

Health experts find no evidence homeopathy works, again

March 11 2015, by Adam Smart



The statement by the NHMRC is based on a summary of research on homeopathy's effectiveness for treating health conditions. Credit: Guillaume Brialon/Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA

There's no reliable evidence that health conditions can be effectively treated with homeopathic medicine, according to a [statement](#) by the National Health and Medicine Research Council (NHMRC) released today.

The statement comes a year after the NHMRC's draft paper was put out for public consultation. It is based on a summary of research on homeopathy's effectiveness for treating [health conditions](#). It aimed to provide people who use [homeopathic remedies](#) with information of their risks and benefits so they could make informed [health decisions](#).

The chair of the committee that produced the report, Paul Glasziou said the statement was not going to stop the use of homeopathic treatments overnight.

Professor Glasziou, who is director of the Centre for Research in Evidence-Based Practice at Bond University said the trend would likely follow a similar pattern observed after the release of a [2010 UK report](#) by the House of Commons. There had been a decline in the use of homeopathy in the UK since that report, he added.

The review failed to find any evidence for homeopathy's effectiveness for treating 68 conditions, which ranged from the common cough through to malaria. Only single studies were identified for 29 of the conditions, and all were deemed unreliable for either having too few participants for a meaningful result or being poorly designed.

"This lack of scientific research into the use of homeopathic medicine is not unusual and is mirrored across most alternative treatments" said Paul Komesaroff, professor of medicine from Monash University and medical practitioner.

Glasziou said reports like this created "a dialogue about the nature of the evidence and what constitutes evidence and people start to look at it and it makes an impact".

Professor Komesaroff said patients should be supplied with accurate and up-to-date information on treatment options and that some treatment

types in the field of complementary and alternative [medicine](#) lacked evidence.

"People who use alternative medicines such as homeopathy do so for a large suite of reasons not just for treatment. Their supposed effectiveness is only one reason," Professor Komesaroff said. "One quick example is reducing the symptoms that people suffer from HIV medication."

The NHMRC statement did not mention preventative [health](#), but Professor Glasziou did not see this as a shortcoming.

"If you look at what GPs are treating people for, the vast majority of people are coming in for symptoms rather than health checks and preventative measures," he said.

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