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NEWS

H:MC21 at the forthcoming HMA conference

The Homeopathic Medical Association (HMA), are holding their annual conference on the 15th of March at the School of Pharmacy, London. They have kindly agreed to let us promote the campaign at the conference without charging us for our display. We are very grateful to them, especially because we have in the past been charged for similar facilities. You can find out details of the conference with its very interesting topics and speakers by going to www.the-hma.org

Homeopathy fares well in Northern Ireland report

Complementary and Alternative Therapies Backed for NHS Funding

A major Government-funded study, carried out in Northern Ireland and commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, found there would be a range of benefits to patients in providing access to complementary and alternative medicine, and that the treatments could even save the health service money.

Treatments administered after referral from local GPs included acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic, osteopathy, reflexology and aromatherapy. The Health Minister in Northern Ireland has made the independent evaluation report available to download on the Department's website. As well as an extensive report with detailed responses from patients, GPs and practitioners, using a validated audit tool, focus groups and surveys, the report has made recommendations about the way forward. www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/complementary-alternative-medicine.htm

The Results

Following the pilot, 80% of patients reported an improvement in their symptoms, 64% took less time off work and 55% reduced their use of painkillers. In the pilot, 713 patients with a range of ages and demographic backgrounds and either physical or mental health conditions were referred to various complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies via nine GP practices in Belfast and Londonderry.

Homeopathy received the highest percentage of reported improvements : In relation to

treatment programme, patients who availed of chiropractic and osteopathy treatments (56%) were less likely to record an improvement in their level of wellbeing, compared with patients availing of acupuncture (77%) and homeopathic treatments (79%) (see page 31 of the report).

Health improvement

- 81% of patients reported an improvement in their physical health
- 79% reported an improvement in their mental health
- 84% of patients linked an improvement in their health and wellbeing directly to their CAM treatment
- In 65% of patient cases, GPs documented a health improvement, correlating closely to patient-reported improvements
- 94% of patients said they would recommend CAM to another patient with their condition
- 87% of patient indicated a desire to continue with their CAM treatment

Painkillers and medication

- Half of GPs reported prescribing less medication and all reported that patients had indicated to them that they needed less
- 62% of patients reported suffering from less pain
- 55% reported using less painkillers following treatment
- Patients using medication reduced from 75% before treatment to 61% after treatment
- 44% of those taking medication before treatment had reduced their use afterwards

Health service and social benefits

- 24% of patients who used health services prior to treatment (i.e. primary and secondary care, accident and emergency) reported using the services less after treatment
- 65% of GPs reported seeing the patient less following the CAM referral
- Half of GPs said the scheme had reduced their workload and 17% reported a financial saving for their practice
- Half of GPs said their patients were using secondary care services less

Despite initial scepticism, the GPs involved were almost unanimously in favour after seeing tangible results. In 99% of patient cases GPs said they would refer the patient, or a different patient, to the scheme again and in 98% of cases GPs said they would recommend the service to other GPs. However, they also called for more information to help build their understanding of CAM therapies.

(**Source:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety : Evaluation – Complementary and Alternative Medicines Pilot Project in Northern Ireland, May 2008 (see web-link above); and circular email from Get Well UK)

Codex Alimentarius: Get the correct information from the Alliance for Natural Health (ANH)

From ANH www.anhcampaign.org

“The ANH has been inundated with email and phone requests recently to clarify whether the frightening, and frankly outlandish, information on **Codex** currently doing the rounds on the internet, is accurate or not. And unfortunately, whilst Codex does present a significant threat to our health freedoms, the truth is that so much of the circulating information is either grossly inaccurate or completely incorrect. Misinformation of this nature has the ability to damage and derail the campaigns against Codex that are based in truth and accurate fact. Hence, we have felt compelled to put a statement up on the ANH site and update our Codex Campaign page to clarify the key myths and set people straight. We'd like to thank those supporters who have taken the time to forward information they've received to check on accuracy before adding to the misinformation pool by forwarding it. It's this action that has prompted us to write a statement to attempt to redress the balance. We would now ask you all to please cascade the link to this story to as many people as you can and ask your contacts to send it out as widely as possible. Given how widespread the misinformation on Codex is now, we really need your help to get the accurate facts out there as a matter of priority.

Yet another study that generates negative headlines for supplements has hit the world's media this week. The ANH shows that this latest study which claims to show that **multivitamin supplements** don't prevent cancer or heart disease, is a waste of public money! These funds could be much more usefully spent on research that can really help transition the health system from one that largely treats the symptoms of disease, to one whose foundation is rooted in preventative and sustainable healthcare.”

Go to the ANH website www.anhcampaign.org to read more.

A letter to The Times

From The Times, February 3, 2009

www.timesonline.co.uk:80/tol/life_and_style/court_and_social/article5644142.ece

"Complementary medicine does help patients"

The case for having more education for complementary medicine practitioners

Sir, No doubt to the dismay of your correspondents (letter, Jan30) complementary therapies are being used by about 60 per cent of my cancer patients. They are used by millions who suffer from long-term conditions for which, despite the efforts of scientists, there is no effective conventional treatment. Many knowledgeable and trained doctors use complementary therapies in their everyday treatment of patients where it is appropriate.

Those of us who are faced daily by real human suffering use the best evidence available to help our patients. At the same time, patients do their best to help themselves. The ill-thought-through arguments of those who are not doctors — and so have no experience of the practice of medicine — are ridiculous.

According to the Department of Health, about one in five adults uses

complementary therapies. That means we need more education for practitioners, not less. And we certainly need better research, not the Stalinist repression that Professor Colquhoun and his colleagues demand.

Armchair physicians are welcome to their views, but clearly patients know better.

Professor Karol Sikora
Professor of Cancer Medicine,
Imperial College School of Medicine, Hammersmith Hospital

Coming up

Have you been annoyed or upset at *Trick or Treatment?*
Have you been sure that it is not telling “the truth” about alternative medicine?
Well now H:MC21 are able to offer you the truth about its authors!

In March H:MC21 will be releasing a stunning attack on Edzard Ernst and Simon Singh ... by Edzard Ernst and Simon Singh! Of course they will have a little help from us, but what else are we for?

This extraordinary revelation will be exclusive to H:MC21, so make sure you are one of the first to know by opening the next newsletter as soon as you get it.

Get *Halloween Science* free from H:MC21 in March – though any donations will help enormously.

Please make a donation to fund this campaign

Thanks a lot to those who donated money after our appeal last month. We received a total of £341. Please help us to raise more.

If every one of you on this email list (over 6,000 people) gives even just one pound, we could be much more active and promote the campaign more prominently.

Please donate now – every £ helps!!

Click [here](#) and you will be taken to PayPal.

You do not need to have a PayPal account, just use your debit or credit card.

Or get together with a few friends or patients, collect a donation from each and send us a cheque (made out to H:MC21) to

The Treasurer
H:MC21
The Old Farmhouse
Filgrave

Bucks MK16 9ET

Thanks a lot!

Signatures

Please keep collecting signatures!
And don't forget to send us your completed lists.

Next update of signatures numbers will be on our website soon

We have other exciting projects in the pipeline just waiting to get them started, but more about this later.