

1,800 Studies Later, Scientists Conclude Homeopathy Doesn't Work

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Perhaps you remember when scientists debunked homeopathy in 2002. Or 2010. Or 2014. But now a major Australian study analyzing over 1,800 papers has shown that homeopathy, the alternative treatment that relies on super-diluted substances and the principle of “like cures like” is completely ineffective.

After assessing more than 1,800 studies on homeopathy, Australia’s National Health and Medical Research Council was only able to find 225 that were rigorous enough to analyze. And a systematic review of these studies revealed “no good quality evidence to support the claim that homeopathy is effective in treating health conditions.”

The Australian study, which is the first position statement relying on such an extensive review of medical literature, strikes the latest blow at a 200-year-old alternative treatment developed by a German physician with “no interest in detailed pathology, and none in conventional diagnosis and treatment.” The Washington Post reports that the study’s authors are concerned that people who continue to choose homeopathic remedies over proven medicine face real health risks—including the nearly 4 million Americans who use homeopathic “medicines.”

The head of the National Health and Medical Research Council told the Guardian that he hopes the findings will lead to changes in Australia’s health insurance and pharmacy systems. But he also said that “there will be a tail of people who won’t respond to this report, and who will say it’s all a conspiracy of the establishment.”

News of the Australian study comes on the heels of newly released National Health Interview Survey data showing a “small but significant” increase in the use of homeopathy during 2012. And recently, a Canadian homeopathic college came under fire for taking an anti-vaccination stance and promoting homeopathic “nosodes” as an alternative to vaccines.

But will the not-so-new news that homeopathy is ineffective keep consumers from wasting their money on the complementary therapy? If the growing homeopathic industry is any indication, the answer is probably no.