

Complementary Medicine Should be Made Available on the NHS

Dennis Johnston - BGS Spring 2009

If something appears to be repeatedly absurd, it probably is absurd.

Gullibility Error

People tend to observe what they expect, or in retrospect, what they think they have observed, or on subsequent reflection, suggest they ought to have observed.

Complementary Medicine

Medical practices which are not supported by scientific evidence.

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck
and sounds like a duck, it probably is a
duck.

How to spot a practitioner



complementary

- Absence of definable outcomes
- The disclaimer
- The universal diagnosis
- The conspiracy of conventional medicine
- Exaggerated claims
- The myth of the lone genius



“The body is a quantum mechanical device and quantum healing is healing the body mind from a quantum level in a process of peacemaking wherein one mode of consciousness – the mind, corrects mistakes in another mode of consciousness – the body.

CNN News Report 1998

Dennis Johnston - BGS Spring 2009

- Absence of definable outcomes
- The disclaimer
- The universal diagnosis
- The conspiracy of conventional medicine
- Exaggerated claims
- The myth of the lone genius

Exaggerated Claims

In politics and medicine, he who promises too much is likely to be a quack.

Karl Popper

- Absence of definable outcomes
- The disclaimer
- The universal diagnosis
- The conspiracy of conventional medicine
- Exaggerated claims
- The myth of the lone genius

Meta Analyses of Homeopathy

Study	Treatment Areas	Conclusion
Kleijnen, Knipschild Gerben ter Riet Lancet, 1991	14 trials classical homeopathy 58 trials single homeopathy 26 trials combination homeopathy	Negative
Linde, Clausuis Ramirez et al. Lancet, 1997	106 randomised placebo controlled trials	Positive?
Linde et al J. Clin. Epidemiol., 1999	Previous group plus new homeopathic trials	Negative

Meta Analyses of Homeopathy

Study	Treatment Areas	Conclusion
Shang, Huwiler-Müntener Nartley et al. Lancet, 2005	110 placebo controlled homeopathic trials	Negative
Milazzo, russell, Ernst Eur. J. Cancer, 2006	6 trials in patients following cancer treatment	Negative
Cochrane Library	Trials for asthma, dementia or induction of labour	Negative

“There is, to my knowledge, no condition for which homeopathy has been proven to be an effective treatment”.

Dr Jack Killen

Newsweek, February 2008

Deputy Director of the National Centre for
Complementary and Alternative Medicine, USA

Dennis Johnston - BGS Spring 2009

Adulteration: Chinese Medicines containing 'Western' Remedies

Mei Hua – diclofenac

Life blood medicine – dexamethasone

Sheng Chi Wei – diazepam, ibuprofen, paracetamol

Tung Shueh Wan – indometacin, prednisone

Wonder Pills - phenformin

Serious Toxicity

- Aristolochia – renal failure
- Ginseng abuse syndrome
- Chinese herbal tea and fatal hepatitis
- Heavy metal poisoning – lead, mercury, arsenic and copper.
- Aconite – heart failure

- Interactions with warfarin – St. John's wort, gingo biloba, Dong Quai
- Interactions with antiepileptic drugs – St. John's wort
- Interactions with neuroleptic – Ginseng
- Interactions with antihypertensives – Yohimbine
- Interactions with cardiovascular drugs – St. John's wort

Dangers of Complementary Medicine

Direct

- Allergic reactions
- Toxic effects
- Interactions
- Contamination
- Lack of quality control
- False authentication

Indirect

- Missed diagnosis
- Mis-diagnosis
- Delay in effective treatment
- Disregard of contraindications
- Deterioration and adverse effects not recognised
- Effective treatments stopped