

Press Release



For immediate release

- **Authoritative report commissioned by Swiss government supports homeopathy**
- **Homeopathy reimbursed in Switzerland on national scheme**
- **Previous negative findings about homeopathy discredited**

The long awaited English translation of the Swiss Health Technology Assessment (HTA) report on Homeopathy was published in December 2011. This authoritative report offers an unambiguous endorsement of the evidence base for homeopathy.

This report was commissioned by the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) as part of an overall evaluation of Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAMs). The HTA methodology adopted by the authors of the report is a cornerstone of the UK's NIHR (National Institute of Health Research) strategy for assessing real-world effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for the NHS.

The authors, Doctor Gudrun Bornhöft and Professor Peter Matthiessen, conclude "In summary, it can be said that there is sufficient evidence for the preclinical effectiveness and the clinical efficacy of homeopathy and for its safety and economy compared with conventional treatment."

Following on from the initial publication of this report, a public referendum in Switzerland in 2009 supported the inclusion of homeopathy and other complementary and alternative medicines in the Swiss national health insurance, with 67% of the population voting in favour. Earlier this month, the Swiss government passed legislation to enact the referendum's conclusion.

The 234-page report exhaustively reviews the clinical research in homeopathy (both systematic reviews and the original clinical studies). It includes a summary of 22 systematic reviews of clinical trials in specific medical conditions, 20 of which show a positive direction of evidence for homeopathy (with 5 of those 20 showing clear evidence of effectiveness).

The report sheds an interesting light on the meta-analysis of Homeopathy published in *The Lancet* in 2005, which was heralded by the *Lancet*'s editor as "The end of homeopathy". The authors carefully analyse the *Lancet* study, concluding "While the above argument does not allow us to draw the reverse conclusion that homeopathy is effective, it does support the claim that the Shang et al. study 2005 does not prove the ineffectiveness of homeopathy". These remarks strongly undermine the conclusions of the *Lancet* 2005 meta-analysis, which, to date, remains the only original scientific study ever to conclude that the clinical effects of homeopathy are likely to be due to placebo.

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Dr Alex Tournier, Executive Director of the Homeopathy Research Institute said:

“The publication of the Swiss HTA report confirms the growing body of evidence which suggests that the effects of homeopathy are not due to placebo alone. More than ever, we need to pursue the research which will enable us to answer the burning questions, ‘Are homeopathic dilutions biologically active and if so what is their mechanism of action?’ This we are actively pursuing at the Homeopathy Research Institute.”

About the Homeopathy Research Institute

The Homeopathy Research Institute is a leading charity, based in the UK, working to facilitate scientific research in the field of homeopathy.

For further information, please visit: www.homeoinst.org

References available on request.

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