

The “Art of Case Taking” by Pierre Schmidt, a Book Review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230738>

ABSTRACT

In Homoeopathy, the “Case taking” is one of the cardinal aspects to deal with. “A WELL TAKEN CASE IS HALF CURED”. Homoeopaths put a lot of effort in case taking, for understanding “patient as an individual person”, to reach the similimum. Many stalwarts have given instructions regarding Homoeopathic case taking, as it is challenging to every physician. This article contains a review of the book “THE ART OF CASE TAKING BY PIERRE SCHMIDT”, which deals with such directives to physicians regarding case taking.

KEYWORDS: Case Taking, Homoeopathy, Organon, Pierre Schmidt.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Hahnemann has given guidelines for case taking in his Organon (6th edition) from 83 to 104 aphorisms. Case taking is an art of interviewing the patient through conversation, observation and collecting data. Each case is unique in all respects.

Only a true individualized approach can explore the true picture and help a physician to arrive at a totality in its true sense. Every individual is different in health as well as in disease and hence every case has to be examined individually giving importance to its unique expressions during health and disease.

Dr. Pierre Schmidt (1894 – 1987), a classical Homoeopath, was a first graduate of American Foundation for Homoeopathy course for doctors. He was responsible for reintroducing classical Homeopathy into Europe, and he was one of the main founders of the Liga Medicorum Homeopathica Internationalis (LIGA).

The “Art of case taking” is one of the masterly contributions of Dr. Pierre Schmidt, apart from his many other treasure works like Defective Illnesses, The Art of Interrogation, The Privilege of Liberation through Homeopathy, A Symposium on Dosage, etc.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF BOOKLET:

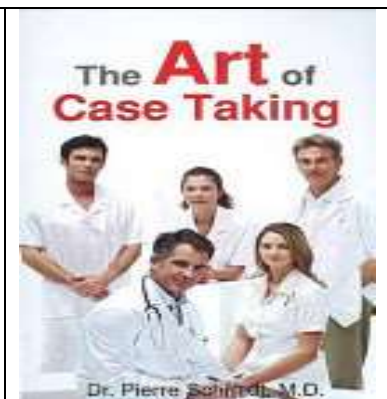
AUTHOR NAME: Dr. Pierre Schmidt

TITLE OF THE BOOK: The “ART of CASE TAKING”

PUBLICATION DETAILS: published by Kuldeep Jain for B.JAIN PUBLISHERS (P) LTD.

3rd Edition, reprint, 2022.

ISBN 8131902447, 9788131902448.



CRITICAL REVIEW: This is a small book comprises of 51 pages. The content of the book is divided into 3 sub topics.

1. THE ART OF CASE TAKING
2. HOMOEOPATHIC CASE TAKING: SOME POINTS
3. SOME SERIOUS CASES

Highlights of each sub topic:

1. THE ART OF CASE TAKING: (from page no: 1 to 30). There are many vital points in this subtopic regarding drug selection. The author commences the topic by giving 2 examples, where lycopodium caused severe aggravation as a first prescription. With these examples the author conveys to the Homoeopaths that before giving a mineral, animal or nosode, it's better to start the treatment with vegetable remedies other than lycopodium, as it is very deep acting and causes unwanted aggravation. In second case author antidote the aggravation of lycopodium by giving higher potency of same medicine, though inhalation.

Author instructs that in an acute case to consider only acute symptoms for selection of similimum, and in acute exacerbation of chronic disease, firstly acute remedy to be given, followed by chronic remedy.

The author differentiates 'symptoms, signs, accidents' – of Master Hahnemann's Organon. He says "Symptom" is subjective, whereas "sign" is objective. "Accident" is a symptom which has nothing to do with vital force or chronic miasm. It comes from external source.

Important instructions for case taking given by Hahnemann in his Organon was explained crisply with examples in this book. Author says each case to be treated as a fresh new case, and not to frame questions while interrogating in such a way that the patient has only 2 options "yes" or "no" to tell, instead try to be neutral in framing question. Author says Gladwin and Austin, teachers of him, advised homoeopaths to divide page into 2 parts to write pathognomonic and non-pathognomonic symptoms separately, and for this, a

physician needs sound knowledge about disease. If the case has more non-pathognomonic symptoms, then it is curable case.

