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ATMS responds to NHMRC statement

NHMRC research was flawed, ignores critical evidence

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) is disturbed by the recent positioning statement from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) on homoeopathy, citing the fact NHMRC ignored critical evidence and conducted flawed research, while raising the point that more support is needed to conduct sound clinical studies into the effects of Homoeopathy and other Natural Medicine modalities.

Trevor Le Breton, CEO of ATMS expressed concern over the validity of the NHMRC's findings while calling for further funding to be given to conduct controlled, randomised studies with larger sample sizes into Natural Medicines.

"There are numerous examples of studies that have shown that homœopathy is superior to placebo in the majority of cases.

"These studies, which were neglected by the NHMRC review, include: one¹ into Homeopathic treatment in treating multi-drug resistant pulmonary tuberculosis, a major global public health problem, in a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled clinical trial; where results saw an improvement in all the outcome measures. Another study² into the interim results of a randomised controlled trial of homeopathic treatment for irritable bowel syndrome found a statistically significant difference in favour of homeopathic treatment. We also would draw NHMRC's attention to a third study³ into Arctium lappa, used in traditional Western and Chinese medicine as well as homeopathic literature for acne, demonstrated positive effects in the treatment of acne especially of inflammatory type," said Mr Le Breton.

Further to this, ATMS sides with Complementary Medicines Australia's (CMA) response to the statement which outlines the five fundamental flaws in the NHMRC's review on Homoeopathy. These are:

1. Including **poor methodology** with inadequate explanation of the reasoning behind randomised controlled trials being excluded from the review
 - a. Back in December 2014 CMA called into question the methodology of the NHMRC resulting in the article: [‘Fatally flawed’ review puts Aus research council’s method in doubt](#)
2. **Selective research**, meaning a narrow database search and exclusion of non-English speaking studies

¹ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24685414>

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24931748>

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24931753>

3. **Lack of expertise** in that the NHMRC did not appoint a homeopathic expert to the Review Panel
4. **Flawed evidence** in using systematic reviews with inherent weaknesses as a reliable source of evidence
5. **Ignoring the opinion of experts;** when two out of three of the experts NHMRC consulted prior to publication expressed significant concerns over the methodology and selective use of the data, recommending that NHMRC could not come to the definitive conclusion that it did.

Mr Le Breton explains, **“These flaws demonstrate the NHMRC has clearly neglected its responsibility to provide an unbiased and comprehensive, scientifically backed review and ATMS will continue to advocate for the rights and abilities of our members to practice and be recognised as qualified healthcare providers.”**

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society would urge further controlled research to be completed in Australia, such as that conducted by the Swiss government on homeopathic medicine, from late 2011, which represented the most comprehensive evaluation and report of homeopathic medicine ever written.⁴

An overview of the report can be found on the *HuffPost Healthy Living*; [The Swiss Government’s Remarkable Report on Homeopathic Medicine](#)

Homœopathy is a form of medicine that is more than 200 years old and is legally recognised in more than 80 countries. The World Health Organisation claims that homœopathy is the second most widely used medicine in the world.

ENDS

⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dana-ullman/homeopathic-medicine- b_1258607.html



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