

# National Health of Medical Research Council rule homeopathic remedies useless for human health

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**AFTER** a lengthy investigation the nation's peak medical research body has delivered its verdict on homeopathic remedies — they are useless for human health.



Homeopathic remedies useless for human health ... Professor Warwick Anderson, National Health and Medical Research Council CEO. *Source: Supplied*

The judgement is likely to influence a crucial government review which is deciding whether the 30 per cent tax rebate for private health insurance coverage of [complementary therapies](#) should continue.

Australians spend almost \$4 billion a year on complementary therapies like vitamins and herbs and almost \$10 million on homeopathic remedies.

**Have homeopathic remedies worked for you? Leave your comment below**

The [National Health and Medical Research Council](#) will today release a guide for doctors on how to talk to their patients about the lack of evidence for many such therapies. Doctors will also be told to warn patients of possible interactions between alternative and conventional medicines.

### HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES: Homeopaths dispute critical leaked report

### HEADACHE CURES: Painkillers versus natural remedies

The council has also produced a 300-page draft report that reviews the evidence for [homoeopathy](#) in treating 68 clinical conditions. It concludes “there is no reliable evidence that homoeopathy is effective for treating health conditions”.

Homoeopathy is a 200-year-old form of alternative medicine based on the principle that substances that produce symptoms in a healthy person can be used to treat similar symptoms in a sick person.

The theory is that homeopathic remedies stimulate the body’s ability to fight infection by using molecules in highly diluted substances that retain a ‘memory’ of the original substance.

Its worth has long been debated.

In 2009, the UK House of Commons Science and Technology Committee released a report which argued “there has been enough testing of homoeopathy and plenty of evidence showing that it is not efficacious” and that homeopathic products “perform no better than placebo”.

NHMRC chief Warwick Anderson said health care choices should be based on good evidence.

However, [Australian Homeopathic Association](#) spokesman Greg Cope said he was disappointed at the narrow evidence relied on by the NHMRC in its report.

“What they have looked at is systematic trials for named conditions when that is not how homoeopathy works,” he said.

Homoeopathy worked on the principle of improving a person’s overall health and wellness, and research such as a seven-year study conducted in Switzerland was a better measure of its usefulness, he said.

There are about 10,000 complementary medicine products sold in Australia but most consumers are unaware they are not evaluated by our medicines safety watchdog before they are allowed on the market.

Complementary medicine sceptic Professor Ken Harvey said the NHMRC's ruling on homoeopathy was "not unexpected" and its implications could be wide ranging.

"One would conclude on the basis of this report a government committee revising whether natural therapies should continue to get private health insurance tax rebates would conclude it doesn't warrant a private health insurance rebate," he said.

The NHMRC report also raised questions about how colleges that provide homoeopathy training could continue to meet government training rules and regulations, he said.