

# **Homeopathy Declaration: Professors and medical societies underline the scientific evidence for the effectiveness of homeopathy – and criticise one-sided representations.**

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## **Summary of the Homeopathy Declaration**

In view of the lack of plausibility to the principles of homeopathy, it has become fashionable to deny their therapeutic efficacy, although the evidence published here indicates that it is effective. Nevertheless, scientific misinformation is launched as an expression of ignorance or a deliberate mood against homeopathy. The present publication shows the lack of respectability of these activities in three selected examples from recent times, taking into account the actual document situation.

In the name of the Dialogue Forum on Pluralism in Medicine (DPM) and other well-established and representative medical organisations, the need for evidence-based integrative medicine and its increasing importance is being presented at leading medical schools in the USA as well as in Germany. It is shown that a fully orchestrated health care, which seeks to meet the individually different needs and preferences of the population, requires integrative medicine as a critical, but unbiased cooperation between mainstream medicine and selected complementary medical approaches to its foundation.

In this context, reference is made to a principle of professionalism written by all the members of the Dialogue Forum, which states that both conventional medicine and complementary medicine are equally committed to science. Already Ludwig Fleck and Thomas Kuhn have shown that the followers of a particular paradigm strive to privilege each own paradigm by the state. The present article, however, points out that according to §5 (3) of the Basic Law, the Wissenschaftsrat is fundamentally forbidden by the Wissenschaftsrichtertum in the sense of seizing a party for a particular paradigm. In addition, it is pointed out that the monopolization of a single paradigm is accompanied by the formation of totalitarian thinking structures.

## **Tendentious, factually incorrect reproductions of study results on the therapeutic effectiveness of homeopathy.**

The plea by Edzard Ernst to remove homeopathy from the pharmacies contradicts the scientific documentary situation and lacks the readiness for factual information.

Against the backdrop of numerous unsustainable national and international blanket attacks on complementary medicine in general and homeopathy in particular, in the name of the Dialogue Forum on Pluralism in Medicine (DPM) and the other signatory institutions and persons listed below, a plea for the requirement of evidence-based Integrative Medicine and formulated their constitutional position in the German Basic Law. The current reason for this statement is, on the one hand, the demand recently raised in a "Münster Memorandum Homeopathy" for the abolition of the additional name homeopathy at the 121st Medical Day in Erfurt [1]; on the other hand, an expression of opinion of Edzard Ernst, which under the heading "outside view" in the south German newspaper on 10.08. 2018 has been published. In addition, the arbitrary and the real data contradictory pleading of Werner Bartens in the Süddeutsche Zeitung, resort opinion, from 11.10.2018, in which he asserted, inter alia, "everything that carries the label homeopathy" must disappear from the pharmacy, as well as " in these means and many others more [...] in a serious way never been proved a benefit ", which is " a hundredfold proven ".

While in view of the "Münster Memorandum Homeopathy" of the "Münster Circle" has already been issued an opinion [2, 3], this has not happened with respect to the article by Ernst [4] and Bartens [5]. There, Ernst has argued that homeopathic medicines, which he considers to be placebos without therapeutic efficacy, should be withdrawn from the market by prompting pharmacists to educate customers that homeopathic remedies are ineffective against placebo. Unfortunately, the texts written by Ernst and Bartens are not factual or even scientifically proven statements, but tendentious, factually

incorrect reproductions of study results on the therapeutic effectiveness of homeopathy. This and the fact that it has become fashionable recently

## **Dialogue Forum Pluralism in Medicine (DPM) and Integrative Medicine**

The Dialogue Forum Pluralism in Medicine (DPM) was founded in 2000 by the then President of the German Medical Association, Prof. Dr. med. med. Dr. Jörg-Dietrich Hoppe was founded in order to overcome the traditional partisanship between mainstream medicine (conventional medicine) and complementary medicine with renowned physicians and scientists through a steady dialogue between proven representatives of different thought and practice approaches on equal terms. The medical approaches represented in the Dialogforum include, in addition to those of mainstream medicine, Anthroposophic Medicine, Homeopathy, Naturopathy and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The concern and goal of the DPM is, in addition to a separation of the wheat from the chaff, to develop an evidence-based integrative medicine as a prerequisite for a fully orchestrated health care, through which the individually different needs and preferences of citizens / patients can be better met. However, integrative medicine by no means implies arbitrariness, a separation of the wheat from the chaff is also regarded as indispensable on our part [25 - 27].

