

ECCH news



The Newsletter of the European Council for Classical Homeopathy

January 2009

Homeopathy effective prevention in epidemics

Ground-breaking research in millions of citizens shows homeopathy can be effective in prevention of epidemics.

Homeopathy has a long and distinguished history in the area of disease prophylaxis. Historical evidence of past success in epidemics of flu and cholera exists but there has been little recent evidence.

Now however, in a ground-breaking research project the health authorities on Cuba recently offered five million doses of homeopathic remedies as prevention against leptospirosis, a disease from water pollution spread by rats, that results in jaundice and kidney damage. Each year after being hit by hurricanes a few thousand Cuban citizens are infected and some die, despite the conventional vaccination programme.

For the last two years the state run vaccine institute not only dispensed 773 000 doses of conventional vaccine as they have done every year, but also five million doses of a homeopathic remedy. The total population of three provinces with the highest outbreak of leptospirosis were targeted. Results were compared to data going back to 1990 and showed an 80 percent decline in reported cases of the disease after homeopathy.

Costs for the conventional vaccine amount to US \$3 million for 770 000 doses compared to only US \$200 000 for five million doses of homeopathic remedies. The homeopathic remedy is a nosode made from the micro-organism and is administered in two single doses two weeks apart. The preliminary results were presented at an international conference in Havana, Cuba, 10 to 12 December 2008. A scientific paper presenting the results will be published later in 2009.

ECCH changes its name

The ECCH Council has decided to change its name to the European Central Council of Homeopaths (ECCH). The change is an important move in order to clarify and support ECCH's role and identity across Europe and with the European Union.

The decision was carried by a large majority of votes at ECCH's council meeting in Copenhagen in November 2008. The change in name involves the replacement of the words 'Council for Classical Homeopathy' with 'Central Council of Homeopaths'. The change clarifies the fact that ECCH is the council representing the homeopathy profession in Europe. The now familiar ECCH acronym and the logo will be maintained.

The name change does not mean that ECCH is promoting ways of practising homeopathy other than 'classically'. 'Homeopathy' is clearly defined in the ECCH Constitution as practice that involves the selection and prescription of a single remedy.

Where several of ECCH's member associations still use the word 'classical' in their title, it is important when dealing with different authorities such as the European Union that it is clear who and what ECCH represents. ECCH will continue to be an umbrella organisation for national associations representing homeopaths in Europe.

Historical note: The design of ECCH's logo was originally done with great thought and care. The circle of stars nestling in the 'holder' of the four letters represents stability while the two large letters at either end emphasise the two main themes in the name.



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ECCH & ICH International Education Symposium 23 - 24 April 2009



From Classroom to Clinical Practice

Leuven, Belgium

EU UPDATE

Cooperation leads to progress in Brussels

Over recent months there has been much progress in raising the profile of CAM and homeopathy with the EU in Brussels. ECCH's General Secretary Stephen Gordon has been at the centre of a number of cooperative actions that have resulted in successful initiatives taking place.

Towards the end of 2008 EFCAM the European Forum for CAM, of which ECCH is a founding member, changed its name to the European Federation for CAM. This move is an important one as it gives EFCAM a constituted footing enabling it to be more effective in its dealings with the institutions of the EU, not least when applying for EU funding.

ECCH and EFCAM are partners in a consortium bidding for 1.5 million Euro EU funding under the EU FP7 Research Programme. The project is to research the current status of CAM in Europe and to set out a road-map for future CAM research.

Working together with groups representing CAM doctors, patients and manufacturers ECCH and EFCAM made an impact at the recent Open Health Forum hosted by DG SANCO in Brussels in December. As well as making contributions to discussions from the floor a joint statement on CAM was presented to the Director General of DG SANCO who as a result agreed to a future in-depth meeting with representatives from the sector early in the Spring of 2009.

