

Depth Sounding on a Lesser Remedy with Three Cases

Neil Tessler ND, DHANP

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Case # 1

30 year old female April 9, 1993

Meniere's Disease

Sudden vertigo when tired. Crackling in the ears on swallowing. Gets dizzy spells at times. Things are just moving around, I've got to grab on to something < night (2). Constant sinus infections.

- pressure in the cheeks extending to the ear and throat with bad headaches. Lately gets clots of clear white mucous.

Anxiety attacks

- I'm a very nervous person. Married eleven years ago. I was afraid to be in a crowd, in a mall, it's only been in the last 6-7 years that I've been better. However, I've been worse since sexual abuse memories came up. Sometimes wake with anxiety and shaking. Heart murmur, I guess from the anxiety. Heart flutters, feels like it's skipping a beat. Lungs collapsed when I was 18 months. In hospital for a year. Six brothers and one sister. I'm the third youngest. We were all put into foster homes and separated into pairs. (crying) My mom and dad had separated and we were living with my father. Mother had abandoned all of us. Oldest brother stayed home to baby sit. Welfare found out and fostered out the kids. Parents both alcoholic, mom was very violent and would abuse father in front of the kids. She would come in and out of our lives. Once she pushed him down the stairs and we watched as he was taken away in an ambulance. Sexually abused with threats by two brothers from age six to fifteen. Only remembered a few years ago. Two brothers were also sexual abuse victims. When remembered became a total basket case. (Further discussion of family dysfunction) Mother was half native and died of pancreatic cancer four years ago. I'm a born again Christian.

Lots of crackling in the ears. Wakes up in the middle of the night nervous and shaking (2). Gets really tired. Lots of viral infxns. Lots of stomach aches, bloating, dizzy spells.

Food: Desires Chocolate (3) Tea (3) Bread (3) Spicy (4) Aversions: Fat(2)

Chilly. Sensitive to being in the sun. No sexual desire before and after menses. Generally very low sexual interest. Fear of water(3) I hate water. Fear of closed places (3) driving long distance (2) Flying(3)

Extremely angry before menses (3) flow.

If I'm not in control I become anxious. Start imagining getting into an accident. Fear of snakes, animals, dogs (all 2). Asthma periodic <outdoors.

Anxious dreams and anxiety felt in the abdomen. When gets asthmatic I just can't handle it, become irritable and anxious. I'm a very nervous person (3)

I always think of the worst scenario of what's going to happen. (3) I'm very cautious (3) Don't fly, don't go on boats.

Anxiety and vertigo are the worst.

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Phone consult: July 2/93 three months after the previous visit

I've felt wonderful the last two months since the remedy. Crying and emotional the first few days. No dizziness since the remedy. I've felt great and more energetic. I haven't needed naps like I used to. Nervousness and anxiety has been much less. I haven't been as jumpy when driving with my husband. Fear has really changed for the first time in my life. We went swimming a few weeks ago. I went up to the top of a water slide and swam in deep water. I never would have done those things. It's changed a lot things. I used to get really, really dizzy, it wasn't just anxiety. Recently got a little dizzy before my period, but I just rested and it was fine. First day of menses usually I'm out of it, but this has been fine, able to do my normal activities. This is also the first time in my life it's been like that. Irritable PMS. (2) Still had two asthma attacks.

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July 20/93 Finding it hard to breathe. Pressure in my chest. Can't stand anything on my chest such as bras or tight shirts. I can't say whole sentences without taking a breath. I'm gasping for air. This began after drinking coffee on one occasion. plan:

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Dec 14/93 Five months after the last visit Still doing generally well. Tired lately, breathing is oppressed. At times my heart feels like it's pounding a mile a minute. I really haven't had anxiety since the original remedy Sinuses have been great, no pressure. The sinus condition has gone completely. Bit of crackling in the ears. Much less fear of water. I can wash my hair without jumping out of the bathroom and drying my hair immediately. Much calmer driving. Problems in the last few months. Eating a lot, gaining weight. I've caught my husband masturbating twice. It makes me feel like I'm not good enough. I feel fat and ugly. It eats at me and I feel betrayed. Menses irregular in the last few months. Flow has

been heavy and clotted. Feel run down and tired during menses with terrible cramps. -

