A fresh look at the concept of Genus Epidemicus: findings from the Clificol Project

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Clificol® COVID-19 Support Project is an innovative international data collection project aimed at tackling some of the core questions in homeopathy, including the notion of Genus Epidemicus.

Aims: To shed some light on the notion of Genus Epidemicus in the context of this infection. Going beyond that, the project aims to use these data to tackle more fundamental questions, such as the role of symptoms and rubrics in treatment individualisation..

Methodology: This online multi-national data-collection project is supported by the ECH, ECCH, ICH, HRI, LMHI, and other professional associations. The collected data includes demographic information, severity, conventional diagnosis and treatment, presenting symptoms as well as the remedies prescribed. The outcome of treatment was tracked using the ORIDL scale.

The concept of Genus Epidemicus, including the role of treatment individualisation, was investigated by analysing whether presenting symptoms cluster into distinct groups (K-Means clustering approach). The symptom data originating from China was obtained using a questionnaire.

Results and discussion: 20 Chinese practioners collected 359 cases, primarily in the first half of 2020 (766 consultations, 363 prescriptions). The cluster analysis found two to be the optimum number of clusters. These two symptomatic clusters had a high overlap with the two most commonly prescribed remedies in that population: In cluster 1 there were 297 prescriptions, 95.6% of which were Gelsemium sempervirens, In cluster 2, there were 61 prescriptions, 95.1% of which were Bryonia alba.

Under the assumption of a single genus epidemicus we would expect to see a single cluster of symptoms. The data from the Chinese population were not compatible with this assumption.

Conclusion: This was the first study that investigated the notion of Genus Epidemicus by using modern statistical techniques. These analyses identified at least two distinct symptom pictures. The notion of a single COVID-19 Genus Epidemicus did not apply to this population.

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