

Inspiring event hosted by HRI at the House of Commons

On 17 May 2011, the Homeopathy Research Institute (HRI) hosted a reception at the House of Commons to promote scientific research in homeopathy. Sponsored by David Tredinnick MP, this unprecedented event was attended by over 150 guests including academics, scientists, peers and members of Parliament, as well as representatives from across the homeopathic industry and NHS healthcare providers.

The HRI reception attracted attention from around the world, with researchers involved in both fundamental and clinical research attending from the US, Austria, Belgium, Germany, India and Northern Ireland to show their support for the Institute's work. The event focused on presentation of the reasons why further research in homeopathy is needed and provided an opportunity for the HRI to launch a £2million fundraising appeal to fund this work.



House of Commons, Members' Dining Room

Networking in the Members' Dining Room

This exciting event enabled experts in homeopathy research and experienced clinicians to mingle over afternoon tea with those interested in finding out more about this field, including NHS consultants, politicians such as Lord Stone of Blackheath and the Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, and members of the Health Select Committee. The Institute was particularly pleased to receive cross-party support and to welcome guests such as Dr Michael Dixon OBE (Chairman of the NHS Alliance and a director of the College of Medicine) and the Earl Baldwin of Bewdley (member of the House of Lords' Science and

Technology Committee which issued a report on Complementary and Alternative Medicine in 2000 and Co-Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Alternative and Complementary Medicine during the 1990s).

"This event offered a rare opportunity to bring together those interested in and supportive of homeopathy from many walks of life and to celebrate the future of homeopathy - high quality research backing up the highest quality of homeopathic clinical care."

Dr Elizabeth Thompson, Lead Clinician and Academic Director, Bristol Homeopathic Hospital and HRI Trustee

Thought-provoking presentations

The speeches were opened by host David Tredinnick MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated Healthcare and an elected member of the Health Select Committee. Mr Tredinnick made an impassioned speech about the value of homeopathy for day-to-day health problems, reminding those attending that he practices what he preaches using homeopathy himself in first aid situations, before turning to the resources of the NHS. He stressed the potential cost-benefits of integrating homeopathy into the NHS, the need for homeopathy research to help achieve such integration and therefore the necessity of an organisation such as the HRI.



David Tredinnick MP



*Rachel Roberts,
HRI Chief Executive*

Prof Kate Thomas presented five key reasons why we need research in homeopathy, based on her 25 years experience in academia and health services research, with a special interest in complementary therapies and their potential role in the NHS. Referring to the 'evidence check' into homeopathy carried out by the Science and Technology Select Committee in 2009, Prof Thomas said, "The committee sought to dismiss homeopathy as 'scientifically implausible', but to me good science should be excited by anomalies, they're often a sign that we've got something to learn and as Marilynne Robinson memorably suggested, the most important statement in science is not 'Eureka' but 'that's curious'".

"Despite a sceptical and sometimes cynical campaign against it, homeopathy remains very popular, and that has been reflected in the attitudes of MPs. The HRI's lively and well-attended event brought together a wide range of people and groups involved in homeopathy in diverse ways. It was a great opportunity to exchange views and discuss research ideas, as well as a morale-booster. Well done, HRI!"

*Dr Peter Fisher, Clinical Director,
Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine*



*Dr Alex Tournier,
Chairman*

The final presentation, by HRI Chairman Dr Alex Tournier, began by acknowledging the controversial nature of homeopathy and stating the need for objective, rational exploration of this subject. He explained: "I believe we need to know. We need to find out the truth, or more probably the truths, behind homeopathy - whether it's about water structures, the placebo effect or the benefits of holistic care." Dr Tournier also highlighted the wide use of homeopathic medicine in Europe, particularly the use of over-the-counter homeopathic prescriptions in France.



Clockwise from top: Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, Lord Stone of Blackheath, Prof Kate Thomas, University of Sheffield, and Dr Clare Relton, HRI Trustee.

Considering the bigger picture

The event was covered by US film-makers Blind Dog Films as part of a documentary on homeopathy and plans are also in progress to produce a short film covering the event which will be available on the HRI website and on YouTube. Such coverage will help us to bring our message to a wider audience and attract the funds that are needed to facilitate this important research.

The Homeopathy Research Institute is delighted with the success of this reception, which brought together a broad range of experts across many disciplines sharing the goal of promoting high-quality scientific research in the field of homeopathy.

The HRI Management Team

The HRI Team

This event would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Mrs Rachel Roberts (Chief Executive), Mr Simon Wilkinson-Blake (Event Organiser) and Mrs Lorna Birch (Public Relations), plus the support of our Trustees and Patrons. Particular thanks go to Dr Clare Relton for her invaluable input on clinical research matters and for bringing the event to the attention of interested academics from outside the homeopathic profession.

Support the Research

HRI £2million fundraising appeal

We need your help to raise the funds needed for vital research into whether homeopathy works for specific conditions, and if so, how and why it works.

With **6 million people** in the UK using homeopathy, these questions need to be addressed. To contribute to this appeal please go to our website www.homeoinst.org

Help us reach our target by 2013!