



Questions and Answers:

Release of an annotated version of the 2012 draft report *The Effectiveness of Homeopathy: an overview review of secondary evidence*

Why is NHMRC releasing the draft 2012 homeopathy report now?

There have been a number of enquiries about the 2012 draft report and requests for its release. NHMRC's CEO is also aware of ongoing community interest in its content and the body of misinformation that has grown up around the content of this draft report. To address this misinformation, the CEO has decided to release an annotated version of the report emphasising that it was never completed and has not undergone the usual NHMRC quality assurance steps, including consideration by the Council of NHMRC.

Has any of the draft 2012 homeopathy report been censored? Why hasn't a non-annotated version been released?

The 2012 draft report has been released in full with annotations to assist the reader in understanding the draft report, the context in which its conclusions were reached and the reasons it was not completed.

Who undertook this review that included the draft 2012 homeopathy report?

In March 2012, NHMRC established the Homeopathy Working Committee, and its first meeting was held in April 2012. The Committee was tasked with:

- guiding a review of the literature addressing the effectiveness of homeopathy;
- providing advice to NHMRC on methods to identify and evaluate relevant published guidelines, systematic reviews, government reports and evidence submitted by relevant bodies; and
- considering the outcomes of the review and using these findings to inform an information paper on homeopathy and a position statement for consideration by NHMRC Council.

The International Centre for Allied Health Evidence based at the University of South Australia was initially contracted to review the scientific evidence on the effectiveness of homeopathy in treating a variety of clinical conditions with the aim of providing Australians with reliable information about its use. The contract was terminated by mutual agreement.

Is the draft 2012 homeopathy report endorsed or finalised?

The draft report was not endorsed or finalised. As the contract was terminated by mutual agreement, the draft report did not undergo NHMRC's usual rigorous quality assurance steps, which can often result in significant changes to initial drafts.

These steps include methodological review, expert review and public consultation. Draft reports usually also undergo approval by the expert committee and the Council of NHMRC, but this also was not done.



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A second reviewer was contracted and provided an overview of published systematic reviews and a review of submitted literature. The second reviewer drafted the [NHMRC Information Paper: Evidence of the effectiveness of homeopathy for treating health conditions](#). This underwent full committee scrutiny, all of the usual NHMRC quality assurance steps and the approval processes of the NHMRC Council and CEO. It was published March 2015 at the same time as the NHMRC Statement on Homeopathy.

What is NHMRC's current position on the effectiveness of homeopathy for treating health conditions?

The *NHMRC Statement on Homeopathy* is NHMRC's current position, and the *Information Paper: Evidence of the effectiveness of homeopathy for treating health conditions* provides more details on the issue. Both publications were published on the [NHMRC website](#) in March 2015 and are the recommended references.

This position is:

Based on the assessment of the evidence of effectiveness of homeopathy, NHMRC concludes that there are no health conditions for which there is reliable evidence that homeopathy is effective.

Homeopathy should not be used to treat health conditions that are chronic, serious, or could become serious. People who choose homeopathy may put their health at risk if they reject or delay treatments for which there is good evidence for safety and effectiveness. People who are considering whether to use homeopathy should first get advice from a registered health practitioner. Those who use homeopathy should tell their health practitioner and should keep taking any prescribed treatments.

The National Health and Medical Research Council expects that the Australian public will be offered treatments and therapies based on the best available evidence.

Will NHMRC undertake another review?

The Department of Health is updating its review of natural therapies as part of its work on reviewing policies on health insurance rebates. As part of this update, NHMRC will oversee the evidence reviews of 16 natural therapies including homeopathy. The reports on the evidence reviews will be provided to the Department of Health.

It is expected this review will be completed in late 2020.