

Charity H:MC21 will fight for patients' rights in the face of the ASA's disgraceful judgement

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The charity H:MC21 is shocked at the recent ASA adjudication on an advert which appeared in a supplement of the *New Statesman*. It is a judgement which tries to suppress statements of fact.

The ASA is knowingly devoting substantial resources to investigating complaints which are being brought by organised campaign groups. In doing so the ASA has been drawn into acting beyond its competence. As a regulatory body established to protect the consumer's interest, it would appear to be applying double standards in the field of health advertising.

Paul Burnett, Chairman of H:MC21 states, "After ten months of 'deliberation' the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has presented a disgraceful judgement in the form of its adjudication on the advertisement in the *New Statesman*. The adjudication is not about consumers; it is about suppressing the charity's ability to inform the public of the demonstrated facts that set out a clear argument for homeopathy as a legitimate, cost effective and safe alternative to conventional medicine."

For example, one ruling upheld that H:MC21 cannot cite a scientific review of 6,500 patients who received homeopathic treatment at the NHS's Bristol Homeopathic Hospital, claiming that patients' assessment of their own health is not valid. The ASA has also refused to take account of supporting evidence supplied by H:MC21 and other homeopathic organisations.

William Alderson, a founding Trustee of H:MC21 stated, "The whole process has been farcical and frightening in uncovering the inconsistencies within the ASA. Only on final review by the ASA Council have they confirmed the advertiser's right to cite the *British Medical Journal* clinical evidence website which showed that of the 2,500 most commonly used treatments in the NHS, 51% have unknown effectiveness, and only 11% have been shown to be beneficial."

Alderson continues, "The only people who will benefit from this decision are those having a vested interest in the pharmaceutical industry. The general public and those with serious health problems will see no benefit at all. Indeed, they are having their access to information curtailed. We do not believe that the ASA has the right to censor facts. H:MC21 will therefore appeal the decision and continue to fight for patients' rights."

Ends

Notes to editors:

Homeopathy: Medicine for the 21st Century (H:MC21)

- It is a registered charity established in 2007 to promote the education of the public in the subject of homeopathy.
- It organised a lobby of Parliament by more than 250 homeopaths and patients in 2010 in protest at the Commons Science and Technology Committee *Evidence Check 2: Homeopathy*.
- It handed in to the Prime Minister nearly 29,000 signatures to the declaration 'Homeopathy Worked for Me'.
- It supported the protest at the BMA annual representatives meeting in Brighton in 2010.
- Websites: www.hmc21.org and www.homeopathyworkedforme.org

Paul Burnett, Chairman

William Alderson, was one of the founding Trustees

For more information/interviews

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