

## **Edzard Ernst Exposed: An ‘Expert’ Without Qualifications.**

*Professor Edzard Ernst, the most prominent ‘expert’ on homeopathy, has been revealed to have no qualifications in homeopathy and little experience of practising it.*

Edzard Ernst, Professor of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) at Exeter University, is the most frequently cited ‘expert’ by critics of homeopathy, but a recent interview has revealed the astounding fact that he “never completed any courses” and has no qualifications in homeopathy. What is more his principal experience in the field was when “After my state exam I worked under Dr Zimmermann at the Münchner Krankenhaus für Naturheilweisen” (Munich Hospital for Natural Healing Methods). Asked if it is true that he only worked there “for half a year”, he responded that “I am not sure ... it is some time ago”!

Homeopathic training in the UK typically takes 3-4 years, as does training in acupuncture, so when he claims to have “learned, among others, homeopathy, phytotherapy, massage, manual medicine, acupuncture and autogenic training”, one would expect to see evidence of at least 10 years of proper training. This interview suggests that Ernst became a professor of CAM without such training and without having any qualifications or serious experience in the field.

The interview, in German, originally appeared in the April 2010 newsletter of the *Deutscher Zentralverein homoeopathischer Ärzte* (DZVhÄ – German National Association of Homeopathic Physicians), and it has been published in English for the first time by Homeopathy: Medicine for the 21st Century (H:MC21 – [www.hmc21.org](http://www.hmc21.org)), a charity campaigning for greater understanding and use of homeopathy. The translator, Ursula Kraus-Harper MA PhD RSHom, said that this was an important interview since it reveals the hypocrisy of the attacks on homeopathy.

“In July 2010 a study was published showing how homeopathy had benefited 2.3 million people in Cuba affected by endemic Leptospirosis. It demonstrated that homeopathy can save lives. It is outrageous that opponents of homeopathy, have been relying on this ‘expert’ in homeopathy to dismiss promising research when he is not even qualified in the field.”

In 2009 William Alderson RSHom, Chair of H:MC21, published *Halloween Science*, a detailed critique of the book Ernst wrote with Simon Singh, *Trick or Treatment? Alternative Medicine on Trial*. He was not surprised at the revelations in this interview.

“I pointed out that some of the statements made in *Trick or Treatment?* could only be the result of a profound ignorance of the principles and practice of homeopathy. This interview has confirmed my assessment. It is particularly worrying because Ernst has been active in research, and ignorance of homeopathic principles can lead to making basic mistakes which will invalidate the research as evidence about homeopathy. Ernst did not mention this issue in his book, and the doubts it raises about his competence should not be ignored in the light of this evidence of his lack of proper training.”

The interview was accompanied by comments by Curt Kösters, Chair of DZVhÄ. He too was concerned about Ernst’s research competence.

“We were baffled about the initial reply we received from Professor Ernst when we asked for an interview: ‘I just read the questions. If you want answers to such specific questions, please name the publications they are referring to’. The leading researcher is obviously not familiar

with essential work that has been published during recent years in his own field of work. We gave him the sources willingly, among them a journal of which nobody other than Professor Edzard Ernst himself is a member of the scientific advisory committee.”

H:MC21 will be seeking an explanation as to how someone completely unqualified in the field of homeopathy has become a university professor of CAM and a supposed ‘scientific expert’ in homeopathy.

## Notes to Editors

Original interview in German:

‘Interview mit Professor Edzard Ernst, Exeter’, *Homöopathische Nachrichten*, April 2010, pp.1-3, available at  
<[http://www.dzvhae.com/portal/pics/abschnitte/300410102802\\_hn168april10.pdf?PH\\_PSESSID=273eb20b3c19d743c6c106bbd56fd1dc](http://www.dzvhae.com/portal/pics/abschnitte/300410102802_hn168april10.pdf?PH_PSESSID=273eb20b3c19d743c6c106bbd56fd1dc)>.

English translation:

‘Interview with Edzard Ernst’ at <<http://hmc21.org/> ... >.

Cuban research on Leptospirosis:

G. Bracho, E. Varela , R. Fernández, B. Ordaz, N. Marzoa, J Menéndez, L. García, E. Gilling, R. Leyva, R. Rufín, R. de la Torre, R.L. Solis, N. Batista, R. Borrero, C. Campa, ‘Large-scale application of highly-diluted bacteria for Leptospirosis epidemic control’, *Homeopathy*, 99 (2010),156-66, at  
<<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20674839>>.

More details are available in the Faculty of Homeopathy press release:

‘Homeopathy associated with dramatic reduction in Leptospirosis infection in Cuban population’ (3 August 2010) at:  
<[http://www.facultyofhomeopathy.org/media/press\\_releases/leptospirosis\\_infection\\_in\\_Cuban\\_population.html](http://www.facultyofhomeopathy.org/media/press_releases/leptospirosis_infection_in_Cuban_population.html)>

Books referred to:

Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst, *Trick or Treatment? Alternative Medicine on Trial* (London: Bantam Press, 2008).

William Alderson, *Halloween Science* (Stoke Ferry: Homeopathy: Medicine for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2009), available at:

<<http://www.homeopathyworkedforme.org/#/halloweenscience/4533482584>>.