

INDIVIDUALIZATION ACCORDING TO ORGANON OF MEDICINE: A CRITICAL REVIEW BASED ON CLASSICAL HOMOEOPATHIC AUTHORS

¹Dr. Atul Kumar Singh, ²Dr. Manvendra Bhattacharya, ^{3*}Dr. Hemant Bhalla,
⁴Dr. Komal Sharma

¹(MD, PhD, HOD, Department of Organon of Medicine MNHMC and RI Bikaner).

²(BHMS, M.Sc, PhD. Department of FMT, MNHMC & RI Bikaner).

^{3,4}(BHMS, MNHMC& RI Bikaner).

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Hemant Bhalla

BHMS, MNHMC& RI Bikaner.



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ABSTRACT

Background: Individualization is one of the most fundamental principles of homoeopathic philosophy and practice. Rooted deeply in Samuel Hahnemann's Organon of Medicine, this concept emphasizes treating the patient as a unique individual rather than focusing solely on the disease label. The principle forms the foundation of homoeopathic case-taking, analysis of symptoms, and remedy selection. Over time, several eminent homoeopathic authors have interpreted and expanded this doctrine, contributing to its practical and philosophical development. **Objective:** To critically review the concept of individualization according to... Individualization in the Organon of Medicine The principle of individualization occupies a foundational place in Samuel Hahnemann's Organon of Medicine. Although the term—individualization|

may not always appear explicitly in every discussion, the concept permeates the entire philosophical structure of homoeopathic therapeutics. Hahnemann consistently emphasized that successful treatment depends upon accurate recognition of the unique symptom totality presented by each patient. The physician's task is therefore not merely to diagnose disease according to conventional nomenclature but to understand the distinctive manner in which disease manifests in the individual organism.

Physician's Duty and the Basis of Individualized Cure

Hahnemann begins the *Organon* by defining the physician's mission in Aphorism 1, stating that the physician's highest calling is to restore the sick to health. This apparently simple statement establishes the philosophical basis for individualization, as restoration of health requires understanding the patient as a whole rather than treating abstract disease entities.

Aphorism 2 further clarifies that the ideal cure should be rapid, gentle, and permanent. Such a cure cannot be achieved through generalized therapeutic routines because patients differ in susceptibility, constitution, and symptom expression.

Aphorism 3 is particularly central to the concept of individualization. Hahnemann states that the physician must clearly understand:

1. What is to be cured in disease,
2. What is curative in medicines,
3. How to adapt the remedy appropriately.

This aphorism establishes individualized prescribing as a scientific necessity. Accurate adaptation of medicine requires precise knowledge of the patient's characteristic symptom picture rather than reliance on disease labels.

Knowledge of Disease Through Individual Symptom Expression

Hahnemann explicitly addresses the individuality of disease manifestation in Aphorisms 5 and 6. In **Aphorism 5**, he emphasizes consideration of:

1. Exciting causes,
2. Maintaining causes,
3. Constitution,
4. Temperament,
5. Habits,
6. Occupation,
7. Social relationships,
8. Age,
9. Sexual function,
10. Environmental influences.

This aphorism is among the clearest textual foundations for individualization. Disease is not

viewed as a detached pathological event but as a condition influenced by the patient's total life context.

Aphorism 6 further asserts that the physician can perceive disease only through the totality of symptoms. Since the internal essence of disease cannot be directly known, its external manifestations become the only guide for therapeutic action.

Thus, individualization depends upon detailed symptom observation rather than theoretical speculation. Totality of Symptoms as the Foundation of Individualization

Aphorism 7 establishes that in disease, the totality of symptoms represents the only conceivable form by which disease demands the remedy.

This aphorism forms the cornerstone of individualized homoeopathic prescribing. Treatment is not directed toward isolated complaints but toward the complete symptom picture characteristic of the patient.

For example, headache alone is insufficient for prescription. The physician must examine:

- Location,
- Sensation,
- Modalities,
- Causation,
- Concomitant symptoms,
- Emotional state,
- Constitutional tendencies.

Only then can true individualization occur. Characteristic Symptoms and Peculiar Manifestations

Hahnemann strengthens the concept further in Aphorisms 153–154.

Aphorism 153 is especially crucial in homoeopathic philosophy. Hahnemann states that the uncommon, peculiar, and characteristic symptoms are chiefly to be considered in selecting the remedy.

This directly supports individualization because common symptoms shared by many diseases lack differentiating value. Individuality emerges through what is unusual and distinctive.

Examples include

- Headache relieved by tight bandaging,
- Cough aggravated after sleep,
- Sadness improved by consolation,
- Thirstlessness during fever.

Such peculiarities define the patient's individuality.