Methodologically pursued by the DPM is the question of the mutual supplementary potential, but also of the mutual exclusion of the different medical approaches. Corresponding objectives also belong to the following medical institutions. A meticulous but unbiased analysis of the published evidence on the efficacy of homeopathy shows that the therapeutic efficacy of high-quality studies is well-founded and 90% of existing clinical studies should be disregarded in order to conclude that homeopathy is ineffective [18]. In the medical profession, homeopathy is an important part of an integrative medicine that combines the best of conventional medicine and medical homeopathy for the benefit of the patient [28].

## **Switzerland: reimbursement of homeopathy after scientific evaluation**

In Switzerland, the introduction of complementary medicine as a constitutional right was carried out after a thorough evaluation. This has meant that homeopathy, in addition to three other complementary medical methods, must be offered as a compulsory service by health insurances in Switzerland and taught at the universities for all health professions. This decision was not only preceded by a referendum, but also by a double scientific evaluation. Contrary to claims that there are no high-quality studies in homeopathy, there are a number of them, although there is no institutional funding for homeopathy research [17, 22, 29].

## **Professor Robert Hahn on meta-analyses on homeopathy**

Robert Hahn, a multi-award winning Professor of Anaesthetics and Intensive Care Medicine at the University of Linköping, Sweden, who has published more than 300 scientific articles in the field of anaesthesia and intensive care and previously had nothing to do with homeopathy, commented as follows [18]: "About three years ago, the organization Vetenskap och folkbildning (VoF) (Science and Education) launched a summer campaign against homeopathy. During the political week in Almedalen, the VoF provided a group of teens with T-shirts with the imprint "Jag är skeptisk" - (I'm sceptical). This group ended up on television together with the astronaut Christer Fuglesang, where they spent an evening arguing freely against homeopathy. Homeopathy was depicted as a big bluff. The teens said one after another that there are no scientific studies that could prove that homeopathy works. This oppressive fact led me to write about the existing evidence in favour of homeopathy. My three blogs on this topic aroused enormous attention in the late summer of 2011. The aim was to review the scientific articles that addressed the question of whether homeopathy in medical conditions is statistically more effective than placebo (globules or dilutions). [...] Ernst wrote an alleged meta-analysis on homeopathy in 2002, which is, in fact, a systematic review. [...] So who else can you trust? We can start with sorting out Edzard Ernst. I read some of the other studies he has published, and they are all dubious. "

## **Australian study (NHMRC): No valid information**

As far as the Australian study, which Edzard Ernst refers to as the ineffectiveness of homeopathy, it should be noted that this is not a meta-analysis, but only a literature research, in the homeopathy studies with less than 150 participants from the outset were ruled out with the consequence that a large part of data sets was not taken into account in the evaluation [24]. This means that the study cited by Ernst does not have valid validity. Accordingly, this study has not been published in a journal with a reviewer system. Under the impression of the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) allegations that it has falsified this review on homeopathy [30], Meanwhile, the NHMRC itself has admitted to the Australian Senate that it has manipulated the report. Of the original 176 studies, only five were in the final selection of the highest quality studies. The decision not to consider other studies in the evaluation was obviously due to the fact that many of these studies had positive results [31]. In a principle article on medical professionalism and complementary medicine, published in 2010 in the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, and signed by all members of the DPM, it has been shown that both conventional medicine and complementary medicine are equally committed to science [32].

