

THE HOMEOPATHY DEBATE

How Effective are Homeopathic Remedies?

1 Most national healthcare programs use **conventional** medicine, meaning that illnesses are treated using drugs and **surgery**. However, there is also a range of alternative medical treatments to choose from. One **controversial** treatment is homeopathy. Homeopathic remedies are highly diluted¹ mixtures of natural **substances**, such as plants and minerals, that may cause the **symptoms** of a disease in healthy people. The idea is that they will cure similar symptoms in sick people. Supporters of homeopathy believe that it can be effective. Others argue, however, that homeopathy does not work and agree that they should not be **funded** by government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid in the United States (national health insurance programs for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families). Here, one **proponent** and one critic present their cases.

Homeopathy Should Be Covered by Government Healthcare Programs

by Jessica Nogueira (Professional Homeopath)

2 In 1810, a German physician named Samuel Hahnemann published an overview of his medical theories and research in a book titled *The Organon of the Healing Art*, which stated that consuming a substance that causes the symptoms of an illness could cure that illness. This was the birth of homeopathy. Ever since then, many people have tried this alternative treatment and found success with it. Often, homeopathic treatment is less expensive than conventional medicine is, since it is made from plants and other natural substances. Also, but perhaps less importantly, over 400 doctors in the United States regularly recommend homeopathic treatments. Since they are cheap and popular, I find it difficult to understand why Medicare and Medicaid do not fund them. Why shouldn't people be allowed to make their own health choices? They have this freedom in other aspects of their lives—for example, which school to send their children to—so why not in terms of their healthcare?

3 As for the critics who argue that homeopathy doesn't work, I could give hundreds of examples of patients who have been cured by my treatment. On top of that, there's plenty of research that shows the benefits it can bring. Homeopathy wouldn't have survived so long if it were complete nonsense. It has much more than just a placebo effect⁴. Too much emphasis is sometimes put on providing "proof" of why something works. Belief is just as powerful.



Homeopathy Should Not Be Covered by Government Healthcare Programs

by Dr. Piers Wehner (Primary Care Physician)

4 We don't really know whether homeopathy helps people feel better because of the remedies themselves or because people believe they will work. Some people just feel better when they get personal care and attention from their homeopathic practitioner. For me and many others in my profession, there is absolutely no proof that says homeopathic treatment works. The government's **chief** scientist confirmed this when he said there was "no real evidence" to support homeopathy. We live in difficult economic times, and every health insurance penny the government spends should be checked to ensure that it is not wasted. In fact, 75% of U.S. doctors are against the use of Medicare and Medicaid for funding of homeopathy.

5 One of the main arguments put forward by supporters of homeopathy is that this therapy doesn't cause any damage. However, people may think they are treating their illness by taking homeopathic remedies when there is actually no scientific evidence that this is true. Even more seriously, patients who rely on homeopathy alone for treating life-threatening illnesses like cancer could be taking a big risk. The cancer might no longer be treatable by proven methods if the patient has waited too long trying homeopathy. This can cost lives.



Read the article. Choose T (true), F (false), or DNS (does not say).

The majority of countries use alternative rather than conventional medicine.

Supporters of homeopathy believe that patients should have choices in their treatment.

More than two-thirds of doctors in the United States are against homeopathic treatment.

Traditional Indian doctors frequently use homeopathy.

Jessica Nogueira thinks that homeopathic remedies only work because of the placebo effect.

Medicare and Medicaid do not fund homeopathic remedies.

Weak, highly diluted liquids are a common form of homeopathic treatment.

Homeopathic health care is not available in the United States.



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