Patient Safety High on the EU Agenda



There are a number of health related issues the EU is dealing with at the moment that offer opportunities for ECCH and EFCAM to present the arguments for greater recognition and use of CAM across Europe. Patient Safety is one that is of current concern as part of the Commission's Europe for Patients programme. At a recent Health First Europe conference entitled 'New Horizons' attended by ECCH General Secretary Stephen Gordon (see above speaking with conference chairwoman Ex Irish MEP Mary Banotti), EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou raised the

issue of patient safety pointing out that 197 000 patients die every year in the EU from adverse events and medical errors and 8-12% of hospitalised patients in the EU suffer adverse events as a result of healthcare. In addition Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs) are acquired by approximately 4.1 million patients per year, 35 000 of whom die as a result. Homeopathy has an important role to play in helping prevent these highly unfortunate iatrogenic incidents.

New ECCH Document confirms the safety of homeopathic treatment

A new ECCH report shows that homeopathic treatment is safe. Homeopathic medicinal products (HMPs) are safe to use, no serious side effects have been found and cases of unethical practice or malpractice are rare.

Three main areas of concern have been considered: the safety of HMPs; the safety of treatment provided by practitioners; and the safety of patients self-administering HMPs.

The report provides an overview of current regulations and manufacturing procedures for HMPs, which render these medicines safe to use.

Several experimental and observational studies, including six systematic reviews, show that adverse events are rare in homeopathy, and when they occur they are only mild or moderate, and transient. No serious adverse effects or serious adverse drug reactions were found.

Reported cases of unethical practice and malpractice are very rare, and when found they are dealt with by professional associations or by the courts. The profession has put in place a number of precautionary measures which, together with national legislation, contribute to ensuring the safety of patients.

The main area of concern raised involves patients self-administering HMPs, as there might be a risk of arriving too late for necessary treatment and as it may be difficult for patients to consider how to proceed with self-treatment. Consultation with well-educated and trained homeopaths is recommended.

In summary, current evidence seems to confirm the claim that HMPs are safe to use and homeopathic treatment provided by statutorily regulated or self-regulated homeopaths is safe.

References: European Council for Classical Homeopathy (ECCH). (2009) The safety of homeopathy. Available at <http://homeopathy-ecch.eu>

NATIONAL NEWS

VAT exemption for Registered Homeopaths



After a long process of evaluation and hearings, the Norwegian Department of Finance has decided that practitioners on the public CAM register will be exempt from charging patients VAT and paying it. All other CAM practitioners will still have to charge VAT for their services.

When VAT for health services was introduced in Norway in 2001, homeopaths and acupuncturists were the only two categories of CAM practitioners who were exempt. The Norwegian Government decided to exempt homeopaths after being informed about these practitioners' professional standards. Information was provided by ECCH and its Norwegian member association, the NHL.

Since then a number of other groups of CAM practitioners applied for VAT exemption. Having reviewed the current system, the Norwegian Department of Finance decided that exemption will be directly linked to the public CAM register. This register, established after the introduction of a new CAM law in 2004, only accepts practitioners who are members of a recognised professional association. Practitioners must also register their business and they must obtain liability insurance. In order for an association to be recognised, it must have in place registration requirements for its members, and standards of practice and professional conduct. Associations must have systems in place which give them the power to exclude members who behave in conflict with the associations' regulations.

The current system of VAT exemption for CAM practitioners depends on the practised therapy. This causes a number of problems for the authorities, as it is not always easy to determine which therapy a practitioner is practising. The new system will link VAT exemption directly to the public register. A transition period of two years is given, to allow sufficient time for practitioners to register.

Reference: Det Kongelige Finansdepartement. (2008) Avgrensning av merverdiavgiftsunntaket for omsetning av helsetjenester – alternativ behandling. 08/1377 SLTN/rfa 12.2008.

Forskrift om endring av forskrift 15. juni 2001 nr.682 (Nr.119) om avgrensning av merverdiavgiftsunntaket for omsetning av helsetjenester. Fastsett av Finansdepartementet 9. desember 2008 med hjemmel i lov 19. juni 1969 nr.66 om merverdiavgift § 5 b fjerde ledd.

