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.\(^1,2,3,4\) Based on a smaller selection of trials, a fifth review came to a negative conclusion about homeopathy.\(^5\)
- Positive conclusions have been reported in 9 of 23 reviews of RCTs in specific categories of medical condition (the other 14 are largely inconclusive):
  - allergies and upper respiratory tract infections\(^6\)
  - childhood diarrhoea\(^7\)
  - influenza treatment\(^8\)
  - post-operative ileus\(^9\)
  - rheumatic diseases\(^10\)
  - seasonal allergic rhinitis\(^11,12,13\)
  - vertigo.\(^14\)

RCTs of homeopathy – the original peer-reviewed research literature

- Up to the end of 2009, 142 RCTs had been published: 63 positive; 11 negative; 68 not statistically conclusive. In addition to the above seven conditions, there is positive evidence from two or more RCTs in each of the following three areas:
  - fibromyalgia\(^15,16,17\)
  - osteoarthritis\(^18,19\)
  - sinusitis.\(^20,21\)
- There is evidence from single RCTs (not refuted elsewhere) in favour of homeopathy for a number of other conditions, including: acute otitis media,\(^22\) ankle sprain,\(^23\) 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.\(^27,28,29\)

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 Homoeopathic 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.\(^32,33,34\)
- Additional laboratory studies have shown that homeopathic dilutions can exert biological effects.\(^3,35,36,37\)
References


