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
- Two major reviews of RCTs of individualised homeopathy have reached broadly positive conclusions.6,7
- Positive conclusions have been reported in 9 of 36 reviews of RCTs in specific categories of medical condition (the other 27 are largely inconclusive):
  - allergies and upper respiratory tract infections8,9
  - childhood diarrhoea10
  - post-operative ileus11
  - rheumatic diseases12
  - seasonal allergic rhinitis13-15
  - vertigo16

Placebo-controlled RCTs of homeopathy - the original data

- Up to the end of 2016, the peer-reviewed literature included 164 papers reporting placebo-controlled RCTs, of which 114 have data eligible for our analysis: 47 positive; 5 negative; 62 not statistically conclusive. In addition to the medical conditions above, there is a positive balance of evidence in the following, for example:
  - influenza17,18
  - insomnia19-21
  - sinusitis22,23
- There is evidence from singleton placebo-controlled RCTs in favour of homeopathy for a number of other conditions including: bronchitis,24 chronic fatigue syndrome,25 fibromyalgia,26 premenstrual syndrome.27

Cost effectiveness of homeopathy

- Integration of homeopathy with conventional treatment is associated with better clinical outcomes for similar or lower costs.28-30

Clinical observational studies

- 70.7% of 6,554 follow-up patients, treated at Bristol Homeopathic Hospital for a wide range of chronic medical complaints, reported positive health changes.31
- Many patients who attended the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital were able to reduce or stop conventional medication following homeopathic treatment.32

Basic Science

- Laboratory research has obtained evidence that water may retain information about homeopathically-prepared solutes.33-35
- Additional laboratory studies have shown that homeopathic dilutions can exert biological effects e.g. 36-38
REFERENCES