Case # 2

Female Age 52 Secretary Dec. 23, 1991

Influenza in July and still hasn't recovered. Began with sore throat, head cold, fatigue/weakness. It's tiring even to watch T. V., aches all over. Pain across her mid-back, headaches. After mid-August had a three week period. Very heavy, large clots, lots of blood. Stayed very weak, stumbling on walking, exhaustion climbing the stairs. Felt overwhelmed, couldn't handle anything. Easily fatigued, pains in muscles, weakness (all 3). Goes to bed at 8-9 P. M. Bladder problems, very frequent urination. Often large amounts of urine, sometimes difficulty urinating. Redness in the lower half of the vision of her R. eye. Occasionally feels so tired as if she can't go on another second. Crying from slight causes. Wakes suddenly with extreme anxiety (2).

Many sicknesses over the last ten years. In Spring 1982 had a four week viral infection, was extremely sick with a severe sore throat; flat in bed, thought she was going to die. Told she would be sick for six months. Two or three viral infections a year since then. In the first four week sickness she often had a sensation as if everything was coming to a stop. She had this sensation again with the flu this summer. Numbness of the right side at times, especially the right leg. Bothers her to go to sleep. Tripping on even floors and going upstairs.. Awkward for no reason, as if there were a bump in the floor. Stumbling when walking. Muscle weakness, feels as if she's done a complete workout on waking . Eczema severe of both hands in mid-twenties. Come and goes. Six month of cortisone at that time. Mother and her sister both had eczema. Itching in spots. One time across arm and chest.

(speaks hastily). Overweight. In March lost ten pounds for no reason. Tubal ligation 21 years ago. There were a lot of problems for six months after this. Continuous vaginal discharge and soreness. Lost her sexual interest. Cyst removed from R. breast. Lot of speech problems; using the wrong words. Sudden loss of comprehension. Someone would hand her something and she wouldn't know what it was, even though it was a common item. Family stress in the late spring led to her becoming ill in early July. Her son is thirty and is mildly retarded. She has had no interest in sex since July, having a low interest prior to that. This tends to increase after menses. Frequent sensation of phlegm in her throat. She has high blood pressure alternating with very low blood pressure. Pleurisy in her mid-twenties. She is warm and sensitive to the sun. Craves bread

(3) fat(3) milk(3) Averse bananas (3) Mother died when she was 12 from heart problems. She was the oldest of four kids. Father remarried 11 months later. Step-mother was a very strict, opinionated German women and as a consequence R.'s teenage years were "terrible". Her father had two brain tumors.

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Jan 16/92 One month after the first visit Lot of funny aches and pains in the first week. Very mild chest cold over Christmas. Much less severe then usual. It's been a long, long time since those symptoms didn't drive her to bed. Spot of pain of R. leg and R. arm for two to three days. Burning in a little spot. Energy went way up. Urination is less. Sleeping much better. Not waking uptight at night. More relaxed. Way less edgy in traffic. Even as a passenger usually was aware of traffic as if she were driving. No muscular weakness. I have had days where I felt better than I can remember feeling. No numbness of her right side. More bounce in my step. Increased sexual interest. Much more enthusiasm for baking and cooking, etc. Used to envy women who had energy for that.

Bit of fatigue in the last few days. Headache last night. Wall papered on the weekend (strong odors from glue).

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March 5/92 Energy is great. Most of my pain is gone. Less frequent urination, Less awkwardness, Stiffness after sitting for a few hours and in the morning on waking. Prickly numbness of her right side at times. Spots of eczema since the remedy on her wrist and hands. I feel better at times than when I was a teenager. Before shopping for clothes was so exhausting. Now it is a joy. People at church are amazed by her energy. Sharper mentally. Cooler at night but like an open window.

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Dec. 3/93 Two years after the original visit The remedy always brings me right back up. I used to have 3-4 horrible colds per year but has only had one cold since the original prescription and worked through it easily.

