

Homeopathy as con or cure?

A homeopath's perspective

| Nicole Duelli

On April 1, 2015, Ontario was the first province to grant homeopaths the legal authority to self-regulate, including the power to register homeopaths and manage quality assurance programs. You might think this validates homeopathy, as I do, but news headlines still read "Health Experts Criticize Government Approval of Homeopathic 'Vaccines'" and "Cure or Con?"

As a homeopath who has recommended homeopathy for more than 20 years and used these apparently controversial nosode remedies as part of everyday practice—but not once as a vaccine alternative—this sort of media attention is frustrating. In fact, homeopathy makes an excellent complementary medicine and need not be an alternative at all. But I suppose that must not make a good headline.

Homeopathy has a history that extends more than 200 years. In Europe, where it originated, it's trusted by an estimated 100 million—or about three out of every 10 people—including 21 percent of older adults and 24 percent of children. In Germany, 38 percent of physicians frequently prescribe homeopathy to their patients while, according to a 2014 survey, 60 percent of Germans use homeopathic medicine to treat many everyday complaints.

Many celebrities also support homeopathy, including Dr. Oz, David Beckham, and Martina Navratilova.

However, many media sources don't seem to recognize the positive impact homeopathy can have. Some news sources seemed quick to recount the

highly critical conclusions of a recent Australian review on homeopathy. Yet the report of a 2011 Swiss review, which concluded that scientific studies proved homeopathy to be an effective and cost-effective medicine, went unnoticed.

I believe a certain degree of skepticism is healthy. But blind skepticism in the face of overwhelming scientific and clinical evidence is dangerous.

As a result of misinformed skeptics, homeopaths have had their share of setbacks. In August 2014, the homeopathic company Heel Group left the North American market due to costs associated with unproven class action lawsuits. Instead, the company chose to focus on strong markets in Europe and South America, leaving many physiotherapists and consumers without the popular Traumeel products.

Luckily, the homeopathic company Boiron Canada recently won a similar lawsuit and was awarded damages, hopefully preventing similar allegations from clogging the courts again anytime soon.

Whether or not you are a fan of homeopathy, the freedom to choose products that suit your individual health needs is a right that serves every Canadian. If homeopathy is pulled from the shelves because it is considered unproven or a "con" after so much evidence to the contrary, it might not be long before shelves are bare of vitamins, supplements, and other complementary options too—a dangerous path.

Then again, perhaps this new media attention is a sign that homeopathy is becoming a revolutionary, cutting-edge complementary medicine in Canada. Who won't want to be a part of that? **a**

Nicole Duelli has been practising homeopathy for 20 years, inspired by its effectiveness in restoring the body's natural ability to heal. She believes homeopathy makes an excellent complementary medicine.