

An Overview of Positive Homeopathy Research and Surveys The European Network of Homeopathy Researchers April 2005

This document has been produced by the European Network for Homeopathy Researchers (ENHR). The ENHR was established in 2004 with support from the European Council for Classical Homeopathy (ECCH). ECCH currently assists the ENHR in its secretarial work. The ENHR consists of 39 individuals from 10 different countries involved in or with a special interest in homeopathy research. The ENHR is open to membership for any individual involved or interested in homeopathy research.

Purpose of the European Network of Homeopathy Researchers (ENHR):

- The primary aim of the ENHR is to contribute to improving homeopathy research for the benefit of patients.
- A long-term objective of the ENHR is to contribute to carrying out international EU funded research projects within the area of homeopathy research.
- The ENHR consists of researchers, research advisors and representatives of the homeopathy profession as well as consumer/patient groups with an interest in the area of homeopathy research.
- Members of the ENHR inform each other about homeopathy research that is in the planning stages or being carried out, as well as published research articles.

Introduction

This document contains a sample of brief summaries of positive homeopathy research, together with the full references. Additional information may be found in the document entitled 'Facts about homeopathy and other CAM therapies' (an ECCH document), and on the enclosed list of website addresses. Readers are recommended to read the full research articles in order to acquire a more profound knowledge base of research that has been undertaken.

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USE OF HOMEOPATHY AND OTHER CAM THERAPIES

Homeopathy is being practised in 40 out of 42 European countries.

The Legal Situation with Regard to the Practice of Homeopathy in Europe, revised report, June 2002, European Council for Classical Homeopathy. Legal Status of Traditional Medicine and Complementary/Alternative Medicine: A Worldwide Review, World Health Organization, 2001.

Homeopathy is the most frequently used CAM therapy in 5 out of 14 surveyed countries in Europe and among the three most frequently used in 11 out of 14 surveyed countries.

Norges offentlige utredninger, NOU 1998:21 Alternativ medisin. (Official report published by the Norwegian Department of Health. Available at:

<http://odin.dep.no/hd/norsk/publ/utredninger/NOU/030005-020019/index-ved005-b-n-a.html>

Ot.prp. nr. 27 (2002-2003). Om lov om alternativ behandling av sykdom mv.

Public interest for and acceptance of alternative treatment increases in most European countries. Percentage of the population using alternative treatment varies from 18 to 71 % depending on country.

Ot.prp. nr. 27 (2002-2003). Om lov om alternativ behandling av sykdom mv.

Homeopathy is officially recognised and included in the national health system in a number of countries within and outside of Europe.

Legal Status of Traditional Medicine and Complementary/Alternative Medicine: A Worldwide Review, World Health Organization, 2001.

Between 1/4 and 1/5 of all EU citizens use homeopathic medicines (EU Commission statement).

Resolution on the Commission report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directives 92/73/EEC and 92/74/EEC on homeopathic medicinal products (COM(97)0362 - C4-0484/97)

Information to be included

Menniti-Ippolito, F., Forcella, E., Bologna, E., Gargiulo, L., Traversa, G., & Raschetti, R. 2002, "Use of unconventional medicine in children in Italy", Eur.J.Pediatr., vol. 161, no. 12, p. 690.

USER SURVEYS SHOWING PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT

Seven out of ten patients visiting Norwegian homeopaths reported a meaningful improvement in their main complaint 6 months after the initial consultation.

Steinsbekk, A. Patients' assessments of the effectiveness of homeopathic care in Norway: A prospective observational multicentre outcome study. Homeopathy, Volume 94, Issue 1, January 2005, Pages 10-16.

One year after their first visit to a homeopathic clinic, 609 patients were asked to rate their general health compared with a year ago. 73.5 % reported a marked or moderate improvement in their health status.

F. Attena et al. Homeopathy in Primary Care: self reported change in health status. Complementary therapies in Medicine Vol 8 No 1. March 2000.