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Case # 3

Female age 33

I first saw this women in Sept of 1993 for grief, anxiety, and depression, around the illness of her 87 year old grandfather. He has a fairly advanced emphysema. He had brought her up since birth. Her father was judged to be to unstable to raise us. Mother is selfish, self-serving, and manipulative. My Grandfather raised us right from the hospital. She has been upset most of the year about his health and crys a lot. "I'm

having a hard time letting him go." She also complains of having had sinusitis almost continuously for the last year, with pressure of the forehead and under the right eye. She has a feeling of fullness in her head. She further complains of irritability and suspiciousness for a week before menses which is better with onset. She also has very painful menses. She is hot at times and cold at other times. She is averse to wearing tight clothing around her neck. She craves sweets(3), pasta(3), feta cheese(3), and tea. I observe that she is a reserved, anxious individual. Plan:

In next saw her in mid-October when she presented with the following symptoms. Impatient before menses. Thick chronic post nasal discharge, along with pressure over the eyes and of the right cheek. This all began with a cold nine months ago. She also complains of mild bladder infections. I prescribed Silicea at this time. I next saw her November 26 with the same symptoms. Additionally she says she has a mild vertigo worse from activity. She had pressure in the forehead with fullness in the head. There was no nasal drainage. She is exhausted (3) and says her legs are like lead. She is generally worse in the damp weather. No energy, no ambition. "I become a hermit this time of year. I have to force myself to socialize." Began when she got a cold with an awful fever and headache a year ago. Tons of dark green mucous. Treated with Bactrim after which it go a bit better and then came right back. She has used mountains of decongestants. Generally she extremely stuffed with no mucous flow. This she finds very uncomfortable. She is always worse in the winter. She also has terrible pains in her leg with her menses. The menstrual pain in very low down and very severe for the first two days.

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I spoke with her by phone Dec. 10. She said she was doing much better, and said she hadn't felt so well in ten months. I next saw her January 13. She reported that she had been in excellent shape since the remedy. Her head cleared and her energy was way up. After the remedy she had gone through almost continuous and often copious drainage, yet she felt a great sense of relief with this. Before it had not been draining except down her throat. After the remedy she needed no decongestants. She also added that she was less afraid of things. "My husband used to control me. I used to be afraid of making waves. Now I feel quite indifferent to his subtle threats. I don't put up with things anymore and I'm not bothered by the mind games." She still has significant PMS and dysmenorrhea.

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Feb. 11/94 Drainage has been continuing, but I associate this with a sense of well being. However, I've been stuffed up since the last period. Had chills and an awful headache. Severe dysmenorrhea. Still feeling more able to speak her mind, less afraid of not saying the right thing. Menses are irregular.

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Discussion of Case #1

This case was actually second in terms of the order the individuals were seen. My case is composed of information derived from the five visits that preceded giving her the right remedy. Oddly enough, this woman is the daughter in law of Case#2. On my fifth visit with her she talked of being dizzy and light headed. She said she had major anxiety, she complained of her fear of deep water, and said that she always imagines the worst scenario of what might happen in a given situation. At this visit her information, along with having previously treated her Mother-in-law, who is strikingly similar in physique and personality, led to the idea of Scutellaria and indeed the result justified the choice. The suggestive symptoms were straightforward enough; an abundance of anxiety, along with vertigo and recurrent sinusitis. Since this is not a post-influenza case, it is particularly useful in bringing out the typical symptoms that should lead to consideration of this remedy. Although I had seen her monthly from Dec. '92 to April '93 once she had been given Scutellaria, I didn't hear from her for months. I mention this partially to explain why there was such a long gap before the follow-up, and partially because it may represent a peculiar pattern in Scutellaria cases, as I will explain further along. Something else I would like to point out is that the remedy only affected one of her menstrual or pre-menstrual symptoms and that was weariness before her menses. I also mention this as it seems to appear to be a pattern in these cases that we will also discuss later. The symptoms of July 20 were relieved promptly with one dose of Lachesis 30. When I last saw her I gave her Lachesis 200

