

Beating my AF with homeopathy

- Elizabeth's story

In 2009 when I was 74-years-old, I started having attacks where my heart was fluttering and I felt faint. The flutters were very rapid and irregular, so my pulse was too fast for me to count. I could see and feel it quivering erratically in my neck when looking in the mirror. I did not know what the matter was with me and felt alarmed. Although I am a nurse, I started training in 1953 and I can't remember ever learning about AF in those days.

As I am an autogenic therapist (i.e. stress management) I tried this on myself, although I was not actually stressed, apart from feeling frightened when having an attack. I already also did yoga and meditation but none of these remedies seemed to neither help when I had an AF attack; nor prevent them occurring. As I am a Quaker spiritual healer, I asked my healer friends to give me healing. But this did not stop the attacks, although maybe it resulted in the outcome I eventually found.

I knew about Buteyko breathing, which is taught to children with asthma. I found I could sometimes make my heart go back into sinus rhythm by doing this type of breathing.

However, I was having attacks several times a week, and sometimes three times a day. I did not like the faintness and breathlessness accompanying the attacks. So, eventually I decided it was serious enough to consult my GP. I was worried I would not actually be having an attack when in his surgery, so he might think I was neurotic or a hypochondriac!

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Fortunately, when my GP was listening to my heart with his stethoscope, it suddenly went into an erratic flutter. So he believed me! I was impressed that he immediately referred me to my local hospital to see a cardiologist. I was also given an appointment within two weeks. My GP had told me he suspected AF. He reassured me that when it was diagnosed I would be given treatment.

After an ECG and then a 24-hour ECG, and an echo-scan and several blood tests, I was indeed diagnosed with paroxysmal AF. The cardiologist was interested that by doing Buteyko breathing, I could sometimes return my heart to sinus rhythm. He said it was alright to go on doing this. But, he said I needed warfarin and a beta-blocker to prevent my having a stroke. He explained how the AF predisposes one to a clot forming. He sent me back to my GP to discuss this. Meanwhile, I was told to take soluble aspirin daily. Being soluble; it is less likely to cause an ulcer.

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I was disappointed that there were no tablets which would stop the flutters, but only preventative measures for a stroke. I did not wish to take warfarin as I knew I would have to make frequent visits for blood INR tests to adjust the dose. So I would become a 'perpetual patient'.

So, as I am otherwise fit, with normal blood pressure and weight, with a healthy vegan nutrition and exercise regularly; I asked my GP if I might first try homeopathy. I used to have a GP on the NHS, who has introduced me to anthroposophical remedies. So, I wanted to investigate whether homeopathic hawthorne could help me. My GP

inferred that homeopathic remedies were merely placebo, but agreed I could try. However, he insisted that I should continue taking the aspirin. I agreed to do this, and still am. I obtained the hawthorne (called crataegus) from the Waheda pharmacy and took potency 30 daily.

Almost immediately the AF flutter attacks were reduced to one or two a week. After about two months on crataegus, the attacks had almost completely stopped. When I tried wearing myself off (as one is supposed to do when better) the attacks of AF came back. I was assured it was alright to keep taking it continuously, provided I had 'a rest' at weekends, to keep it 'working'. I am still doing this and only occasionally have a flutter.

After a year from my first appointment, I went back to see the cardiologist. He was pleased that the crataegus had more or less 'cured' me; and my ECG was now normal. So he discharged me. I still feel well but I am careful not to drink alcohol or caffeine drinks. I just stick to herbal tea and healthy vegan tea.

Elizabeth, London (2013)

A note from AF Association:

Currently there is little clinical research regarding AF and homeopathy. The AF Association strongly recommend that you discuss with your doctor any changes in diet or medication. Some medications may not suit everyone and may have interactions with existing drugs. Therefore, it is extremely important to keep all those involved in managing your medical care, informed.

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