A study of 829 patients treated with homeopathic medicines, where conventional treatment had been unsatisfactory or contraindicated. 61 % had a substantial improvement with homeopathy.

Sevar, R. Audit of outcome in 829 consecutive patients treated with homeopathic medicine. British Homeopathic Journal Vol 89 No.4. Oct 2000.

USER SURVEYS SHOWING PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT

A survey of more than 900 patients treated homeopathically showed substantial improvement in quality of life over the first 6 months after treatment and this effect remained more or less stable over the following years.

Güthlin C, Lange O and Walach H. Measuring the effects of acupuncture and homeopathy in general practice: An uncontrolled prospective documentation approach. BMC Public Health 2004, 4:6.

British prospective survey of homeopathic treatment of 223 patients, 1996. 90% improvement or more: 32%. 60% improvement or more: 65% 50% improvement or more: 72%.

Report on NHS practice-based homeopathy project. Analysis of effectiveness and cost of homeopathic treatment within a GP practice at St. Margaret's Surgery, Bradford on Avon, Wilts. Elizabeth A Christie, Andrew T Ward ISBN 1 901262 006

British prospective survey of homeopathic treatment of 160 patients, 1994.

Very positive effect: 73%. Some effect: 27%. No effect: 0%.

Report on a Homeopathy Project in an NHS Practice. Covering 18 month period from February 1993 to August 1994. Elizabeth A Christie, Andrew T Ward,. Reprinted February 1997.

British prospective survey of homeopathic treatment of 37 patients suffering from psychological complaints, 1998. Very satisfied: 81%. Satisfied: 16%. Not satisfied at all: 3%.

Homeopathy within the NHS. Evaluation of homeopathic treatment of common mental health problems. 1995 - 1997. Alistair Dempster,. Rydings Hall Surgery, Brighouse, West Yorkshire. ISBN No 1901262014.

Retrospective survey of homeopathic treatment, Danmarks Farmaceutiske Højskole, 1995.

73% of patients stated they improved after homeopathic treatment.

Andersen HE, Eldov P. Klassisk hom?opati - og dens brugere. Institut for Samfundsfarmaci, Danmarks Farmaceutiske H?jskole. 1995. Andersen, Helle Egebjerg. En unders?gelse af Klassisk Hom?opati. Teorier, praksis og brugererfaringer. 1999. ISBN 87-987279-0-7

The effect of homeopathy, acupuncture and osteopathy. Result: 89% of patients stated they experienced positive effect from the treatment. Particularly clear effect on reduction of pain, increased vitality, ability to function socially and with regards to limitations at work and in daily activities influenced by physical problems. Homeopathy was particularly effective for patients suffering from arthritis, hayfever, atopic asthma and skin complaints.

Richardson J. Quasi-randomised control trial to assess the outcome of acupuncture, osteopathy and homeopathy using the short form 36 item health survey. Health Services Research and Evaluation Unit, The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust. December 1996.

META-ANALYSES

A meta-analysis is a means of combining results from more than one trial to look for overall trends. (NB! In general complicated research terminology such as OR, CI, and words such as significant or randomized should only be used in communications with people who will understand such terminology. Otherwise stick to what can be understood by all, e.g. A survey of all the high quality research that has been carried out clearly shows that homeopathy is effective.)

Information to be included

Jonas, W. B., Kaptchuk, T. J., & Linde, K. 2003b, "A critical overview of homeopathy", Ann.Intern.Med., vol. 138, no. 5, pp. 393-399.

Cucherat, M., Haugh, M. C., Gooch, M., & Boissel, J. P. 2000, "Evidence of clinical efficacy of homeopathy. A meta-analysis of clinical trials. HMRAG. Homeopathic Medicines Research Advisory Group", Eur.J.Clin.Pharmacol., vol.. 56, no. 1, pp. 27-33.

