

Suppressed NHMRC 2012 report found ‘encouraging’ evidence homeopathy is effective for some medical conditions

Australia’s leading research institute, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), recently bowed to public pressure and released its first report on homeopathy, produced in 2012 but never released to the public.

As expected, the findings of the draft 2012 report are far more positive than those of a second report – the official NHMRC Homeopathy Review published in 2015 – that has caused widespread damage to the reputation of the homeopathy sector.

The First Report – an evidence review conducted for NHMRC by expert reviewer Prof Karen Grimmer of the University of South Australia (UniSA) – found that *“There is encouraging evidence for the effectiveness of homeopathy”* for five medical conditions, including otitis media (ear infections), upper respiratory tract infection in adults, and some side effects of cancer treatment.

After receiving this draft report in 2012, NHMRC terminated the contract with UniSA, hired a new contractor to review the evidence on homeopathy again and published the findings in their 2015 report. This second report applied arbitrary and unprecedented rules which reduced the number of trials from 176 to 5, resulting in the conclusion that *‘no good quality studies with sufficient participants for a meaningful result’* showed homeopathy to be effective for any health condition.

As Rachel Roberts, Homeopathy Research Institute Chief Executive, explains, “The first report found some good evidence that homeopathy works for certain medical conditions. More studies are needed to confirm and build on these findings, but *some* evidence is very different from *no* evidence.”

NHMRC Chief Executive finally puts the record straight about the 2015 Report

Publication of NHMRC’s 2015 report triggered inaccurate and damaging headlines around the world claiming homeopathy doesn’t work.

HRI therefore welcomes NHMRC Chief Executive Prof Anne Kelso’s belated clarification regarding the 2015 Homeopathy Review saying, “Contrary to some claims, the review did not conclude that homeopathy was ineffective” (CEO Statement, 26 August 2019).

NHMRC under investigation for bias and misreporting the evidence on homeopathy

NHMRC have released the draft First Report covered with annotations which repeatedly call into question the validity and accuracy of Prof. Grimmer’s work, without giving her any right of reply. This is astonishing, given that Prof. Grimmer used NHMRC’s own recommended method for reviewing the evidence (the ‘FORM’ methodology) and that Prof. Grimmer was one of the research team who invented this approach for NHMRC.

Rachel Roberts said, “Given the author’s expertise and the inappropriate comments made by NHMRC on this annotated copy, one has to question whether the First Report was buried because it did not produce the result NHMRC wanted, rather than because of any serious issues with the research itself.”

NHMRC is currently under investigation by the Commonwealth Ombudsman regarding its review of the evidence on homeopathy, facing charges of bias, misreporting, conflicts of interest and breach of procedure. The fact that NHMRC failed to even acknowledge the existence of this first taxpayer-funded draft report (discovered only via Freedom of Information requests) is part of the evidence against NHMRC submitted in a complaint by Complementary Medicines Australia (CMA) and the Australian Homeopathic Association, with scientific input from the Homeopathy Research Institute (HRI). A verdict from the Ombudsman's 3-year investigation is expected soon.

Fuller details on this story can be found in HRI's 'Release of NHMRC Homeopathy Review 2012 Questions and Answers' document [here](#).

Further information

[HRI](#) is an innovative international charity created to address the need for high quality scientific research in homeopathy.

The First Report, "*The Effectiveness of Homeopathy: an overview review of secondary evidence*" (with covering CEO Statement and NHMRC annotations) can be viewed in full [here](#).

Information on the Australian Report story: www.HRI-Research.org/Australian-Report

Summary analysis of NHMRC's 2015 report: <https://youtu.be/QvF8KxbCXzA>

Impact of NHMRC's 2015 report: <https://youtu.be/oUCU2TbFd70>

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