Aphorism 154 complements this by emphasizing the importance of correspondence between characteristic symptoms and medicinal effects.

Thus, remedy selection becomes a process of matching individuality with medicinal individuality.

Individualization in Case-Taking

Aphorisms 83–104 provide detailed instructions for case-taking, constituting one of the most practical sections for individualization.

Hahnemann insists upon

- Careful listening,
- Avoidance of interruption,
- Accurate recording,
- Chronological symptom arrangement,
- Investigation of modalities,
- Inquiry into causation,
- Assessment of previous treatment.

These instructions reveal that individualization is not merely philosophical but procedural.

Aphorisms 90–95 particularly emphasize observation of:

- patient behavior,
- emotional expression,
- gestures,
- voice,
- objective manifestations.

This broadens individualization beyond verbal complaints. Constitution, Susceptibility, and Personal Factors

Hahnemann's concept of individualization also includes constitutional factors.

Aphorism 5 already introduces constitution and temperament.

Later, in discussions of chronic disease, Hahnemann recognizes inherited tendencies, miasmatic predispositions, and varying susceptibility.

Not all patients respond identically to the same morbid influence. For example:

- One individual develops acute disease,
- Another remains unaffected,
- Another develops chronic manifestations.

Such variation reinforces individualized prescribing. Mental and Emotional Individualization

Although later authors elaborated mental generals more extensively, Hahnemann clearly acknowledged the importance of mental symptoms.

Aphorisms concerning case-taking direct physicians to observe mental and emotional changes because disease affects the dynamic totality of the organism.

- Examples:
- Irritability,
- Anxiety,
- Fear,
- Sadness,
- Confusion,
- Aversion to company.

These often become decisive in individualization.

Individualization Versus Disease Naming

Hahnemann consistently rejected therapeutic reliance on disease nomenclature alone.

Aphorism 100 and related discussions of epidemic diseases illustrate this clearly.

Even when multiple patients share the same epidemic disease, each individual case must still be examined for characteristic variation.

This is a sophisticated expression of individualized therapeutics. Individualization in Remedy Selection

Aphorisms 147–150 establish that remedy selection depends upon similarity between patient

symptoms and medicinal symptoms.

This similarity must be individualized rather than generic. Medicines themselves possess individuality through provings. Therefore:

- Patient individuality
- Medicinal individuality.

This is the essence of homoeopathic prescribing.

Critical Interpretation

From the Organon, individualization may therefore be understood as:

—The systematic recognition of the unique totality of symptoms, constitutional characteristics, susceptibilities, mental state, modalities, causative influences, and peculiar manifestations that distinguish one patient from another for accurate remedy selection.¶

This principle is not optional within homoeopathy—it is structurally indispensable.
Transitional Discussion

While Hahnemann established the philosophical and methodological foundations of individualization, later classical authors interpreted this principle through different clinical frameworks. Some emphasized mental generals, others modalities, constitutional states, pathological generals, or repertorial analysis.

Comparative Views of Classical Authors on Individualization

While Samuel Hahnemann established the philosophical and practical foundations of individualization in homoeopathy, later classical authors expanded, refined, and operationalized this principle according to their clinical experiences and interpretative frameworks. Although their methodologies varied, all remained fundamentally aligned with the Hahnemannian doctrine that treatment must correspond to the individual patient rather than merely the disease diagnosis.

James Tyler Kent: Individualization Through Hierarchy of Symptoms

James Tyler Kent made one of the most influential contributions to the doctrine of individualization through his emphasis on symptom hierarchy and constitutional prescribing. In *Lectures on Homoeopathic Philosophy*, Kent asserted that disease affects the patient from the center to the periphery, beginning in the dynamic interior and expressing outwardly through physical manifestations.

For Kent, true individualization depended primarily upon identifying the deepest expressions of individuality, particularly:

- * **Mental generals,**
- * **EMOTIONAL characteristics,**
- * **physical generals,**
- * **Constitutional tendencies.**

Kent regarded common pathological symptoms as possessing limited value because they are frequently shared among many diseases. Instead, he prioritized symptoms that reflect the unique response of the individual organism.

For example

- * **Fear of death during illness,**
- * **Irritability from contradiction,**
- * **Aggravation from heat,**
- * **Desire for open air.**

Kent's constitutional approach significantly shaped modern homoeopathic prescribing. However, critics argue that excessive emphasis on mental generals may occasionally overshadow local pathological realities.

Stuart Close: Philosophical Clarification of Totality

Stuart Close provided one of the most philosophically rigorous interpretations of individualization in *The Genius of Homoeopathy*.

Close emphasized that individualization does not mean collecting random symptoms but understanding the organized totality of characteristic manifestations.