META-ANALYSES SHOWING THAT HOMEOPATHY WORKS

A systematic review of results from 93 substantive RCTs was carried out by Robert Mathie (2003). It concludes that of the 35 different medical conditions covered by these trials the weight of evidence favours a positive treatment effect in 8: childhood diarrhoea, fibrositis, hayfever, influenza, pain (miscellaneous), side-effects of chemotherapy or radiotherapy, sprains and upper-respiratory tract infections.

Mathie, R. The research evidence base for homeopathy: a fresh assessment of the literature. Homeopathy 92: 84-91. 2003.

Meta-analysis of 89 trials of homeopathic medicine versus placebo. Result: significantly in favour of homeopathy (OR 2.45 (95% CI 2.05-2.93)). This meta-analysis included 186 placebo-controlled studies of homeopathy published until mid-1996, of which data for analysis could be extracted from 89. The overall odds ratio was 2.45 (95% confidence intervals 2.05-2.93) in favour of homeopathy, which means that the chances that homeopathy would benefit the patient were 2.45 times greater than placebo. When considering just those trials of high quality published in MEDLINE listed journals, and with predefined primary outcome measures, the pooled odds ratio was 1.97 and significant. Even after correction for publication bias the results remained significant. The main conclusion was that the results "were not compatible with the hypothesis that the effects of homeopathy are completely due to placebo". If the result of new trials were to show no difference between homeopathy and placebo, we would have to add 923 trials with no effect with 118 patients in each in order to balance the two.

Linde K, Clausius N, Ramirez G, et al. Are the clinical effects of homeopathy placebo effects? A meta-analysis of placebo-controlled trials. Lancet 1997;350:834-43.

HMRG report with overview of clinical research in homeopathy, identified 184 controlled clinical trials. They selected the highest quality randomized control trials, which included a total of 2617 patients for a meta-analysis. This meta-analysis resulted in a p-value of 0.000036 (which means that results are highly significant) indicating that homeopathy is more effective than placebo. The researchers concluded that the "hypothesis that homeopathy has no effect can be rejected with certainty". Homeopathic Medicine Research Group. *Report to the European Commission directorate general XII: science, research and development. Vol 1 (short version). Brussels: European Commission, 1996:16-7.*

Of the 105 trials with interpretable results, 81 trials indicated positive results. Most studies showed results in favour of homeopathy even among those randomized controlled trials that received high-quality ratings for randomization, blinding, sample size, and other methodological criteria. They came to the following conclusion: "The amount of positive evidence even among the best studies came as a surprise to us. Based on this evidence we would readily accept that homeopathy can be efficacious, if only the mechanism of action were more plausible. The evidence presented in this review would probably be sufficient for establishing homeopathy as a regular treatment for certain indications".

Kleijnen J, Knipschild P, Ter Riet G. Clinical trials of homeopathy. British Medical Journal. 1991b;302:316-23.

Meta-analysis of 105 articles on laboratory research. Result: positive effect 50% more frequently than negative effect among trials of highest methodological quality. (1994)

Linde K, Jonas WB, Melchart D, Worku F, Wagner H, Eitel F. Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Serially Agitated Dilutions in Experimental Toxicology. Human and Experimental Toxicology. 1994;13:481-492.

A meta-analysis of three trials on homeopathic immunotherapy. Result: significant effect in favour of homeopathic treatment.

Reilly D, Taylor MA, Beattie NGM, Campbell JH, McSharry C, Aitchison TC, Carter R, Stevenson RD. Is evidence for homeopathy reproducible? Lancet. 1994;344:1601-1606.

KEY TRIALS AND SURVEYS

Diarrhoea in children

Treatment of acute childhood diarrhoea in Nicaragua

This trial involved 81 children aged from 6 months to 5 years in a randomised, double-blind trial of intravenous fluids plus placebo versus intravenous fluids plus homeopathic remedy individualised to the patient. The treatment group had a statistically significant decrease in duration of diarrhoea.

