports the accident 2 years ago which left her daughter mute. The accident was a traumatic even that is still fresh in her mind, and evidently it triggered a turn in her health as well. The heel spurs have been a problem for the past 4 years and the numbness in the fingers has been occurring since the pregnancy with her 4 year old daughter, so perhaps the pregnancy is an etiology for these.

She has a lot of anxiety for her children, possibly somatized as chest pains, which began after the daughter's accident. She feels pestered by her children, anxious for her disabled daughter who cannot

speak. These feelings are normal for parents of small children, and especially for parents with kids who have disabilities, and perhaps more so in her case since she reports that the relationship with her husband is conflicted and does not offer support for the daily grind. So it is not unusual that she worries or feels pestered, but it is unusual that she has chest pains with no physical basis as determined by the examination she had with a specialist, and that she associates these with worry and stress and fear of having a heart attack.

In addition to her worry about a heart attack and her daughters, she reports fears of heights, closed spaces, spiders, and getting pregnant again. She is irritable before her menses, not interested in sex, and short of breath when she yawns. She states that she is restless as if she should be 'doing something', feels guilty when not doing anything.

Miasmatically, this may be related to sycotic miasm as there is overproduction of bone tissue. It would have been nice to have more of the unavailable family history. She likes fresh air and feels better after going for a walk. She says she wants to be left alone, but when she goes to be alone, she takes the dog on a walk, which makes her not alone. Because of this I can't confirm 'aversion to company' in this case. There is some confusion about this symptom - her behavior and her actions are not in complete accord. Perhaps 'left alone' is more 'not demanded of' than actually being alone if you read exactly what she said?

As the center of her case, she has exostoses with a pattern of anxiety, restlessness, and sharp, brief pain. These are keynotes I saw in the case:

Sepia (overwhelm and irritability, worn out Mom, averse to company and sex, varicose veins, better from exercising)

Pulsatilla (neediness, amelioration from fresh air, and desire for peanut butter)

Phosphorus (fears and easy bruising and desire for spicy)

Roger Morrison notes in his materia medica that whenever Pulsatilla and Phosphorus both look like options for a case, that Argemone Nitricum should be considered.

Arg. Nit (fear, anticipatory anxiety that something will happen to her children, stabbing pain, ideas – what if about potential disasters)

Calcarea (anxiety and overwhelm, heel spurs, with calcium buildup)

I chose the following rubrics from Complete repertory:

Generalities; Exostoses

Generalities, Veins, varicose

Generalities, Pain, appear suddenly

Mind; Fear; happen, something will

Generalities; Walking; in open air amel.

Mind; Touched; aversion to being

Chest, Pain, stitching

Extremities, Numbness, Fingers + Extremities, Numbness, Upper limbs, morning +

Extremities, Numbness, Upper limbs, morning, waking on

These rubrics were referenced also:

Mind, Anxiety, conscience of; Mind, Restlessness

Mind; Occupation; amel.; Skin; Ecchymoses

Mind, Ailments from bad news (accident still fresh in mind with physical problems since)

Generalities, Pain, splinter-like sensation (she described the pain like a thorn in her foot)

These remedies were considered: **Calcarea carbonica, Flouricum acidum, Kali iodatum, Phosphorus.**

**Calcarea carbonica** applies as the essence of the case includes responsibility (she wakes at night to check on her daughter), security (she's anxious about her health, feels it in her heart), overwhelm

(demands upon her, she feels guilty when she's not doing anything), phobia (she has definitive fears readily expressed, including heights). Calcium is forming on her bone, displaced into a spur, and covers all the repertorized and confirmatory rubrics except the splinter like pain. It is in the rubric for stitching pain, so that is close enough.

**Phosphorus** has to be considered. Her symptoms of anxiety about health, thirst, imaginations, numbness, affections of the knees, easy bruising etc., are all covered in Phosphorus. Allen's Keynotes confirms "Restless, hemorrhagic diathesis; pain acute, especially in the chest; full of gloomy forebodings; longs for drink." Repertorization shows that Phos is not in the rubric for pains that come suddenly.

**Flouricum acidum** matches because it is a good remedy for broken down tissue, premature aging, young people looking old. Her arches are falling, varicose veins, even heart symptoms in a relatively young woman. Flouric acid also has sharp splinter like pains (Generals, Pain, Splinter, sensation of) which is as close as I could find for the thorn like pains she mentions. Clarke's Characteristics describes this remedy as complementary to Silica, which also was present in the repertorization result. His notes confirm 'Suited to complaints of old age and premature old age' which we see in this case – the physical breakdown of fallen arches, creaking joints and circulatory problems of bruising and varicose veins affecting this woman who is still young. Lippe's Redline Symptoms notes 'Young people look old... Aversion to people about him, even his own family...Exostoses...Varicoseveins...'

