Homeopathic remedies are nothing more than placebos, says Australian authority

By ACSH Staff — June 5, 2015

The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has released a position statement on homeopathic remedies. After reviewing 225 research papers and 57 review studies, the group said Based on the assessment of the evidence of effectiveness of homeopathy, NHMRC concludes that there are no health conditions for which there is reliable evidence that homeopathy is effective. They further stated that For some health conditions, studies reported that homeopathy was not more effective than placebo.

Homeopathy is based on the scientifically-inane belief that extreme dilutions of disease-causing entities such as viruses and bacteria will confer immunological benefits and fight disease. Although this sounds like vaccination, it is in fact in no way related to the immune-boosting properties of vaccination. A vaccine uses a carefully titrated amount of live or attenuated bacteria or virus to stimulate antibody formation in the body. But homeopathic solutions are so dilute that there is none of the original substance left in it. Believers say that the water or other solution used for dilution has a memory that makes it effective, but such an effect isn’t possible under the commonly understood laws of physics and chemistry.

The chair of the committee releasing the report said he hoped private insurers would no longer subsidize homeopathic treatments.

Based on the report by the NHMRC, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has formally recommended GPs stop prescribing homeopathic remedies and says pharmacists must also stop stocking such products because there is no evidence they are effective in any way.

In addition to these reports by the Australian authorities, our own FDA has been considering what to do about homeopathy, as we reported here. And ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom said, On the surface, it would seem that these quack treatments are at the very least safe, since they are
nothing but water. But there are two problems with this statement: 1) they have never been shown to be effective, and 2) they become indirectly unsafe when they are used in place of legitimate medicines for diseases that could otherwise be treated.

Should you be in the mood for some mockery, we also recommend you take a look at his piece [4], Does This Cow Really Exist on Science 2.0.

ACSH’s Dr. Ruth Kava added it’s hard to believe that people could be taken in by this type of snake water, but obviously they can. Certainly insurers in this country should take homeopathic remedies off their formularies until they have been shown to be safe and effective as are other drugs which I’m sure will never happen.

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