Jacobs J. Treatment of acute childhood diarrhea with homeopathic medicine: a randomized clinical trial in Nicaragua. Pediatrics 1994; 93: 719-725.

Treatment of acute childhood diarrhoea, repeated in Nepal

In a replication of a trial carried out in Nicaragua in 1994, 116 Nepalese children aged 6 months to 5 years suffering from diarrhoea were given an individualised homeopathic medicine or placebo. Treatment by homeopathy showed a significant improvement in the condition in comparison to placebo.

Jacobs J., Jimenez M., Malthouse S., Chapman E., Crothers D., Masuk M., Jonas W.B., Acute Childhood Diarrhoea- A Replication., Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 6, 2000, 131-139.

A meta-analysis of childhood diarrhoea trials

This meta analysis of 242 children showed a highly significant result in the duration of childhood diarrhoea (P=0.008). It should be noted that the World Health Organisation consider childhood diarrhoea to be the number one public health problem today because of the millions of children who die every year from dehydration from diarrhoea.

J. Jacobs, WB Jonas, M Jimenez-Perez, D Crothers, Homeopathy for Childhood Diarrhea: Combined Results and Meta-analysis from Three Randomized, Controlled Clinical Trials http://homeopathic.com/articles/research/diarrhea_t.php

Respiratory tract complaints

Homeopathy versus conventional treatment in respiratory tract complaints

In an outcome study, 30 practitioners in four countries enrolled 500 consecutive patients with at least one of three complaints: upper respiratory tract complaints including allergies; lower respiratory tract complaints including allergies; or ear complaints. Of 456 patients, 281 received homeopathy and 175 conventional treatment. The primary outcomes criterion was response to treatment, defined as cured or major improvement after 14 days of treatment. Results showed a response rate of 82.6% in the homeopathy group compared to 67.3% in the group receiving conventional medicine. The authors concluded that homeopathy appeared to be at least as effective as conventional treatment of patients with the three conditions studied.

Riley D, Fischer M, Singh B, Haidvogel M, Heger M. Homeopathy and conventional medicine: an outcomes study comparing effectiveness in a primary care setting. J Altern Complement Med 2001; 7: 149-159.

Homeopathy versus conventional treatment in recurrent acute rhinopharyngitis in children

Prospective pragmatic study, comparison of homeopathy versus antibiotics in the treatment of recurrent acute rhinopharyngitis in children (18 months to 4 years) over a 6 month period. Results showed that homeopathy was significantly better than antibiotics in terms of episodes of rhinopharyngitis (2.71 vs 3.97, p<0.001), number of complications (1.25 vs 1.95, p<0.001) and quality of life (global score: 21.38 vs 30.43, p<0.001). Homeopathic treatment also contributed to lower medical costs (88 Euros vs 99 Euros, p<0.05) and significantly less sick-leave (9.5% of parents vs 31.6% of parents, p<0.001).

Trichard M, Chaufferin G, Nicoloyannis N. Pharmacoeconomic comparison between homeopathic and antibiotic treatment strategies in recurrent acute rhinopharyngitis in children. Homeopathy. 2005 Jan;94(1):3-9

Homeopathy versus conventional treatment in otitis media

Prospective observational study, comparison of homeopathy versus conventional treatment in acute otitis media. Conclusion: homeopathy should be first line treatment in acute otitis media. Results showed median duration of pain of 2 days in the homeopathy-group and 3 days in the conventional medicine group. 70.7 % of the children receiving homeopathic treatment did not have another ear infection the next year and 29.3 % had a maximum of three ear infections within one year. 56.5 % in the conventional medicine group did not have another ear infection the next year and 43.5 % had a maximum of six ear infections the next year. Results showed that in the group receiving homeopathic treatment only 5 out of 103 children needed antibiotics.

Friese K-H, Kruse S, Ludtke R, Moeller H "Homeopathic treatment of otitis media in children: comparisons with conventional therapy". Int J Clin Pharmacol Ther. 1997; 35: 296-301.

