

[REDACTED]

From: Frederick Mendelsohn <faomcloud@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, 12 July 2012 6:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Homeopathy Review: comments for meeting 17-07-12 [No Protective Marking]
Attachments: Homeopathy Review notes for 17-07-12.txt; ATT00001.txt

Dear [REDACTED]

I accidentally sent some incomplete versions of the attached file. Please ignore them.

I believe that the assessment of secondary literature has been performed very well with careful systematic analysis and the results are reported factually with strong supporting material

I have made some suggestions aimed at improving the impact of the report, particularly emphasizing the overall conclusions and provision of an executive summary at the front of the document

Dear [REDACTED]

I am impressed by the rigor, thoroughness and systematic approach given to this evaluation of the published reviews of efficacy and side effects of homeopathy. The decision to restrict the evaluation to particular conditions is sensible.

The methods and criteria for various decisions are covered very well. The analysis of the included reviews seems to have been done in a careful systematic manner and there is ample detail to enable those who wish to do so to read and evaluate the original material.

However, currently the material reads as a detailed methods document and I think there needs to be more emphasis on the results. I think the document would have more impact and be easier to read if the results came before the methods, including an executive summary at the front. Perhaps both technical and lay versions of the summary would be relevant.

I also feel that several pages describing the overall conclusions are needed. At present there are very detailed accounts of inclusion and exclusion criteria and decisions regarding individual reviews but really only a few paragraphs on the overall conclusion ie that in nearly all cases there is insufficient high quality evidence to enable conclusions regarding efficacy etc

All of the material presented should be included, including the tables and appendices, because it enables the reader to see the care and rigor that has gone into the analysis.

Some minor comments are:

Under Methods, Search Strategy, paragraph 4, the comma before "Boolean" should be a full stop.

A list explaining the many abbreviations would help especially CEBM, SR, MA, CAM etc. Also define after first usage in the text.

In the tables, Journals are sometimes given in italics, sometimes underlined, sometimes neither. Is there any significance attached to this? If not consistency is needed.

Table 9. "cholecystopathia" is an outmoded entity.
"Viral infection" is better than "viral entity"

Appendices to Report, Appendix 5

The table is headed. "...quality measures" but it is unclear what the quality measure(s) are being referred to. In the text many valid and relevant measures are discussed but only "risk of bias" seems to be presented in the table.

Overall, a lot of excellent work has gone into this review and the results are presented in a systematic, unbiased and convincing manner. Since the aim of the study is to determine the state of knowledge regarding efficacy in the area, as assessed by evaluation of the secondary published material, more emphasis needs to be given to presenting a general overview and conclusions near the front of the document. I am not suggesting that any of the current detail be deleted because it adds impressive support for the conclusions.