The Research Evidence Base for Homeopathy

Systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of homeopathy
- Four of five major comprehensive reviews of RCTs in homeopathy have reached broadly positive conclusions.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^4\) Based on a smaller selection of trials, a fifth review came to a negative conclusion about homeopathy.\(^5\)
- Positive conclusions have been reported in 10 of 29 reviews of RCTs in specific categories of medical condition (the other 16 are largely inconclusive):
  - allergies and upper respiratory tract infections\(^6\),\(^7\)
  - childhood diarrhoea\(^8\)
  - influenza treatment\(^9\)
  - post-operative ileus\(^10\)
  - rheumatic diseases\(^11\)
  - seasonal allergic rhinitis\(^12\)\(^-\)\(^14\)
  - vertigo.\(^15\)

RCTs of homeopathy – the original peer-reviewed research literature
- Up to the end of 2011, 163 RCTs had been published: 67 positive; 11 negative; 85 not statistically conclusive. In addition to the above, there is a clearly positive direction of evidence in each of the following three conditions:
  - fibromyalgia\(^16\)\(^-\)\(^18\)
  - insomnia\(^19\)\(^-\)\(^21\)
  - sinusitis.\(^22\),\(^23\)
- There is evidence from singleton RCTs in favour of homeopathy for a number of other conditions including: bronchitis,\(^24\) chronic fatigue,\(^25\) premenstrual syndrome.\(^26\)

Cost effectiveness of homeopathy
- Integration of homeopathy with conventional treatment is associated with better clinical outcomes for similar or lower costs.\(^27\)\(^-\)\(^29\)

Clinical observational studies
- 70.7% of 6,544 follow-up patients, treated at Bristol Homeopathic Hospital for a wide range of chronic medical complaints, reported positive health changes.\(^30\)
- Many patients attending the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital were able to reduce or stop conventional medication following homeopathic treatment.\(^31\)

Basic Science
- Laboratory research has obtained evidence that water may retain information about homeopathically-prepared solutes.\(^32\)\(^-\)\(^34\)
- Additional laboratory studies have shown that homeopathic dilutions can exert biological effects.\(^35\)\(^-\)\(^37\)
References