Acute otitis media in children

A study involving children suffering from acute otitis media suggests that a positive treatment effect from homeopathy when compared with placebo in acute otitis media cannot be excluded. There were fewer treatment failures in the group receiving homeopathy after 5 days, 2 weeks, and 6 weeks, with differences of 11.4, 18.4, and 19.9%, respectively, but these differences were not statistically significant. Diary scores showed a significant decrease in symptoms at 24 and 64 h after treatment in favour of homeopathy (P<0.05).

Jacobs J, Springer DA, Crothers D. Homeopathic treatment of acute otitis media in children: a preliminary randomized placebo-controlled trial. Pediatr Infect Dis J 2001; 20: 177–183.

Acute otitis media in children

In a trial of 230 children who were given homeopathic treatment to treat acute otitis media, pain relief was achieved in 39% of the patients after 6 h and another 33% after 12 h. The resolution rates were 2.4 times faster than in placebo controls. No complications were observed and compared to conventional treatment the homeopathic approach was 14% cheaper.

Frei H, Thurneysen A. Homeopathy in acute otitis media in children: treatment effect or spontaneous resolution? Br Homeopath J 2001; 90: 180–182.

Glue ear in children

In a pilot study in children suffering from glue ear treated with homeopathy 75% had normal tympanogram, compared to 31% in the group treated with conventional medicine. A higher proportion of children receiving homeopathic treatment had a hearing loss less than 20 dB at follow-up, though the difference was not statistically significant. The authors concluded that further research comparing homeopathy to standard care is warranted; 270 patients would be needed for a definitive trial.

Harrison H, Fixsen A, Vickers A. A randomized comparison of homoeopathic, standard care for the treatment of glue ear in children. Compl Therap Med 1999; 7: 132–135.

Acute sinusitis

In an uncontrolled clinical trial of 119 patients suffering from clinical signs of acute sinusitis were treated using homeopathic medicines. Typical sinusitis symptoms, such as headache, pressure pain at nerve exit points, and irritating cough, were reduced after a mean of 4.1 days of treatment. Ninety-nine received only a homeopathic test medication, 20 patients were able to discontinue concomitant medication at the first visit, and only one patient needed antibiotics. Average duration of treatment was 2 weeks. At the end of treatment 81.5 % described themselves as symptom free or significantly improved. No adverse medication effects were reported.

Adler M. Efficacy, safety of a fixed-combination homeopathic therapy for sinusitis. Adv Ther 1999; 16: 103–111.

KEY TRIALS AND SURVEYS

Musculo-skeletal problems

Rheumatoid arthritis

Forty-six patients with rheumatoid arthritis received an individualised remedy or placebo in a 3-month randomised trial. Both groups were allowed to continue standard anti-inflammatory drugs. After 3 months, the double-blind code was broken and remedies were given to members of the placebo group in a single crossover study. Articular index, limbering up time, grip strength and pain all showed statistically significant differences.

Gibson RG, Gibson SLM, MacNeill AD, Buchanan WW Homeopathic therapy in rheumatoid arthritis: evaluation by double-blind clinical therapeutic trial. British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology 1980; 9: 453-459.

Osteoarthritis

In this trial, 65 sufferers of Osteoarthritis (OA) were split into 2 groups, and through a double blinding process were given either a homeopathic medicine or Acetaminophen, a commonly prescribed drug for pain relief in OA. Researchers found that homeopathy provided a level of pain relief that was superior to Acetaminophen, and produced no adverse reactions.

Shealy C.N., Thomlinson P.R., Cox R.H., and Bormeyer V. Osteoarthritis Pain: A Comparison of Homeopathy and Acetaminophen. American Journal of Pain Management, 8, 3, July 1998, 89-91.

