

ABSTRACTS - POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Development and implementation of a research-training program in Homeopathy within the Master's degree for medical doctors of the University of Barcelona (UB)

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Introduction: There is a growing offer of homeopathic courses in Europe. Nevertheless, there training in evidence-based research in homeopathy is not always available. The scientific evidences of homeopathy are crucial for the integration of homeopathy in public health. Thus, knowledge in this field is necessary for novel and experimented homeopaths to understand evidence-based medicine (EBM) and contribute to generate valid scientific data.

Aims: The aim of this project was to design and implement a clinical research training in homeopathy within the Master's degree for medical doctors (MDs) of the University of Barcelona (UB), Spain.

Methods: The Master's degree for medical doctors of the University of Barcelona (UB) is a two-years course based on the "Basic Teaching Standards in Homeopathic Medicine" approved by the European Committee of Homeopathy. A research programme was designed by two MDs clinical researchers, specialised in both clinical pharmacology and homeopathy. The program is divided in four major areas: 1) review of the scientific evidences of Homeopathy following EBM standards (basic science, effects of ultradilutions, effects in healthy volunteers, clinical evidences) 2) developing critical reading skills in EBM and pertinent analysis of relevant homeopathic research publications 3) training in developing an EBM research protocol and in planning, developing and publishing a scientific paper. 4) Preparation and presentation of the pertinent research dissertations work.

Results: Since 2010 60 MDs and veterinary doctors have been trained in this program enhancing their knowledge of evidence-based homeopathy and their research-related skills. Dissertation's work comprise several different research areas including veterinary research, design and execution of "provings", design of randomised and controlled clinical trials, epidemiological studies, studies in healthy humans, replication of previous published work etc.

Conclusions: Training in homeopathic research increases the awareness of the scientific evidences of homeopathy and can contribute to increase the generation of valid scientific data in homeopathy. This can enhance the quality of clinical reports and observational studies and promote adequate clinical trials to answer clinical practice research questions.

Quality assessment and response to the Spanish Health Minister's report regarding the scientific clinical evidence of homeopathy

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Introduction: on December 2011 the Spanish Health Minister's presented a report concerning the situation of natural therapies in Spain. This report included an analysis regarding the clinical scientific evidences of Homeopathy.

Aims: To analyse the scientific basis of the report and to perform a scientific update based on a systematic review regarding the clinical scientific evidences of Homeopathy.

Methods: A quality assessment of the report and a systematic review of systematic reviews was performed in Medline, Embase and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, search date up to December 2011. Search term used was "homeopathy" and hand search was also performed for the main digital homeopathy libraries.

Results: The Spanish Health Minister's report is limited by several methodological flaws which prevent the generalization of its results 1) Inclusion/exclusion criteria are not specified for the 9 studies included, therefore selection bias can not be excluded. 2) The flux of studies found and analysed are also not specified 3) Scores and scales used to evaluate the quality of the studies are not indicated 4) Studies were limited to some reviews in single medical conditions; 5) The bibliographic research was limited up to 2007, nonetheless conclusions were generalised to 2011. In the review performed by our team, 30 systematic reviews/ and Meta-analysis were found in addition to the 9 reviews described in the report. These reviews analyse the efficacy of homeopathy in 23 clinical indications, 14 more than the ones included in the report. There are convincing high quality scientific clinical evidences in several indications as diarrhoea in the childhood, high respiratory track infections or radiodermatitis.

Conclusions: the Spanish Health Minister's report is not a systematic review of the literature and is limited by