Also incorrect is the equation made by Ernst of the placebo effect with therapeutic ineffectiveness. Thankfully, this claim has been corrected in a very competent contribution by Winfried Rief, published on 22.08.2018 in "Außenansicht" of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In the study, Rief points out that placebo treatments are highly efficacious and can be effective in the long term, depending on the positive (or negative) expectations of patients and physicians, and therefore not what the pill itself is she triggers at the patient. Rief therefore strongly advocates intensifying the investigation of these placebo effects, which are equally important in mainstream medicine, and to investigate "placebo-like" interventions such as homeopathy.

## **The Importance of Integrative Medicine**

For several decades, there has been a worldwide recognition that fully-orchestrated health care requires integrative medicine as a basis, if it is to meet the diverse and individually different needs of the population and, to that extent, evidence-based medicine in the sense of Sackett [33]. The concept of integrative medicine is to be understood as a well-founded and therefore comprehensible coexistence of paradigms in the sense of different thinking and practical approaches. In the United States, the Integrative Medicine definition has been published by the Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health, which has over 60 leading medical faculties: "Integrative Medicine and Health is the practice of medicine that understands and emphasises the meaning of the relationship between doctor and patient".

For those involved, the concept of integrative medicine is a guiding principle that puts the partialities between the individual groups in the background in favour of an integration that associates an unprejudiced look for the best therapeutic approaches on the individual patient. At the end of 2015, approximately 121,000 physicians in private practice in Germany were working in complementary medicine at around 95,000 medical practices, which means that half of physicians have already integrated complementary medicine into their medical practice.

## **What does the Basic Law say?**

All those who are currently demanding with eschatological dogma the exclusion of complementary medicine from the reimbursement by the payers and a ban on homeopathy or the abolition of homeopathic medicines, confirm the already by Thomas Kuhn [35, 36] and Ludwig Fleck [37] described dynamics of the privilege of the own paradigm by state jurisprudence. In a secular state like Germany, however, the state in accordance with §5 (3) of the Basic Law is fundamentally forbidden to use a scientific judiciary in the sense of seizing a party for a particular paradigm. It is also described in detail in the Basic Law Commentary by Maunz et al. pointed out: "Everyone who works in science, research and teaching has – subject to the fidelity gem. Art. 5 para. 3 GG – a right to ward off any state interference in the process of obtaining and communicating scientific knowledge ". Science constitutes a "domain of personal and autonomous responsibility of the individual scientist free of external

interference" [38]. In this respect, the state is constitutionally forbidden to privilege a particular scientific approach or medical paradigm. Accordingly, on the occasion of the reorganization of pharmaceutical legislation in the framework of the Pharmaceuticals Act (AMG 1976), which was passed in 1976, the competent Bundestag Committee considered that "it can not be the task of the legislator to: Accordingly, homeopathic medicines at the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM) have their own reprocessing commission, and medicines are regulated in the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia (HAB) and are anchored in SGB V.

When the Nestor of hermeneutic philosophy in Germany, Hans-Georg Gadamer was asked at the age of 100 years in a SPIEGEL interview on 21.02.2000, if he could sum up the quintessence of his philosophy in one sentence, he answered: "The other could be right". One does not lead a conversation, if the other one could not be right. In the Dialogue Forum we have modified this sentence: "The Other One May Be Right" [27].

But a mono-paradigmatic reductionism always leads – deliberately or not deliberately – to a totalitarian ideology, for which the dogmatic ideology regards everything, the respect for the citizens' right of self-determination, tolerance towards representatives of other approaches to thinking and practice, the individual quest for knowledge and respect for Human dignity means nothing. Do we want such a development characterized by totalitarian structures in our country for the medicine and the health service?

## **Signatory of the Homeopathy Declaration:**

Dialogue Forum Pluralism in Medicine (DPM)

Hufelandgesellschaft eV Medical Association for Naturopathy and Integrative Medicine

Scientific Society of Homeopathy (WissHom)

German Central Association of Homeopathic Physicians (DZVhÄ)

Society of Anthroposophic Physicians in Germany eV (GAÄD)

German Medical Association for Acupuncture (DÄGfA)

Health Active

Privatärztlicher Bundesverband eV for Private Physicians in Germany (PBV)

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Bibliography: please see original paper on the website.

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