Author instructs not to interrupt patient while narrating, and let him tell as much as he can, then start questioning. Ask the patient in detail about his occupation, religion, domestic troubles, generals, mentals, etc. Intensity of expression of patient symptoms is also to be noted.

Author praises Hahnemann for his questionnaire, with which it is impossible for patient to answer the question by mere "yes or no". Hahnemann prepared 22 Q's about diseases which patients commonly hide.

Many at times Physician must be like a detective, the author says, and he introduces briefly about "Iris diagnosis" written by Dr. Sinabe in German, with examples.

Reportorial way of interrogating is useful while case taking, but asking questions which are not present in repertory like "do u like almonds?" is useless, the author says. The remedies were not much proved to bring out all cravings, so the author requests Homoeopaths to try adding them to repertories by making provings. In the reference, 3, in page number 7, author says to his repertory, he has added many mentals of Dr. Gallavardin, who extensively worked on them and cured countless number of patients, where some patients themselves doesn't know even that they have taken medicine, because medicine was given in coffee, milk, wine, which worked wonderfully. The coffee is considered as antidote but the dynamic remedy is different from crude and more powerful, the author says. Author had added in his repertory symptoms of 'adultery' where the remedy induces man to quit his mistress, and come back to his wife, patient quits wine, beer, etc.

Author explains the techniques to extract cardinal symptoms, and gives an example of a case- Myxedema, cured with Psorinum, where the patient has difficult breathing amelioration by lying flat as cardinal

symptom. He also narrates about collecting characteristic symptoms regarding sleep, dreams, sexual sphere, menses and mentals (different emotions like jealousy, fear, suicidal tendency, impatience, irritability, effects of consolation).

Author ends this section by giving an advice to practice pure Homoeopathy, without mixing other pathy's like Acupressure etc. as they interfere with Homoeopathy.

2. HOMOEOPATHIC CASE TAKING: SOME POINTS: (from page no: 31 to 41).

In first section author gave instructions about case taking. In this 2nd section author deals with examination part, for proper diagnosis, which helps in differentiating pathognomonic symptoms from non-pathognomonic symptoms. Here author mentions about a case of vertigo < from reading, cured with Arnica, and brings up importance of study of Repertory in improving knowledge while case taking. He adds about evaluation of symptoms towards end of this sub topic.

3. SOME SERIOUS CASES: (from page no: 40 to 51): This is 3rd and last subsection. Here the author gives a short survey of some serious cases, initially he gives details of about 3 obstinate cases which were failed to manage by other system of Medicine.

Case 1- Verruca Obstinata, a one and half year long standing case cured with Thuja in just 2 weeks.

Case 2- Spring finger- (trigger finger/tenosynovitis) cured with Ruta.

Case 3- Dry eye (Xerophthalmia) cured with Lachesis.

Followed by some other cases, they are- Otagia (baby suffering at midnight, restless, and severe shrieking pain) cured with Aconite, Tinnitus (with history of grief, indignation, thirst less) cured with Gelsimium. Author gives his own mother's case, who went into coma, cured with Opium. Author adds 2 more cases before concluding this section, a case of indurated breast cured with Bryonia, and a perforated

appendicitis, cured with Arnica and Pyrogenum.

STRENGTHS:

1. This book is an author's narration on topic 'art of case taking'. It creates interest while reading and can be completed in one go, as the book is having only 51 pages.
2. The references are given below the same page itself.
3. Author gives ample examples to explain interrogation techniques.
4. This book is worth reading for all students of Homoeopathy and every Homoeopathic physician to understand basic techniques of case taking.

DRAWBACKS:

1. Hahnemann instructions are explained crisply, but in scattered manner, and does not quote aphorism number even though majority of narrated topic is about Hahnemann's instructions of case taking. He quotes only about 153 aphorisms in page number 21, while explaining cardinal symptom.
2. Book does not contain any introduction, preface or forward by author.
3. No index given.

CONCLUSION

The works of Pierre Schmidt are boon to Homoeopathy. The important points to be remembered while case-taking is given in most interesting way with examples in this book. The author has given necessary instructions from his experience through case studies. This book makes it easy for all the students and Homoeopathic beginning practitioners about art of case taking.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Ambala Sriharitha. The “art of case taking” by Pierre Schmidt, a book review. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2023; 10(7): 288-291.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230738>
