

# Research paper on alternative or complimentary medicine

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



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## **Abstract**

It is interesting to take a look at two correlating yet arousing subject that has lingered on for the last 200 years. There are various forms of alternative or otherwise dabbed complementary medicine that has seen major disparities in their application. The reason for this change and views between complementary and alternative medicine and evidence-based medicine is the fact that medical practitioners who rely solely on what Barthó (2010) terms as chemical and the other approach that is dabbed natural have different effects. In this research paper, the learner will take a closer look at homeopathic medication and relate it to safety of the method. In addition to this, there will be a relationship between homeopathy and pharmacological

administration and consideration of evidence-based application. A synthesis and application on the learners' work environment will be done.

## **Introduction**

The term homeopathy is a term that finds its root in early 1800s and that has become a commonly applied yet essentially controversial medical practice (O'Meara, et al., 2002; Jose, et al., 2009, p. 794). The discovery of this approach towards finding a solution to modern problems is credited to Doctor Samuel Hahnemann from Germany (Food Facts. 2008) who, while translating a certain book on malaria treatment stumbled upon a portion raising the issue that cinchona extracts were able to cause similar symptoms as those found in patients with malaria yet upon highly diluting the extract, it became a very effective medicine to cure malaria. Using this approach on dilution of causal agent with a substantially high level of agent, it was possible to make a cure by letting the body healing mechanism activate and initiate defense mechanism that are then stored within the body and thus future invasions by the same parasites would be faced by an internally manufactured cure.

It is for this reason that the knowledge has been passed on and demands for enactment and recognition as a certified approach to contemporary medical care approach has been a major debate. To the practitioners of homeopathy, this is among the most effective methods of curing a disease since it does not only cure the symptoms as other drugs do but rather cures the whole body as the defense that the body creates runs through the system and eliminates the causative agents (Vos & Brennan, 2010). The main source of

challenge for homeopathy has been and still remains to be the issue of safety of its application since there is utilization of the causal agent to cure the body.

## **Homeopathy and Safety**

Use of live pathogens and other disease causing organism to find a cure is one of the most sensitive issues that can be raised. According to Food Facts (2008), it has been argued that the dilution of the extracts can be compared to one drop of that extract that is vigorously mixed in a water body that is equivalent to twenty swimming pools and thus leading to the notion that homeopathy is a placebo by many practitioners who do not ascertain its worth. The main problem is not its validity and its success in application but rather the phobia that this level of dilution makes the drug to be relatively useless.

There are several adverse effects that have been noted that can be evident although to a very small number of people. According to a comprehensive research done through 1, 693 doctors who practiced homeopathy, as carried out by Baars, Adriaansen-Tennekes and Eikmans (2005), there are only 32 recognizable effects that can be identified unlike effects that are in the evidence-based practice ranging in hundreds or even thousands depending on the disease in question (p. 611). These adverse effects include local redness, oedema, hematoma, abscess, local pain, headache, allergic reaction, feverish symptoms, local infection, aversion/ anxiety about injections, itching among others (Baars, Adriaansen-Tennekes and Eikmans, 2005, p. 611).

It is however noted that of these severe reactions over 98.1 % of the doctors interviewed admitted that they rarely, very rarely or never had these cases during their practice (Baars, Adriaansen-Tennekes and Eikmans, 2005, p. 609). Based on their mode of application, these homeopathic injectables have a very low risk factor and thus the best mode of application. It is however noted that the risk factors and some of the effects emanating from admission of homeopathic medicine is mainly associated to interference between the doctor and the patient especially children who can cause a bit of challenge during admission (Baars, Adriaansen-Tennekes and Eikmans, 2005, p. 609).

For products that contain a concentration that is higher than 1: 10, 000 there are a very small number of patients that experience severe adverse reaction that are defined in terms of anaphylactic reaction, asthma, feverish symptoms and anxiety/ aversion against injections (Baars, Adriaansen-Tennekes and Eikmans, 2005, p. 609).

