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. 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 19 are largely inconclusive):
  - allergies and upper respiratory tract infections6,7
  - childhood diarrhoea8
  - influenza treatment9
  - post-operative ileus10
  - rheumatic diseases11
  - seasonal allergic rhinitis12-14
  - vertigo.15

RCTs of homeopathy – the original data

- Up to the end of 2011, the peer-reviewed literature included 164 RCT papers, of which 160 have data that can be used for analysis: 71 positive; 9 negative; 80 not statistically conclusive. In addition to the conditions above, there is a positive balance of evidence in the following, for example:
  - fibromyalgia16-18
  - insomnia19-21
  - 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 Homeopathic 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, e.g. 35-37
References