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Discussion case 2

She was given Scutellaria 200 at the first visit on the basis of her her post-influenzal syndrome with anxiety and that is all. At the second visit there were indications of a relapse and I gave Scutellaria again which worked well. I have omitted a very lengthy case history with numerous follow-ups to bring us down to the nitty gritty. However, I would like now to add a few points of interest. In September '92 she had a significant

relapse that she felt was precipitated by exposure to glues. She had very low energy and tearing pains in her chest that she says she had last experienced 25 years previously. This had been diagnosed as a mild pleurisy. She now says that it was ever since this incident that she experienced becoming "deathly ill when she contracted a cold or flu, which she would have 3-4 times a year. At this time, in Sept. 92 I had her take Scutellaria 12 for ten days. Though she said she was feeling a lot better from this she returned a month later with an acute cough for which I prescribed Silicea 200. She next visited at the end of November following a car accident in which she suffered whiplash. She said that she was feeling extremely well up to the accident. However, after the accident it took about three months to stabilize her symptoms to a satisfactory extent. Again it was Scutellaria, this time in a 1M potency that was most helpful, where repetitions of the 200 were failing to yield results. Later periodic repetitions of the 12th potency have been quite adequate to sustain her overall well-being is incomparably better than prior to the first prescription, and as she herself plainly states, it still has a wonderful, tonic-like effect on her. Specifically, she is much less anxious, has greater energy, and is much less susceptible to colds, etc. When she does get a cold her reaction is much less severe than in the past.

Tubal Ligation

She was in early menopause when I first saw her, having infrequent periods. When she does have periods they are very severe and prolonged that Scutellaria has been useless in treating, as with case one. She also has fibroid tumors and swelling of her uterus. She had a tubal ligation twenty one years ago after which she suffered for some months. Is this a factor in her case? Though the medical line of thinking is that tubal ligation is a harmless and inconsequential procedure, my observation has been very much to the contrary. It is only rarely that I have seen a woman who has had this operation and has not suffered numerous problems that trace back to the operation. Specifically, severe pre-menstrual mood changes, severe dysmenorrhea, excessive flow and clotting, abdominal problems, chronic depression, are all changes I have had reported by women following this supposedly innocuous procedure. It is my belief that the interference in the normal rhythmic energy flow of the female system, physically expressed in the unhindered movement of the ovum through the fallopian tube, is responsible for the kind of suppressive and disordering effect I have observed.

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Discussion case three

This is an interesting twist on the same theme and represents a somewhat different balance of symptoms. Her anxiety is quite apparent during her first visit when she is particularly concerned with the thought of her grandfather dying. It should be pointed out that her grandfather was not actually dying, it was essentially the anticipation of his death which was causing her a year of grief and panic. In this instance we do see "fear something will happen," the anticipatory anxiety that I would say is characteristic of this remedy. It is also important to note that her frontal headache symptoms described in the very first visit are quite characteristic of Scutellaria. Boericke and Clarke probably quoting from the same source mention headache worse over the right eye. Her headache was worse under the right eye. At the first visit I gave her Natrum mur. 200 though I thought of Lachesis due to the frantic quality of her grief, the pre-menstrual irritability better onset, warm, and averse to clothing near her neck. Actually though she is not warm but can be both warm and cold, which Lou mentions as a characteristic of this remedy. When I saw her in October I gave her Silicea. She is a rather thin woman with an anxious expression yet a kind of timidity and the idea of a weak constitution was there with her susceptibility to colds. When I saw her in November, she was complaining of vertigo, sinusitis, never having recovered well from a cold, great weariness, and suddenly I'm looking into her anxious eyes and I realized that I had a third Scutellaria case in my sights. Her results have been very gratifying, though yet again we have a third case where the menstrual and pre-menstrual symptoms have been unaffected by the remedy that otherwise positively affected her case.

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General discussion

Scutellaria is a remedy that all of us will have occasion to prescribe, though it unlikely that we will find it through repertorization. Fortunately it is a remedy with a few distinctive characteristics that may help us recognize it when it is needed. At the end I'll sum up the few essentials that will help you recognize this remedy clinically. However, in the meantime there are a number of issues to discuss towards a better general understanding of this remedy.

