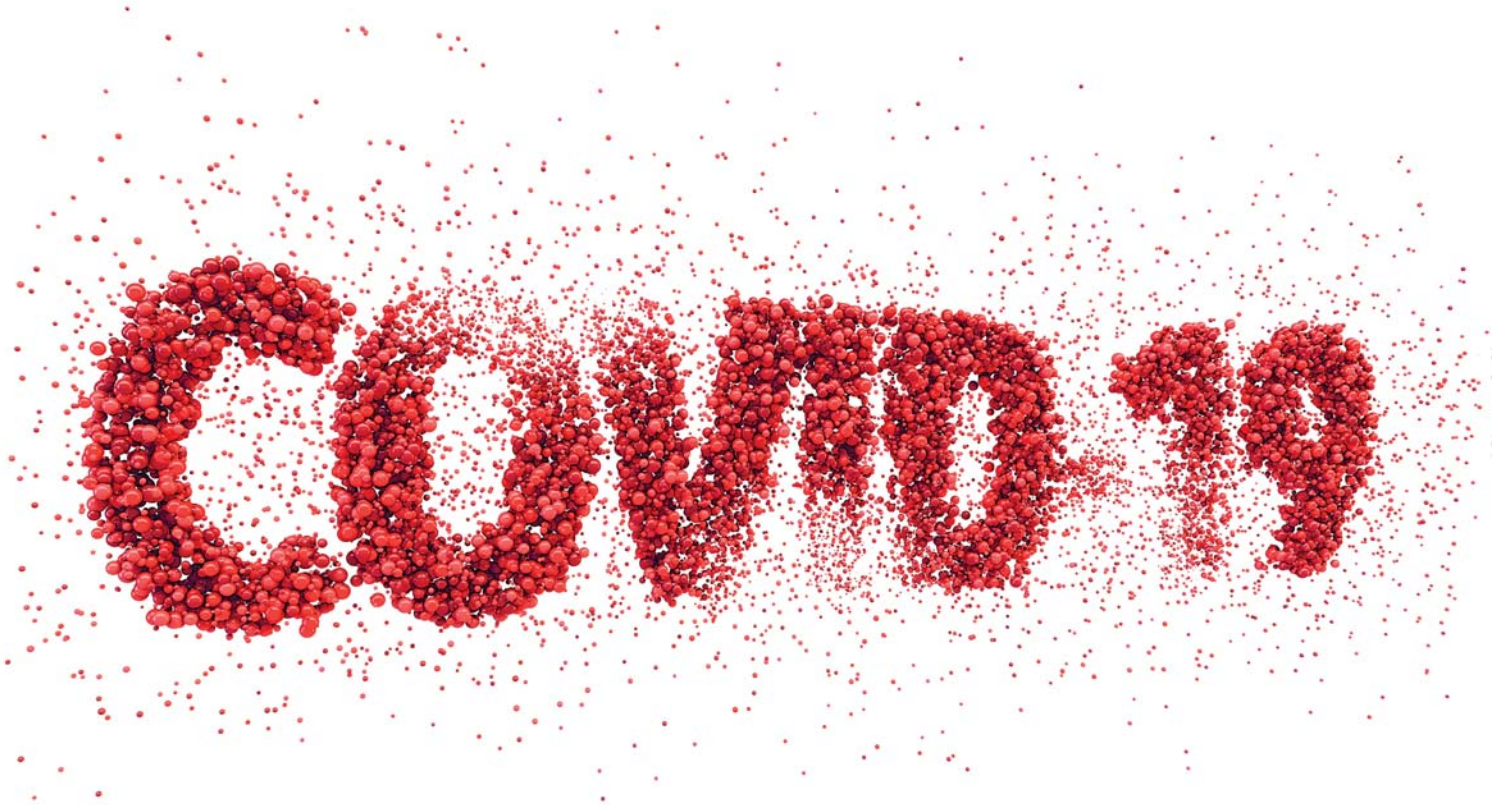


Society director Francis Treuherz, known as the FT index for his in-depth knowledge of all things homeopathic, and a regular voice on the end of the Homeopathic Helpline for more than 20 years, talks about his experience as a patient when he fell ill with symptoms of Covid-19. His wife Rachel Montagu tells it from her point of view.



PRACTITIONER TURNS PATIENT: ADVENTURES WITH COVID-19

We attended Synagogue on March 9, in the evening to celebrate the festival of Purim. As religious festivals go it is a 'little wild, a sort of carnival'. The book of Esther is chanted before the community. During the reading, whenever the name of Haman, the persecutor of the Jews, is heard, the children are encouraged to stamp and boo, the only time in the year they are encouraged to make a noise during the service. We wear fancy dress. Some have a drink after the service. I indulged in a few drinks and ate well at a buffet after the service. The atmosphere alone was infectious in a metaphorical sense, but more physical at the buffet which included shared dips like hummus.

Prolonged aftermath

Other possibilities for the infection might have been attendance at a hospital for an out-patient appointment or bus journeys. But whatever the source, one week later I became ill. I am uncertain when my wife became ill, but I may have been the proximal cause.

We called 111 and it was agreed that we should remain in the care of our GP, and we did not have to go to hospital. He approves of our medical idiosyncrasies. Later on, we did have tests for the virus and they lost the results, so we never became a statistic.

I do not remember clearly what happened. I do recall that I was very weak and could not get up the stairs so I slept alone in a spare bedroom. I was very close to a toilet as I could hardly walk and needed to get up in the night. I was so weak that I could not get my pyjamas on and off

unaided. Looking at the remedies, I must have had respiratory symptoms. I think at times early on I was semi-conscious and/or delirious.