**Though it did not repertorize well, Kali iodatum** is a reasonable choice given her dedication to her family, anxieties and guilt. This remedy applies to her bone spurs and aversion to touch. It covers desire for open air and stitching pains. She does have the restlessness typical of iodum remedies, and Iodum also covers the ecchymosis, numbness and fears that something will happen. There were other details of the case such as the varicosities, that were not noted for for Kali-i but are listed under Kali-carb, so may be part of the general Kali family picture.

After looking at Calcarea carbonica and Flouric acid, I also investigated **Calcarea Fluorica**. It is a leader for bone spurs and varicose veins, and it covers the strong aspects of both remedies that can be seen in her case. Calc Flour is often given as a cell salt in frequent low doses to break down bone spurs. Morrison notes this remedy has great anxiety about health, and sensitivity to grief, especially sudden, unexpected losses. In this case, she says that several of the physical complaints came on in the past 2 years, which is the time of her daughter's accident. That is definitely a sudden, unexpected loss, and could have been an etiology that matches this remedy state. Calc-flour has a strong affinity for this case and is the remedy I would give.

Because of the gradual build up and breakdown nature of bone spurs, I would give this remedy in a repeated low dose posology, as an LM or as a 6c three times daily for 6 weeks, then see her for a follow-up."

### **EXAMPLE ANSWER IN NEW SHORT ANSWER FORMAT:**

This is an equivalently accurate assessment of the case, but the information is presented in brief specific answers rather than a full essay. Notice how much of the same information is presented but in a much more concise way. The questions presented with the case direct the candidate's comments toward the points that require discussion.

**\* List 7 symptoms or themes that you feel most clearly represent the case, in order of the importance you assign to them. You can describe a theme using a sentence or just a few words as in bullet points.**

1. Physical breakdown (falling arches, bone spurs, bruising, varicose veins, knee problems, numb arms, chest pain, pain in coccyx, etc) seems somewhat excessive for relatively young woman.

2. Pregnancy (has had numbness in hands and heel spurs since then) and traumatic experience with daughter's accident (health worse over past 2 years since accident) appear to be etiologies for her.
3. Sharp stabbing pains – in foot w/ bone spurs, in chest w/ stress, quick, brief, sudden
4. Fearful: of heights, having a heart attack, something will happen to her children, spiders, claustrophobic, another pregnancy... lots of fears
5. Restless, can't sit still, as if she 'should be doing something'
6. Aversion to being touched
7. Desires open air, likes to be outside

**\*List 5 rubrics that relate to these 7 symptoms or themes you have noted. You may choose to combine multiple rubrics on one line to be used as one rubric. Enter a rubric or rubric combination in each of the 5 lines below.**

1. Generalities; Exostoses
2. Generalities, Pain, appear suddenly + Chest, Pain, stitching
3. Mind; Fear; happen, something will
4. Mind; Touched; aversion to being
5. Extremities, Numbness, Fingers + Extremities, Numbness, Upper limbs, morning + Extremities, Numbness, Upper limbs, morning, waking on

**\*List 3 remedies that you feel could be indicated in the case based on these symptoms/themes and rubrics. Write either the remedy name or the repertory abbreviation for each remedy here.**

1. Calcarea flourica
2. Kali iodatum
3. Flouric acid

**\*Choose one remedy that you think is indicated most clearly of the options you considered.**

Calcarea flourica

**\*List 5 reasons why you think this remedy is the most clearly indicated, associating those reasons to the aspects of the case you emphasized in the first question above.**

1. Matches etiology of daughter's accident: Morrison notes this remedy has great anxiety about health, and sensitivity to grief, especially sudden, unexpected losses
2. Incorporates the Calcarea carbonica elements present in the case: issues with responsibility (she wakes at night to check on her daughter), security (she's anxious about her health, feels it in her heart), overwhelm (demands upon her, she feels guilty when she's not doing anything), phobia (she has many fears readily expressed, including heights), calcium deposits forming bone spurs, sharp pain in the chest
3. Incorporates the Flouric acid elements present in the case: premature aging, varicose veins, ecchymosis, splinter like pains, sudden appearance of complaint
4. Calc flour is often given as a cell salt to help break down bone spurs – her presenting complaint
5. Calc flour has symptoms of restlessness and better from open air.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: This is one example of a successful discussion. There could be many variations of this which would be equally acceptable, as long as the candidate presents reasonable assessment with articulate justification for conclusions reached.** In comparison to the full essay, this is much more concise for candidates to write, takes less time in the exam, and directs the candidates comments directly to the topics that the case reviewers need to see in order to pass the case.