Scutellaria

A powerful but limited remedy

In all three cases there was a marked improvement of emotional symptoms creating the impression that Scutellaria has acted deeply. On the one hand this is perfectly true, and we could hardly have hoped for better in any of these cases. Yet the cure seemed to have passed over an

entire dimension of their health, that is, the significant menstrual symptoms shared by all three. I surmise from this that Scutellaria is a remedy that affects primarily the nervous system and therefore produces the appearance of a deep cure because of the amelioration at this level. It is my belief that Scutellaria relieves a very deep and old knot of nervous tension within the individual that may go back to circumstances of early childhood. In this sense Scutellaria's action is indeed powerful. Yet it is by no means a polycryst. A polycryst will be found to affect every system, even if stronger in its influence over particular regions. A small remedy affects one or several specific dimensions of the organism, but not all. Apparently Scutellaria does not have much influence on the female hormonal system. Clarke mentions no female symptoms. There is not a single listing for Scutellaria in the entire female section of the latest version of the Complete Repertory.

Scutellaria - flu and fatigue

Classically, this remedy is prescribed for problems that trace back to a severe flu. Thereafter these individuals will get the flu or even a cold with a far greater than usual amount of frequency, severity, and duration. Lou mentions that "their complaints are continuous, but can get worse, and then they intermittently describe it as having the flu." This very accurately accords with my own observation. One of the central features of their chronic complaints is a great deal of fatigue which can be very severe at times. The fatigue can be mental and general, even a feeling of muscular fatigue, which was a cured symptom in case two. In the Complete Repertory Scutellaria is a three for Prostration of mind.

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Sinusitis and frontal headaches

Chronic sinusitis is also a feature in two of the cases. Forehead and facial headaches came up in two of my cases as well as one of Lou's. Heaviness of the forehead and face is characteristic and has been described by earlier authors. Sometimes the headaches are at the base of the skull.

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Vertigo

A point on which I somewhat differed with Lou is that he felt that the vertigo that was typically described in his cases was ".... not a profound vertigo, but rather a sensation that the world is not experienced clearly." I think there is something to what Lou is saying here that further observations may reveal. I do feel that their vertigo is connected to the

neurasthenia or nervous prostration that I believe is the basis of these cases. On the other hand, from a clinical perspective, I would say that their vertigo can range from moderate to fairly severe. When I followed up with case one, who had presented with Meniere's, I pursued this point. She was quite insistent that her dizziness was a very real occurrence. Case three also described a mild vertigo with activity. In her case I relate it somewhat to her chronic sinusitis, but nevertheless the complaint is there. In case two she spoke of awkwardness, bumping into things, tripping as if over a bump in the floor which was cured by Scutellaria. I wonder if this unsteadiness was a kind of vertigo. Lou's first case also described feeling "off balance". Unfortunately, there is only one single vertigo symptom in the repertory for Scutellaria and that is "Vertigo; after eating." It is my impression that vertigo is a characteristic symptom of Scutellaria.

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Anxiety

All three of these women suffered a high level of anxiety which we know to be characteristic of Scutellaria. It was an anxiety that had a kind of frantic tension. Klein says, "The anxiety is low level and at times reaches a more profound intensity, a nervous fear as Boericke describes it." I would say that all three of my cases had pretty significant levels of anxiety. Two of the women described anxiety while riding in cars. There can also be waking with anxiety and anxious dreams. Case one experienced a profound amelioration of fairly intense hydrophobia. One of the old popular names for Scutellaria is Mad dog Skullcap. Scutellaria is discussed as a hydrophobic remedy by Clarke and many authors of the Eclectic school, and this case certainly supports the observation.