According to Close

—The totality is not a mere numerical aggregate.‖

He argued that symptoms must be evaluated qualitatively rather than quantitatively. For Close, true individualization required:

- Discrimination of characteristic symptoms,
- Evaluation of symptom relationships,
- Recognition of symptom hierarchy,
- Understanding **the patient as an integrated whole.**

Close maintained strong fidelity to Hahnemannian principles while offering conceptual clarity for clinical application.

Herbert A. Roberts: Constitutional Individualization

Herbert A. Roberts emphasized constitutional individuality in *The Principles and Art of Cure by Homoeopathy*.

Roberts viewed each patient as possessing unique constitutional makeup influencing:

- Susceptibility,
- Disease tendency,
- Remedy response,
- **Chronic disease evolution.**

He stressed that constitutional prescribing allows deeper and longer-lasting therapeutic effects compared with merely symptomatic prescribing.

Roberts considered individualization inseparable from:

- **Inherited predisposition,**
- **Temperament,**
- **Physical constitution,**
- **Miasmatic background.**

His approach enriched long-term chronic prescribing but may be criticized when constitutional focus delays acute therapeutic intervention.

Boenninghausen: Individualization Through Modalities and Concomitants Clemens von Bönninghausen developed one of the most practical methodologies for individualization through repertorial analysis.

Boenninghausen believed that characteristic individuality often emerges through:

- **Modalities,**
- **Concomitant symptoms,**
- **Location,**
- **Sensation,**
- **Causation**

His method allowed physicians to construct totality even when complete symptom pictures were unavailable.

Examples

- pain worse motion,
- cough worse lying down,
- headache with nausea,

- symptoms better warmth.

Boenninghausen's Therapeutic Pocket Book operationalized individualization systematically. Critics from the Kentian school sometimes argued that Boenninghausen underemphasized mental generals, yet his methodology remains clinically powerful, especially in incomplete cases.

C.M. Boger: Synthesis of Pathology and Individualization

Cyrus Maxwell Boger attempted reconciliation between constitutional and pathological prescribing. In Synoptic Key, Boger emphasized:

- **causation,**
- **modalities,**
- **pathological generals,**
- **constitutional symptoms,**
- **concomitants.**

Boger recognized that clinical reality often requires balancing philosophical purity with practical therapeutic necessity.

His approach broadened individualization by integrating disease pathology without abandoning Hahnemannian principles.

This pragmatic synthesis remains valuable in modern practice.

E.B. Nash: Bedside Clinical Individualization

Eugene Beauharnais Nash contributed a clinically oriented interpretation in *Leaders in Homoeopathic Therapeutics*.

Nash focused less on abstract philosophy and more on practical differentiation between remedies based on characteristic symptoms.

His approach emphasized:

- **Keynote symptoms,**
- **Striking peculiarities,**
- **Comparative materia medica distinctions.**

For Nash, individualization often occurred through rapid recognition of distinctive remedy picture. While highly practical, keynote prescribing may risk oversimplification if detached from full totality.

J.H. Clarke: Materia Medica-Based Individualization

John Henry Clarke emphasized practical prescribing through materia medica familiarity. In Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica, Clarke highlighted:

- Constitutional affinities,
- Clinical relationships,
- Remedy personalities,
- Pathological correspondences.

Clarke's approach bridged theoretical philosophy and practical therapeutics.

He accepted the importance of individualization while maintaining clinical pragmatism.

H.C. Allen: Characteristic Symptom Emphasis

Henry Clay Allen strongly emphasized characteristic symptoms in works such as Keynotes and Characteristics with Comparisons.

Allen's method focused on identifying

- **Strange,**
- **Rare,**
- **Peculiar symptoms.**

This approach closely aligns with Aphorism 153.

Allen's keynote methodology can accelerate prescribing, particularly in acute cases, but may oversimplify complex chronic presentations if applied superficially.

Comparative Analysis

Although classical authors differed in emphasis, their perspectives can be comparatively summarized.

Author	Primary Basis of Individualization
Hahnemann	Totality of symptoms; peculiar symptoms; constitution
KentMental	generals;constitutional hierarchy
Stuart Close	Organized qualitative totality
RobertsConstitutional	individuality; susceptibility
Boenninghausen	Modalities; concomitants; repertorial totality
Boger	Pathological + constitutional synthesis
Nash	Keynote differentiation
Clarke	Practical materia medica individuality
Allen	Characteristic/keynote symptoms

Critical Appraisal

The apparent differences among classical authors represent variations in methodological emphasis rather than contradictions in principle.

All accept that

- Disease manifests uniquely,
- Remedy selection must be individualized,
- Common symptoms possess limited differentiating value,
- Characteristic symptoms guide accurate prescribing.