Fibromyalgia

A double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled trial of individualised homeopathic treatment (LM potency) versus placebo concluded that individualised homeopathy is significantly better than placebo in lessening tender point pain and improving the quality of life and overall health of persons with fibromyalgia.

Bell IR, Lewis II DA, Brooks AJ, Schwartz GE, Lewis SE, Walsh BT, Baldwin CM. Improved clinical status in fibromyalgia patients treated with individualized homeopathic remedies versus placebo <http://rheumatology.oupjournals.org/cgi/reprint/keh111>.

Fibrositis

In a randomised placebo-controlled trial of patients with fibrositis, only those patients in whom Rhus toxicodendron was 'unequivocally indicated' were admitted to the study. After 1 month's treatment, there were highly significant improvements in objective and subjective parameters.

Fisher P. An experimental double-blind clinical trial in homoeopathy. British Homoeopathic Journal 1986; 75: 142-147.

KEY TRIALS AND SURVEYS

Hayfever, asthma and perennial rhinitis

Reilly and colleagues have conducted a series of trials in patients with hayfever, asthma and perennial rhinitis. Patients were given skin tests and remedies were chosen on the basis of reactivity. This design allows individualisation whilst avoiding the issues of case-taking and the effect that this has on the process. The results demonstrate a significant difference between the placebo and homeopathic groups which is reproducible. (NB! Strictly speaking these are trials of isopathy.)

Anon. Reilly's challenge (editorial). Lancet 1994; 344: 1585.

Reilly DT, Taylor MA. Potent placebo of potency? A proposed study model with initial findings using homeopathically prepared pollens in hay fever as a model. British Homoeopathic Journal 1985 ; 74: 65-75.

Reilly DT, Taylor MA, Campbell J, Beattie N, McSharry C, Aitchison T, Carter R, Stevenson R. Is evidence for homeopathy reproducible? Lancet 1994; 334: 1601-1606.

Reilly DT, Taylor MA, McSharry C, Aitchison T. Is homeopathy a placebo response? Controlled trial of homeopathic potency, with pollen in hay fever as a model. Lancet 1986; ii: 881-886.

Taylor MA, Reilly D, Llewellyn-Jones RH, McSharry C, Aitchison T, Lancaster T, Vickers A. Randomised controlled trial of homeopathy versus placebo in perennial allergic rhinitis with overview of four trial series British Medical Journal 2000; 321: 471-476.

Double-blind clinical trial comparing homeopathic preparations from common allergens (tree, grass, weed) with placebo. 40 patients diagnosed with moderate to severe seasonal allergic rhinitis symptoms were treated over a 4 week period. Results showed significant positive changes in the homeopathy group compared with the placebo group ($p < 0.05$). No adverse effects were reported.

Kim LS, Riedlinger JE, Baldwin CM, Hilli L, Khalsa SV, Messer SA, Waters RF. Treatment of Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis Using Homeopathic Preparation of Common Allergens in the Southwest Region of the US: A Randomized, Controlled Clinical Trial. Ann Pharmacother. 2005 Apr;39(4):617-24. Epub 2005 Mar 1. Related Articles, Links

Female complaints

Pre menstrual syndrome (PMS)

In a randomized controlled double-blind clinical trial (1992-94) 19 women suffering from PMS were treated individually with homeopathy. 90 % of the patients who had received homeopathic treatment experienced more than 30 % improvement. Only 37.5 % of patients who received placebo experienced a similar improvement. Sick-days before menses were reduced from 0.75 to 0 in the homeopathy-group, and was unchanged in the control group. Use of conventional drugs was also reduced in the homeopathy-group.

Yakir M, Kreitler S, Brzezinski A, Vithoulkas G, Oberbaum M, Bentwich Z. Effects of homeopathic treatment in women with premenstrual syndrome: a pilot study. Br Homeopath J. 2001 Jul ;90(3): 148-53.

