

Homeopathy and Anthroposophic Medicine – what is the evidence?

World Homeopathy Awareness Week
European Parliament, 13 April 2011

Programme

Venue: Members' Salon, European Parliament

Time: 8:00 – 9:30 am

Chair: Marian Harkin MEP

Presentations: Research Evidence in Homeopathy: Overview of published clinical investigations
Robert Mathie PhD, Research Development Adviser, British Homeopathic Association (BHA)

Clinical Evidence in the Daily Work of an Anthroposophic Hospital

Dr. med. Harald Matthes, Medical Director, Havelhöhe Hospital in Berlin

Open discussion

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Speakers' Profiles

Mrs Marian Harkin MEP



"The fast growing demand for homeopathy and anthroposophic medicine stems from many years of successful practical experience, coupled with the excellent overall safety profile of these therapeutic approaches and their medicinal products. The EU should act now in support of these long-established European therapies to the benefit of more than 100 million European patients and users."

Marian Harkin is an Independent MEP serving the Ireland Northwest constituency. A Member of the ALDE Group in the European Parliament, Marian is the group's Coordinator for Employment and Social Affairs. A lifelong believer in the power of volunteering, she was instrumental in persuading the European Commission to designate 2011 the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) and co-founded the Parliament's Volunteering Interest Group, which she chairs. She actively advocates for a number of other policy issues, including the rights of Carers and a more sensible EU regulatory framework for Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAM).

Dr Robert T Mathie PhD Research Development Adviser at the British Homeopathic Association and Faculty of Homeopathy



"Homeopathy is a complex medical intervention whose diffuse research literature contains positive evidence of clinical effectiveness in over 40% of studies to date. The quality of that evidence and the size of the treatment effects are not clearly defined, however. New insights offer a sharper focus on the necessity, the opportunities and the challenges of further research development."

Robert Mathie studied Physiology at Glasgow University (UK). After receiving his PhD he moved to the Department of Surgery at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, London, where he became Senior Lecturer. Over a period of 25 years in the university sector, Robert published some 80 peer-reviewed papers and wrote a number of review articles and book chapters. In his current position of Research Development Adviser at the British Homeopathic Association and Faculty of Homeopathy, much of his work over 9 years has been devoted to encouraging and assisting practitioners to improve the quantity and the quality of research output in homeopathy. To this end, he is developing collaborations with university researchers and is leading clinical data collection work with the Faculty's doctors, dentists and vets. Within a broader aim to highlight and improve the nature and the quality of homeopathy research, Robert is engaged in a number of systematic reviews of published clinical trials.

For further information please contact Per Engström or Amandine Oset at ECHAMP – media@echamp.eu or call on 02/649 9440.

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Dr. med. Harald Matthes Medical Director at the Havelhöhe Hospital, Berlin



“Anthroposophic medicine is a valid approach of integrative medicine as defined by the World Health Organisation. It is an independent holistic medicine system, with a scientific approach, that considers the multidimensionality of the human being and develops specific methods. It includes the somatic orientated medicine derived from natural science and integrates the psychic, mental and spiritual dimension of man in diagnostic and therapy. It is not a closed system, but a researching and scientific medicine system, a continuously developing medicine concept.”

Harald Matthes studied human medicine at the Free University Berlin Charité, qualifying as a medical doctor in 1987. He specialised in internal medicine and gastroenterology, working from 1986 to 1994 at the Internal Medicine Department, Gastroenterological Clinic, at the Universitätsklinikum Steglitz, Charité Berlin. Since 1995 he has been Medical Director and Chief of the Department of Gastroenterology at the Havelhöhe Hospital in Berlin. This hospital specialises in anthroposophic medicine and in 2008 was chosen in a patient survey of 2000 hospitals as the best hospital in Germany. Dr Matthes is the author of 42 international and 65 national publications and a member of a number of specialist associations including the German Society of Internal Medicine, German Association for Internal Medicine, German Society for Digestive and Metabolic Diseases, the American Gastroenterological Association and the Society of Anthroposophic Doctors in Germany. Among other commissions, he is a member of the Pharmacovigilance-Commission and Commission C of BfArM, the German Medicines Agency.

Press briefing – Facts and Figures

Users

- Three out of four Europeans know about homeopathy and of these 29% use it for their own healthcare – more than 100 million Europeans

Practice and status of homeopathy and anthroposophic medicine

- Between 25% and 40% of European healthcare practitioners prescribe homeopathy occasionally, 7% on a regular basis.
- There are 54 000 specialised homeopathic medical doctors and practitioners in Europe
- More than 30 000 doctors prescribe anthroposophic medicinal products; anthroposophic medicine is only practised by those with dual training as a physician and as an anthroposophic doctor. There are than 4000 anthroposophic doctors in the EU. Anthroposophic medicine is practised by anthroposophic doctors in Europe in 21/27 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland, and also in Russia and Croatia.
- Anthroposophic medicine is provided in 24 hospitals in 5 EU Member States and Switzerland (14 of those have Accident & Emergency services, 2 of those are university teaching hospitals)
- 8 out of 27 EU Member States have issued national policies on CAM including homeopathy (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, United Kingdom); other EU Member States have specific regulations on homeopathy (Latvia, Lithuania, Romania); some Member States have delegated that task to the medical associations. In Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Latvia homeopathy is recognised as an additional medical qualification by the national medical associations. In France, Spain, Italy and Greece the national medical associations are favourably disposed to homeopathy; in France and Italy they have asked the government for legislation in this field.
- Anthroposophic medicine is regularly taught at universities and medical schools in 7 EU Member States and Switzerland. There are university chairs in Germany and Switzerland. In some countries where the government delegates the tasks of authorisation, registration and supervision of practitioners to national medical associations, statutory regulation of anthroposophic doctors requires an 'additional qualification' issued by the medical association/council/chamber (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia and Switzerland). In Italy anthroposophic medicine is recognised through statutory regulation by the local medical associations/chambers/councils in Bologna, Terni and Palermo.

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Market

- Thousands of homeopathic medicinal products have been safely on the market in Europe for many decades; these products are low risk, mostly derived from natural substances and usually highly diluted.
- The industry for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products represents 1% of the European pharmaceutical market and 7% of the European non-prescription market (In 2005 this was equal to €1 771 million at consumer prices).
- Sales of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicines in Europe are growing by an average 5% a year
- The top ten EU Member States in terms of sales volumes are France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain and Poland. France has the highest consumption per head of homeopathic medicinal products in Europe with an average spend of €7 per citizen in 2005. Poland is the biggest player in the CEEC Member States in terms of sales

Cost effectiveness

- Studies demonstrate that GPs who integrated homeopathy in their practice achieved better results for similar cost. A French Government Report showed that the total cost of homeopathic care per physician was approximately half of the total cost of the care provided by conventional physicians, with the overall cost per patient under homeopathic care 15% less;
- Homeopathic medicines cost considerably less than conventional drugs; in France they represent 5% of all medicines prescribed by physicians, and only 1.2% of all drug reimbursements