



Australian Government

National Health and Medical Research Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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## NHMRC releases statement and advice on homeopathy

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The National Health and Medical Research Council today released a statement concluding that there is no good quality evidence to support the claim that homeopathy is effective in treating health conditions.

Its release follows a thorough review of the evidence, conducted as part of NHMRC's responsibility to provide advice and support informed health care decisions by the Australian community.

The conclusion is based on the findings of a rigorous assessment of more than 1800 papers. Of these, 225 studies met the criteria to be included in NHMRC's examination of the effectiveness of homeopathy.

The review found no good quality, well-designed studies with enough participants to support the idea that homeopathy works better than a placebo, or causes health improvements equal to those of another treatment.

Although some studies did report that homeopathy was effective, the quality of those studies was assessed as being small and/or of poor quality. These studies had either too few participants, poor design, poor conduct and or reporting to allow reliable conclusions to be drawn on the effectiveness of homeopathy.

According to CEO Professor Warwick Anderson, "All medical treatments and interventions should be underpinned by reliable evidence. NHMRC's review shows that there is no good quality evidence to support the claim that homeopathy works better than a placebo."

He drew particular attention to the *NHMRC Statement on Homeopathy's* advice that homeopathy should not be used to treat conditions that are chronic, serious, or could become serious:

'People who choose homeopathy may put their health at risk if they reject or delay treatments for which there is good evidence for safety and effectiveness. People who are considering whether to use homeopathy should first get advice from a registered health practitioner and in the meanwhile keep taking any prescribed treatments.'

He emphasised that health practitioners should always offer treatments and therapies based on the best available evidence.

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“Each year NHMRC funds research to test treatments and procedures offered to patients, with more than \$320 million spent on clinical and health services research in 2014,” Professor Anderson said.

“NHMRC conducts reviews of evidence on a range of health topics which is developed into guidelines or advice. Examples include clinical practice guidelines on the management of overweight and obesity and the Australian Dietary Guidelines,” he said.

“It is important that the public has access to independent, high quality advice when it comes to making decisions about their health care.”

“From this review, the main recommendation for Australians is that they should not rely on homeopathy as a substitute for proven, effective treatments.”

“This statement was the result of a rigorous examination of the evidence and used internationally accepted methods for assessing the quality and reliability of evidence for determining whether or not a therapy is effective for treating health conditions.”

“NHMRC is also aware of strongly held views on this topic so it is important to note that the process was thoroughly consultative and that the public was invited to submit information and evidence, all of which was considered by our expert working committee.”

The findings of the homeopathy working group’s review are summarised in the final *NHMRC Information Paper: Evidence on the effectiveness of homeopathy for treating a clinical condition* also released today. Its release follows public consultation on the draft information paper in 2014.

The Statement, Information Paper and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the NHMRC website.

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