

Media Release

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CMA Disappointed with NHMRC Statement on Homeopathy

Complementary Medicines Australia (CMA) today responded to the position statement by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) on homeopathy, by reiterating its concerns into the NHMRC's methods used to review the evidence of effectiveness on homeopathy.

Mr Carl Gibson, Chief Executive of CMA said "We are very disappointed with the position taken by the NHMRC, especially when a number of independent experts in the sector have expressed strong concerns with the methodology of the review, according to information obtained from NHMRC under Freedom of Information laws."

"The NHMRC Review on Homeopathy had Five Fundamental Flaws:

1. **Shoddy Methodology:** *NHMRC provides no adequate explanation of why randomised controlled trials (RTC) were excluded from the Review. The NHMRC decision not to adhere to a search of all Level 1 evidence, as per International standards, should certainly be justified.*
2. **Selective Research:** *The choice of databases searched was not broad enough to capture the balance of complementary medicine specific content, and excluded non-English studies.*
3. **Lack of Expertise:** *NHMRC did not appoint a homeopathic expert to the Review Panel.*
4. **Flawed evidence:** *NHMRC did not provide an adequate explanation of why only systematic reviews were used where systematic reviews have inherent weakness as a reliable source of evidence.*
5. **Ignoring Opinion of Experts:** *Two out of three Experts who NHMRC consulted prior to publication expressed numerous concerns over the methodology and selective use of the data and recommended the NHMRC could not come to the very definitive conclusion that it came to. The NHMRC then chose to ignore these Expert Opinions.*

Mr Gibson added; "Papers released under Freedom of Information show that the NHMRC failed to appoint a homeopathic expert to the Review Panel, left out randomised controlled trials, excluded all studies not published in English, and limited the choice of databases searched, which basically meant that the balance of complementary medicines specific content was omitted."

"No valid conclusions can be drawn from this Review, except that the NHMRC has failed to uphold its own standards of ethics and quality research in this instance," said Mr Gibson.

Mr Gibson went on to say "The NHMRC did accept that some studies reported homeopathy was effective – but has ruled them out of the review, presumably because they did not meet the narrow orthodox pharmaceutical view. Homeopathy has been around for hundreds of years, and I am sure will be around a lot longer than some of the critics."

ENDS

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