RESEARCH NEWS

Eight year research project shows patients improve considerably from long-term homeopathic treatment

Researchers found significant improvements in 2 700 patients in an eight year follow-up survey. The study involved 103 homeopathic practitioners in Germany and Switzerland. Patients included in this prospective multi-centre cohort study were included consecutively upon their first consultation.

The most common complaints in adults were allergic rhinitis and headache, and in children atopic dermatitis and recurrent infections. Severity of patients' main complaint improved significantly, as well as their physical and mental quality of life ($p < 0.001$). More severe disease, younger age and female gender were factors predicting better therapeutic results.

The majority of patients said they would like to use homeopathy again and they would recommend it to their friends.

Reference: Witt CM, Ludtke R, Mangler N, Willich SN. (2008) How healthy are chronically ill patients after eight years of homeopathic treatment? – Results from a long term observational study. *BMC Public Health*, 8:413.

Exposed: The Shame of Shang et al.

The article by Shang et al published in the Lancet in August 2005 has finally been rigorously analysed and its flawed process and outcomes have been exposed.

Since 2005 the article has been used by the small group of UK sceptics, including Edzard Ernst, Professor of CAM at the Peninsular Medical School, to support their assertion that homeopathy is no better than placebo. Tellingly, not one of them took the time to analyse the paper and identify the faulty methodology.

In an article published in the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology the authors point out the faulty methodology and conclude that the authors set out to prove their own prejudices by selectively and unfavourably choosing the trials they analysed. The fact they compared the homeopathic trials with conventional trials was also found to be meaningless.

Reference: Lüdtker R, Rutten ALB. (2008) The conclusions on the effectiveness of homeopathy highly depend on the set of analyzed trials. *J Clin Epidemiol*.

European Council for Classical Homeopathy

National Association Members of ECCH

ARMENIA

Organisation for Classical Homeopathy
www.homeopathy.am

BELGIUM

Liga Homeopatica Classica
www.ligahomeopatica.be

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Society of Homeopaths of Bosnia and Herzegovina
www.homeopatijabh.org

BULGARIA

Homeopathic Society of Bulgaria
www.bghomeopathy.org

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Association of Classical Homeopathy
www.homeopathy.cz

DENMARK

Dansk Selskab for Klassisk Homøopati
www.homeopati.dk

FINLAND

Suomen Homeopaatit ry
www.homeopaatit.org

GERMANY

Verband Klassischer Homöopathen Deutschlands e.V
www.vkhd.de

GREECE

Homeopath's Association of Greece
www.ikko.gr

IRELAND

Irish Society of Homøopath
www.irishhomeopathy.ie

ISRAEL

Israeli Association for Classical Homeopathy
www.homeopathy-israel.co.il

ITALY

Corporazione Omeopati Hanemanniani
www.corporazioneomeopati.org

NETHERLANDS

Nederlandse Vereniging van Klassiek Homeopaten
www.nvkh.nl

NORWAY

Norske Homeopaters Landsforbund
www.nhl.no

POLAND

Krajowe Towarzystwo Zwolennikow Homeopati
homeopatia.roman@wp.pl

PORTUGAL

Associação Portuguesa de Homeopatia
www.homeopatia-aph.pt

SERBIA

Association for Classical Homeopathy "Hahnemann"
www.udruzenjehomeopata.com

SPAIN

Asociación Española de Homeopatas Unicistas
www.aehu.es

SWEDEN

Svenska Akademin för Klassisk Homeopati
www.sakh.se

SWITZERLAND

Homöopathie Verband Schweiz
www.hvs.ch

Verband Klassischer Homöopathen/-Innen
www.vkh.ch

UNITED KINGDOM

Alliance of Registered Homeopaths
www.a-r-h.org

Homeopathic Medical Association
www.the-hma.org

Society of Homeopaths
www.homeopathy-soh.org

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SLOVAKIA

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Slovenská homeopatická asociacia
www.homeopaticka-asociacia.sk

There are ECCH Contact Persons in
Austria, Estonia, France, Iceland, Liechtenstein

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