I do have some psoriasis which spread more than usual and had a strange, rare and peculiar symptom: the lesions were not scaly and hardly itched. Instead they developed into large soft white flaps the size of a small finger-nail. These dissipated as I recovered and the normal itchy scales returned, but have at last lessened.

Symptoms begin

Colleague Simon Taffler very kindly looked after myself and Rachel via the phone and dropped remedies through the letter box as needed. Big thanks are due to him.

The aftermath was prolonged. Since 1996 I have been on call on the Homeopathic Helpline for two days each week. I quit when I became ill and have not returned to duty. I was mentally and physically weak. Even now, many months later, I think that my memory is not what it was and I cannot walk very far. There is a notion that one effect is the loss of a sense of smell. I think I can still detect odours – certainly of foods. But the PQSR is that my own body odour has vanished. I do not require the use of a deodorant. How odd is that? In retrospect, it all seems surreal. ▶

“ I have no intention of letting this virus kill me off, and I am far older than he is. ”



About Francis Treuherz FSHom

Francis Treuherz FSHom has been in practice since 1984 and worked for the NHS from 1990-2003. He is a Fellow of the Society, former editor and board member for 20+ years. He was a former trustee of the British Homeopathic Association and the Homeopathy Action Trust. He has taught many seminars, has written two books and is an incurable collector of homeopathy books and artefacts.

Rachel Montagu



Rachel Montagu writes:

Francis realised that his temperature was up on March 17. He had already had an intermittent dry cough for two days. For the first five days, he had a temperature, was coughing up some nasty phlegm and was weaker than usual, but did not seem seriously ill. During the second week, he got worse, becoming even weaker, and often delirious. At this stage, I realised that I had Covid too: my temperature was up, I had a dry cough, and, although I'm normally comfortable in a single sweater, was shivering while wearing two sweaters and a scarf. I also became breathless while walking up our slightly uphill street on my final daily walk before conceding I was ill.

Francis did not have the loss of sense of taste that was reported as a major Covid symptom (and which I did have) but was very reluctant to eat. David Needleman suggested supplementary nutrition, and that was helpful, although Francis still needed to be encouraged to eat proper meals alongside the nutrition drinks.

Delusions while ill

Some of Francis' delusions while he was ill: during the night he insisted there was a weight hanging over his bed which was about to fall upon him, so he shouldn't go back to sleep. At mealtimes, he insisted that I must perform an operation on his mouth before he could eat, gesturing towards the area he said needed to be cut out. Since I was already worried that he wasn't eating enough, thinking of reasons to give him why he could eat without any operation was an interesting challenge. At one point he asked me to remove the monsters from the spare room, and also said that there were 10 words in the spare room, and if he couldn't remember them, he would die – he then asked how many words there were in the sitting room.

He also became panicky, thinking that he had been deserted and left alone if I was out of his sight for very long, even if I had warned him beforehand. Francis found it hard to remember how to do some activities. We both had an upset stomach as part of the infection, which my stepdaughter informed us was an excellent symptom to have: her doctor neighbours reckoned the patients with upset stomachs were less likely to develop severe chest symptoms than those who didn't – I don't know whether research confirms that.

GP advice

I was nervous that I did not have the medical expertise to recognise when/if Francis reached a stage when he needed to be hospitalised. During the stage when Francis was frequently delirious, I phoned the GP who rang back late in the evening and talked me through a range of physical signs: pulse, breaths per minute and so on, which helped give me

more confidence.

Towards the end of the second week, Francis said to me that he was unsure whether he would recover, because he was too old to recover from such an illness. I was sure that if he despaired of recovery, it would become a self-fulfilling prophecy, so said what I could think of to encourage him, and asked friends and family to suggest other positive things to say: their replies ranged from my sister's scientific, "in every age group, even the 90s, more people recover from Covid than die from it" to my aunt's robust, "I have no intention of letting this virus kill me off, and I am far older than he is."

Good support

We had wonderful support. Francis has mentioned Simon Taffler's prescriptions for him. Friends shopped for us, other friends prayed and enlisted friends of theirs to pray also; that helped me find something to say when I was wondering how to respond during the time Francis was not his normal self. Family and friends rang or skyped/zoomed to chat so I didn't feel too isolated.

Gradually Francis' temperature came down and stayed down, then mine did the same, and the slow process of recovering stamina and energy began for us both.

Postscript from Francis:

I was flabbergasted to read about my delusions and behaviour which Rachel has described. It feels like I lived through a near-death experience with no real memory of the detail. This was so sudden and overwhelming, but I am now recovered and I am back at work, but I am glad no one has consulted me about the virus as I could not become an unprejudiced observer. I am so grateful to Rachel for coping with my problems while she herself was ill, thank you is an understatement.

Remedies prescribed:

- March 16: *Aconite 1M*
- March 17: *Phosphorus 30c, Camphor 30c*
- March 18: *Aconite 1M*
- March 19: *Aconite 1M, Camphor 30c*
- March 20: *Phosphorus 200c, Camphor 30c*
- March 21: *Phosphorus 200c, Camphor 30c*
- March 22: *Camphor 30c*
- March 23: *Camphor 30c, Camphor 200c*
- March 24: *Camphor 200c*
- March 25: *Camphor 200c, Carbo vegetabilis 200c*
- April 3 to 7: *daily Carbo vegetabilis 200c.* ●