ADVICE ON HOMOEOPATHIC PRODUCTS

What about the evidence base for homoeopathy?

Peter A Fisher consultant physician

Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine, London WC1N 3HR, UK

This letter is from 47 other authors: Ubiratan Adler, University of Sao Paulo; Paolo Bellavite, University of Verona; Philippe Beton, CRDT, Paris; Brian Berman, University of Maryland; Simonetta Bernardini, Centro Ospedaliero di Medicina Integrata, Ospedale F Petruccioli, Leoni Bonamin, Università Paulista; Marie France Bordel, International Foundation for Clinical Homoeopathy; Irene Camererkin, Wageningen University; Flavio Dantas, University of Sao Paulo; Jonathan Davidson, Duke University; Peter Davis, University of Westminster; Robert Dumont, Northwestern University; Jose Eizyaga, Universidad Maimonides; Francisco Eizyaga, Universidad Maimonides; Michael Frass, University of Vienna; Joyce Frye, University of Maryland; Carla Holandino, University of Rio de Janeiro; John Hughes, University of Liverpool; John Ives, Samueli Institute; Jennifer Jacobs, University of Washington; Kim Jobst, Journal of Alternative and Complementary Therapy; Wayne Jonas, Samueli Institute; Ansir Khuda Bukhsh, Kalyani University; Christein Klein, Louis Bolk Institute; Rainer Luedtke, Carstens Foundation; Anne Majumdar, University of Liverpool; Rajkumar Manchanda, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Delhi; John Mathie, Faculty of Homoeopathy; Lionel Mitgrom, Program for Advanced Homoeopathic Studies; Marcin Molski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan; Chaturbhija Nayak, Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, Delhi; Ton Nicolai, European Committee for Homoeopathy; Menahem Oberbaum, Sha're Zedek Medical Centre; Chandragouda Patil, R C Patel College of Pharmacy; Bernard Polevkin, Faculty of Medicine, Marseille; David Reilly, Glasgow Homeopathic Hospital; David Riley, University of New Mexico; Helmut Roniger, Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine; Elio Rossi, Centro di riferimento regionale toscano; Lex Rutten, VHAN; Jean Sainte-Laudy, CERBA, Paris; Marcus Zuhan, Televia University of Sao Paulo; Trevor Thompson, University of Bristol; Elizabeth Thompson, Bristol Homeopathic Hospital; Alexander Tournier, Homoeopathic Research Institute; Michel Van Waesenhoven, chair, homeopathic medicines registration committee, Belgian Medicines Agency; Carlos Zacharias, University of Sao Paulo.

Bewley and colleagues attack the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency for advertising for new members for its Advisory Board on Registration of Homoeopathic Products and imply that anyone who practises or researches homoeopathy is a quack or pseudoscientist.¹ This is based on their unreferenced claim: “Homoeopathy has definitively and repeatedly been proved to work no better than placebo or nocebo.”¹

This claim is not based on evidence. On the contrary, evidence from meta-analyses and systematic reviews consistently shows that homoeopathy is effective in certain conditions, such as seasonal allergic rhinitis and upper respiratory tract infections.²³

Another systematic review reports that several in vitro studies show effects attributable to very highly diluted substances.³

The evidence around homoeopathy is challenging. The medical and scientific community should at last rise to the challenge instead of sinking to unfounded ad hominem insults.

Competing interests: None declared.


Cite this as: BMJ 2011;343:d6689

© BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2011