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Scutellaria

Tracing the roots A question that needs to be asked is why these people breakdown, in both an emotional and physical sense, from a bout of the flu. The observation that led to the development of my own understanding was a rather peculiar pattern that I noticed while reviewing the cases. Klein noted in one of his patients that the client waited a long time before returning to the office or contacting him following his second visit. This was before he had been given Scutellaria. It struck me as an odd coincidence that two of the women I treated, once they had the Scutellaria and it had acted, were not heard from for quite some time (in one case three months, in the other six months), until either I called them or new problems came up. Klein interpreted his clients slow return as

arising from skepticism after several uncertain prescriptions. This may have been true in his case, but this could not have explained mine, where they had already received the remedy with good results. Lou had observed that Scutellaria patients "do not give much out emotionally" and are "self-focused". This is an astute observation. I noticed that these individuals are primarily absorbed with their day to day concerns, they do not have much of an outgoing awareness. So whether it is out of skepticism, if things aren't working out, or relief if things are better, they simply get on with their daily lives until relapses or further problems in their health drives them back into your office. However, they return in an uncommitted way. They are not determined. Theirs is the simple pragmatism of the uncomfortable.

So the next question is, how did they get this way?

I noticed that all three of my cases were individuals with difficult backgrounds. In all three cases there was estrangement from their parents at a young age. In one case from death, in the other two from alcoholism and other personality problems of their parents. In case one she tells us that her lungs collapsed at eighteen months of age and as a result she was hospitalized for a year. Later she and her siblings were divided into foster homes after they had been abandoned by their mother. She was sexually abused by several of her brothers over a period of years. Her husband was physically abusive in the first five years of their marriage. In case two her mother died when she was twelve and she later suffered tremendously under her step-mother's care. Her adult life has been fraught with difficulties pertaining to her husband, children, and family. In case three her parents were unstable and selfish, coming in and out of her life, but never there for her. She was raised by her grandfather who was 54 when she was born. The confusion, isolation, and grief caused by these various painful childhood experiences creates a kind of nervous tension and an expectation of trouble (Fear, something will happen). A child should have the sense of safety that allows it to relax inwardly while expanding in awareness of the world. The nervous tension these children suffer binds their energy inwardly, a contraction onto their own inner resources. They develop something of a survival mentality. This is what we see later as a kind of self-focus. The nervous system is weakened by the sustained tension of grief, fear, uncertainty. These people have soldiered on through crises after crises attempting to adapt. All three of my cases are individuals who tried to be "good" and adapt throughout their younger lives. These are not rebels and never have been.

These are all today individuals with very conservative values. I would like to make the tentative suggestion based on my cases that these people are often not very introspective and that there is a strong element of naivety. As I stated earlier, their attention is not essentially on the past or far into the future, or far into the world, or far into themselves, but very much taken up with the familiar tensions and habits of their everyday routine, along with fear of the next crises looming. Basically, their nervous tension appears to arise from the pressure that exists between how they wish to relate to life, which is to strive for normality, and their actual experience of life which is fraught with painful elements always threatening. Their anxiety must be in part related to their considerable emotional suppression along with the nervous weakness. In general, their adaptive mechanisms are actually quite successful in that they do lead the relatively normal lives for which they strive. However, the nervous system itself has carried the tension of the past and has suffered, and a general weakening of the immune system is one result.

At a point of low ebb, they get a severe dose of the flu, or to paraphrase Hale, some other long sickness, or over-exercise, over-study, or other long continued and exhausting labors, or several of these combined. Profound exhaustion and a high susceptibility to upper respiratory infections arises.

As with case one, I believe that we would find that these are pretty anxious people well before the initiating incident of the flu. So for individuals needing Scutellaria, repeated emotional shocks, and the attempt to navigate a normal course of life throughout, while sustaining a fairly superficial relationship to their emotional wounds, leads to an eventual breakdown of their nervous system and then their physical health. In this sense Scutellaria really is a nervous system tonic, as has been taught by the herbalists for centuries. It is not a remedy that reaches deeply into the mental/emotional sphere as such, but to restate what I said earlier, it's special homeopathic action is to relieve a very deep knot of nervous tension within the organism that may go back to circumstances of early childhood.

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Clinical Summary

I would like to end with a quick summary of the specific constellation of symptoms that may lead you to a prescription of Scutellaria. These are: Anxiety, often vertigo, fatigue, chronic recurring respiratory infections often beginning with a serious incident of the flu, sinusitis, frontal or occipital headaches. This will be the striking pattern, with very little else

to suggest a particular polycryst. If the post-influenzal syndrome is missing but the other symptoms are present, I would consider this remedy especially where there is a history of profound emotional or physical stress.