Their combined contributions transformed Hahnemann's philosophical principle into diverse practical systems adaptable to clinical circumstances.

Clinical Significance of Individualization in Homoeopathic Practice

Individualization remains one of the most clinically significant principles in homoeopathic therapeutics because it directly governs case-taking, analysis, remedy selection, and long-term patient management. The principle distinguishes homoeopathy from disease-centered therapeutic models by shifting the physician's attention from nosological diagnosis to the patient's unique response to illness.

Individualization in Case-Taking

Effective individualization begins with meticulous case-taking. Hahnemann emphasized detailed observation and unbiased recording of symptoms, recognizing that incomplete or inaccurate data inevitably compromise remedy selection.

- Clinical case-taking must include:
- Chief complaints,
- History of presenting illness,
- Modalities,
- Concomitant symptoms,
- Causative factors,
- Past medical history,
- Family history,
- Mental and emotional state,
- Personal habits,
- Constitutional tendencies.

The objective is not merely symptom accumulation but recognition of the patient's

characteristic symptom portrait.

For example, two patients with bronchial asthma may differ substantially:

- One worse at midnight, anxious, restless, thirstful;
- Another worse in damp weather, irritable, thirstless, better sitting upright.

Such distinctions guide individualized prescribing.

Remedy Selection

Individualization forms the basis of remedy selection through the law of similars. Since medicines possess distinctive proving pictures, accurate prescription depends upon matching the patient's individuality with medicinal individuality.

This process requires prioritizing

- Peculiar symptoms,
- General modalities,
- Emotional changes,
- Constitutional indicators,
- Concomitant features.

Without individualization, remedy selection becomes speculative. Acute Prescribing

In acute disease, rapid individualization is essential.

Even in common acute conditions such as fever, diarrhoea, headache, or respiratory infection, symptom expression varies significantly.

- Examples:
- Fever with intense thirst,
- Fever without thirst,
- Fever with delirium,
- Fever relieved by uncovering,
- Fever worse movement.

Such variations influence remedy choice. Chronic Disease Management

Individualization becomes even more important in chronic disease, where constitutional, hereditary, miasmatic, and lifestyle influences shape disease expression.

Long-term management often requires understanding

- Constitutional susceptibility,

- Chronic predisposition,
- Emotional patterns,
- Recurrent modalities,
- Environmental triggers.

This broader perspective enhances therapeutic continuity.

DISCUSSION

The doctrine of individualization remains one of the defining pillars of classical homoeopathic therapeutics. The present review demonstrates that Hahnemann's formulation in the *Organon of Medicine* established a robust conceptual framework rooted in symptom totality, characteristic manifestations, constitution, susceptibility, and individualized remedy adaptation.

Subsequent classical authors preserved this foundation while emphasizing different practical dimensions.

Kent's focus on mental generals elevated constitutional analysis, though critics suggest possible overemphasis in some contexts. Boenninghausen's repertorial methodology offered a structured practical approach, especially useful in incomplete symptom pictures. Boger successfully integrated pathology with constitutional principles, making individualization more clinically flexible.

Close contributed conceptual precision by clarifying that totality represents an organized qualitative whole rather than a simple symptom count. Roberts reinforced constitutional and chronic disease perspectives. Nash, Clarke, and Allen emphasized pragmatic clinical differentiation through keynotes and remedy characterization.

These interpretative differences reflect methodological evolution rather than theoretical fragmentation. Nevertheless, certain practical challenges remain.

Individualization depends heavily on physician skill, accurate case-taking, materia medica knowledge, and sound judgment. Subjective interpretation may introduce variability between practitioners. Time constraints in busy clinical practice may also limit detailed analysis.

Despite these limitations, individualization remains indispensable within the homoeopathic

paradigm because it directly embodies the principle of treating the patient rather than the disease.

Its enduring relevance lies in its capacity to integrate symptom individuality, constitutional understanding, and therapeutic precision.

CONCLUSION

Individualization represents the essence of classical homoeopathic prescribing and remains deeply rooted in the philosophical framework of Samuel Hahnemann's *Organon of Medicine*. The principle recognizes that disease manifests uniquely in each patient according to constitution, susceptibility, temperament, environmental influences, and characteristic symptom expression.

Hahnemann established individualization through detailed case-taking, emphasis on totality of symptoms, and prioritization of peculiar manifestations.

Classical authors such as Kent, Stuart Close, Roberts, Boenninghausen, Boger, Nash, Clarke, and Allen enriched this doctrine by offering distinct yet complementary interpretative models.

Although their methodologies differ, all converge on the fundamental principle that accurate remedy selection depends upon recognizing the individuality of the patient.

Thus, individualization remains not merely a historical concept but a continuing clinical imperative in homoeopathic therapeutics.

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