### **Guidelines on evidence-based practice in pharmacology**

There are several guidelines that have been set up in an effort to help the pharmacists, the nurses and the doctors during admission of medications. In their medication, there are several factors that have to be considered by the health professionals in their field. To start with, there should be consideration of the effects that drugs falling under a certain therapeutic class and the same effects communicated to the patient before administration of these drugs (ICH, 2000, p. 2). In addition to this, there should be a clear understanding and communication on adverse effects that

drugs in certain therapeutic class or chemical class have on various organs of the body and the likely reactions and this should also be communicated to the patients before admission of these drugs (ICH, 2000, p. 2).

Thirdly, when administering new sets of drugs, there ought to be comparison of the effects with the assay data that has the recorded adverse effects in conjunction to results derived from past research works by various authors (ICH, 2000, p. 2). Among the most important organs that the drugs can have adverse effects on as stipulated in the guideline is the renal/ urinary system, the gastrointestinal system, the autonomic nervous system and other organs and the effects should be compared against these systems (ICH, 2000, p. 2).

## **Patient Safety and Evidence-Based Practice**

The safety of a patient is very vital in the recovery process. For example, it is a fact that some patients stay in hospitals over a long time depending on the nature of their complication. This means that the patients can develop wounds or even varicose veins especially after surgery and thus their safety not only from physical harm like cuts and bruises but also from other conditions that might arise from their hospitalization. According to van Roon et al., (2009), it is a requirement that upon identification of adverse effects on a patient under medication, there should be immediate intervention strategies to either stop these reactions or reduce them to a manageable level.

In as much as the conventional doctors who use chemical-based medication also known as evidence-based medication raise issues with homeopathy (Vos & Brennan, 2010), (Levy, Ajjawi & Roberts, van Roon et al. 2009), (Food

Facts, 2008) and (Jose et al. 2009), it is clear that the number of adverse effects that have been recorded on homeopathy are far much less than in the case of evidence-based practice. For example, vomiting and diarrhea are some common adverse effects that people keep experiencing in numerous drug administrations under evidence-based practice yet an accusing finger is directed towards homeopathy. It is ironical that an area that receives humongous amounts of adverse reactions and effects from evidence-based drug use can accuse an effective mode of cure of being unsafe. In essence, since the chemical-based applications have more adverse effects than homeopathic applications, it would be proper to integrate homeopathic drugs in admission and let patients select the options to take based on informed decision.

## **Pharmacology and Nursing Practice**

It is true that there are issues that relate to pharmacology that the nurses get involved in. Take for example a patient is brought in with a condition that has similar symptoms, the patient is in much pain and trying to talk to the patient on the available options for medication seems to be futile. This means that the nurse has to make a decision on the most suitable drug to use. According to Winnick (2005), it has been noted that in the past, there were higher and much stricter guidelines as well as regulations that barred the progress of homeopathic admission in most healthcare facilities. This made people to believe that homeopathy was an option that could only be associated with evil, inconsistency or inauthentic and thus a challenge in administration.

This notion, although the laws have been relaxed concerning the issue on homeopathy, still lingers on and trying to apply it as a more effective solution has been met with stiff challenges and guidelines (Winnick, 2005). There are conflicting guidelines that act as barriers to the progress of the medical approach.

Take another example of a healthcare facility that does not stock homeopathic medications and a patient would like to have this kind of medical intervention. This causes a problem since the facility has either to deny its patient the right to choose what medical intervention they would like to have or breach their laid down rules and bring in the medication for these patients. In both cases, there is the issue of bureaucracy in the healthcare institution.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is evident that homeopathy is a relatively safe mode of treatment. It has its roots back in the early 17th century credited to a German doctor named Samuel Hahnemann who made the discovery while translating a book on malaria treatment. Homeopathy works on the principle of diluting extracts of the causative agent to a level such that it becomes almost irrelevant in common knowledge as most critics find it with a mixture ranging from 1: 10, 000 and above. In as much as there are concerns on safety, homeopathy is far much safer than conventional drugs that use chemical combinations to treat symptoms. Homeopathic application is in line with the guidelines since there is enough evidence from its outcome as far as totally eliminating the problem throughout the body system and leaving the



body with an immune system that protects the body from future invasions. It is clear that there is substantial research that point to the fact that there is a lot of safety and support from the homeopathic practitioners as they know how effective the process is and the safety it has compared to the conventional doctors. Finally, a problem with substitution and complementation of this approach is known and a major challenge in the nursing profession with respect to pharmacology.

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