Homeopathy and oestrogen withdrawal

40 out of 45 women with breast cancer withdrawing from oestrogen and then treated homeopathically, experienced significant improvement in their primary symptoms, anxiety and depression, as well as improvement in quality of life. Primary symptoms changed from 7.8 to 5.4, and from 7.2 to 4.1 ($p < 0.001$). The homeopathic approach appears to be clinically useful in the management of oestrogen withdrawal symptoms in women with breast cancer.

Thompson EA, Reilly D. The homeopathic approach to the treatment of symptoms of oestrogen withdrawal in breast cancer patients. A prospective observational study. Homeopathy. 2003 Jul;92(3):131-4.

Homeopathy in menopausal complaints

In a prospective study 82 % of 102 patients reported improvement of menopause symptoms after homeopathic treatment. Main symptoms noted were hot flushes and sweats, tiredness, anxiety, sleeping difficulties, mood swings and headaches. Women referred to homeopathy were those who either could not take hormone replacement treatment (HRT), for whom HRT was unsuccessful, who did not want or who had to come off HRT. Mean length of homeopathic treatment was 5 months.

Relton, C. NHS Homeopathy Menopause Service. Outcome Study. In press.

Other notable trials

ME

A randomised double-blind trial involving 62 patients with ME, reported in some detail, found that 33% of patients in the group receiving homeopathic remedies showed definite improvement compared with none in the placebo group.

Awdry R. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine 1996; February, March, April.

Dengue haemorrhagic fever

Dengueinum 30 was administered to at least 39,200 people in the Delhi area during an epidemic of Dengue haemorrhagic fever. Follow-up of 23,520 people 10 days later showed only 5 people (0.125%) had developed mild symptoms, with the rest showing no signs or symptoms of the disease. (During epidemics of dengue, attack rates among susceptibles are often 40-50 %, but may reach 80-90 %, World Health Organisation)

Central Council of Research in Homoeopathy. CCRH News 1996-1997.

Cost benefit

In a survey of 223 patients in an NHS General Practice, the number of consultations with general practitioners was reduced by 70 % in a 1 year period. Expenses for medication were reduced by 50 % when homeopathic treatment was made available.

Christie EA, Ward AT. Report on NHS practice-based homoeopathy project. Analysis of effectiveness and cost of homoeopathic treatment within ad GP practice at St. Margaret's Surgery, Bradford on Avon, Wilts. September 1996. The Society of Homeopaths. ISBN 1 901262 006.

In a study of 351 adults suffering from allergies, 35.3% received homeopathic treatment, the researchers concluded that alternative medicine is used widely for allergies by the general population and is associated with considerable costs. This has freedom of choice and cost-benefit implications for the healthcare system and health policy. The study also showed that alternative medicine users were better educated than non-users, and assessed the results of alternative medicine as very good (28.6%) or rather good (53.8%).

Schafer T, Riehle A, Wichmann HE, Ring J. Alternative medicine in allergies—prevalence, patterns of use, and costs. Allergy 2002; 57: 694–700.

A study of the cost and effectiveness of homeopathy suggested that doctors practising homeopathy issue fewer prescriptions and at a lower cost than their colleagues. The main costs for homeopathic treatment are for consultations with each individual patient. Costs for the actual medications used are relatively low, particularly when compared with conventional drugs.

Swayne J. The cost, effectiveness of homoeopathy. A pilot study, proposals for future research. Br Homoeopath J 1992; 81: 148–150.

Basic research

The effect of high dilutions

In a multi-centre study including four research centres in Europe the effect of high dilutions of histamine (10^{-30} – 10^{-38} M) were confirmed. Researchers were able to document that high dilutions of histamine inhibit human basophil degranulation. Results cannot be explained through molecular theories.

Belon P, Cumps J, Ennis M, Mannaioni PF, Roberfroid M, Sainte-Laudy J, Wiegant FAC. Histamine dilutions modulate basophil activation. Inflamm. Res. 2004; 53: 181-188.

