

**Meeting of the Council of  
the European Union  
(Employment, Social Policy, Health  
and Consumer Affairs)**

**Tuesday 1 December 2009**

**Joint statement to the Council  
of the European Union**

from the European associations of doctors, practitioners  
and manufacturers in the field of complementary medicinal products

**Complementary Medicine - a third pillar  
to EU policy on antibiotics**

**Brussels  
27 November 2009**

EU policy currently focuses on reducing the use of antibiotics by educating citizens and prescribers on the proper use of antibiotic treatment. The second pillar of the policy is the promotion of Research and Development for new and more effective antibiotics.

**We call on the EU to add a third pillar to the policy, recognising the role complementary medicine (CAM) and in particular homeopathy can play in the treatment of infectious diseases.**

### **Antibiotic resistance - a global health problem**

The European Centre of Disease prevention and Control (ECDC) warns about the threat of antibiotic resistance and calls for antibiotics to be used far more responsibly in the treatment of infectious diseases<sup>1</sup>. Antibiotics are of no use in viral infections and they should not be used in uncomplicated bacterial infections such as light ear, throat and sinus infections<sup>2</sup>.

The ECDC and the World Health Organisation (WHO) warn that infectious micro-organisms have become increasingly resistant to existing antibiotics<sup>3</sup>. Over-use and misuse of antibiotics has caused the development of lethal antibiotic resistant micro-organisms. They are now also suspected of causing cancer<sup>4</sup>.

Replacement products are proving difficult to find. Governments and researchers across the world are searching for alternatives.

### **Homeopathy – effective in infectious diseases**

Research shows that homeopathy can serve as an effective alternative to antibiotics in a range of infectious conditions for which they have been commonly used<sup>5-14</sup>.

Out of 500 patients suffering from upper respiratory complaints, 82% receiving homeopathy improved within 14 days, compared to 67 % treated conventionally<sup>10</sup>. In another study with 169 children, those receiving homeopathic treatment had significantly less symptoms and shorter duration of disease compared to other children<sup>11</sup>. Their parents also had less time away from work.

Homeopathy is effective in treating recurrent ear infections in children<sup>7-8</sup>. Over 70% had no ear infections after homeopathy, compared to 57 % percent receiving conventional drugs<sup>8</sup>. Out of 230 children those receiving homeopathic treatment recovered 2.4 times faster than others<sup>7</sup>.

Three surveys show that homeopathy is at least as effective as conventional treatment in treating sinus infections<sup>5,12-14</sup>.

Patients receiving homeopathic treatment need antibiotics less often. Moreover, no complications are found. Homeopathy is not only effective and avoids the creation of antibiotic resistance, but is also shown to be potentially a more cost-effective solution<sup>15-17</sup>.

**In summary:** Homeopathy may be at least as effective as conventional treatment in treating certain infectious diseases. It could therefore serve as an effective first line option in treating viral and mild bacterial infectious diseases and so help preserve antibiotics for when they are really needed.

## **Complementary Medicine - a third pillar to EU policy on antibiotics**

The Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health (2008-2013) promotes measures to improve patient safety through high-quality and safe health care. Homeopathy can play an essential role in this field because of its safety and effectiveness in the treatment of infectious diseases.

We call on the EU institutions to develop a third pillar to EU policy on antibiotics: research on the contribution of complementary medicinal approaches (CAM) as an alternative for the treatment with broad spectrum antibiotics for widespread infections such as respiratory tract and ear infections (e.g. in children).

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**Signed by the following associations of doctors, practitioners and manufacturers in the field of complementary and alternative medicines:**

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