

## Media Release

15 December 2014

### The Five Fundamental Flaws of the NHMRC Homeopathy Review

Complementary Medicines Australia (CMA) today pre-empted the publication of a formal position statement by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) on homeopathy, calling into question the NHMRC's methods used to review the evidence of effectiveness on homeopathy.

Mr Carl Gibson, Chief Executive of CMA said "A number of independent experts in the sector have expressed strong concerns with the methodology of the review, according to information obtained from NHMRC under Freedom of Information laws."

"We are today calling out the NHMRC Review as fatally flawed by outlining Five Fundamental Flaws:

1. **Shoddy Methodology:** *NHMRC provides no adequate explanation of why randomised controlled trials (RTC) were excluded from the Review. The NHMRC decision not to adhere to a search of all Level 1 evidence, as per International standards, should certainly be justified.*
2. **Selective Research:** *The choice of databases searched was not broad enough to capture the balance of complementary medicine specific content, and excluded non-English studies.*
3. **Lack of Expertise:** *NHMRC did not appoint a homeopathic expert to the Review Panel.*
4. **Flawed evidence:** *NHMRC did not provide an adequate explanation of why only systematic reviews were used where systematic reviews have inherent weakness as a reliable source of evidence.*
5. **Ignoring Opinion of Experts:** *Two out of three Experts who NHMRC consulted prior to publication expressed numerous concerns over the methodology and selective use of the data and recommended the NHMRC could not come to the very definitive conclusion that it came to. The NHMRC then chose to ignore these Expert Opinions.*

Mr Gibson added; "The papers released under Freedom of Information show that the NHMRC failed to appoint a homeopathic expert to the Review Panel, left out randomised controlled trials, excluded all studies not published in English, and limited the choice of databases searched, which basically meant that the balance of complementary medicines specific content was omitted."

**"No valid conclusions can be drawn from this Review, except that the NHMRC has failed to uphold its own standards of ethics and quality research in this instance," said Mr Gibson.**

Mr Gibson went on to say "As the first in a series of investigations into the evidence on complementary medicines, CMA questions how future reviews will be underpinned by best practice principles and conducted in a transparent manner".

ENDS

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