The effect of high dilutions was documented in an experiment showing the effect of highly diluted Belladonna on acetylcholine-induced contraction of the rat ileum. The model is reproducible and highly recognised in ‘the scientific world’.

Bastide M (ed). Signals and Images. Kluwer Academic Publishers 1997: 161-170

Information to be included

Lorenz, I., Schneider, E. M., Stolz, P., Brack, A., & Strube, J. 2003, "Sensitive flow cytometric method to test basophil activation influenced by homeopathic histamine dilutions", Forsch Komplementarmed Klass Naturheilkd, vol. 10, no. 6, pp. 316-324.

Treatment of animals

In a blinded study where rats were treated for urinary infections results showed that rats treated with homeopathic remedies had clear reduction of bacterial colonies. Results were at least as clear as for treatment with antibiotics. Untreated rats had no changes in bacteria colonies, compared to a reduction to 33 % of original bacteria levels in rats treated with antibiotics, and 22 % and 39 % in rats treated with homeopathic remedies (Phosphorus and self-nosode).

Gonçalves et al. O uso da homeopatia no tratamento da infecção urinária em ratas. Anais do VIII SINAPIH; 20-22 May, 2004: p.25-26.

A study of homeopathically potentised remedies showed a reduction in the need for repetition of insemination and reduced semen loss in treatment of fertilisation of female pigs.

Riau court A. L'Exemple de la Filière Porcine. Annals of the "Entretiens Internationaux de Monaco 2002", 5-6 October, 2002.

In a study of homeopathically potentised remedies the incidence of haematomas was reduced by 30 % in turkeys during transportation. The study was randomised, placebo controlled and double blinded.

Filliat C. Particularité de l'utilisation de l'homéopathie en production avicole. Annals of the "Entretiens Internationaux de Monaco 2002", 5-6 October 2002.

RESEARCH WEBSITE ADDRESSES

Pubmed (National Library of Medicine) www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi

British Medical Journal <http://bmj.bmjournals.com> (search for 'homeopathy')

New Scientist www.newscientist.com (search for 'homeopathy')

Healthworld Online (Medline, Medical Research & Document Delivery)
www4.infotrieve.com/newmedline/summary.asp

Biomail www.biomail.org This site offers free regular updates by e-mail. Hosted by Medical Informatics Department at State University of New York, Stony Brook University Hospital and Medical Centre.

An evidence-based resource about Complementary and Alternative Medicine www.cam.org.nz
Funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Health.

Annals of Internal Medicine www.annals.org/cgi/search?fulltext=homeopathy

University of York www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/ehc73.pdf

Biomed Central (homeopathy review) www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/1/12

British Homeopathic Library www.hom-inform.org

The Research Council for Complementary Medicine www.rccm.org.uk

Groupe International de Recherche sur l'Infinitésimal www.giriweb.com

National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine
www.campain.umm.edu/ris/risweb.isa (search for 'homeopathy')

National Centre for Homeopathy www.homeopathic.org/research.htm

Homeopathic Educational Services www.homeopathic.com/articles/research/index.php

Homeopathy (the journal) www.harcourt-international.com/journals/homp

Boiron www.boiron.com/en/htm/04-politique/clinique.htm

Official Indian research centre www.ccrhindia.org

Carstens stiftung (Germany)
www.carstens-stiftung.de
www.carstens-stiftung.de/eng/index.html (English pages)

ISI Web of Knowledge (resembles PubMed but includes more areas)
<http://isi3.isiknowledge.com/portal.cgi>

BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine (free articles)
www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882

NAFKAM, Tromsø (Norway) (research info will be included) <http://uit.no/nafkam/omnafkam>

Vifab (Denmark) www.vifab.dk

Townsend Letter for Doctors & Patients publishes a print alternative medicine magazine.
www.townsendletter.com

Comments and corrections to the ENHR report on 'An Overview of Positive Homeopathy Research and Surveys'

April 2005

Comments

Corrections

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