

Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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Module code: HPCA7002 Module title: RESEARCHING CONTEMPORARY COSMOLOGIES	Student ID number: 1812628	Educational support needs: /No
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This assignment is for the 1 st ☐ 2 nd ☒ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐ module of the degree		
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PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOEOPATHY

INTRODUCTION

Following a recent call to ban homoeopathic medicine within the National Health Service (NHS), the purpose of this paper is to understand what people think about homoeopathy, and how meaning is drawn both from first-hand experience of its use and personal belief or cosmology. This research looks at people's beliefs, narratives and experiences about health and healthcare, exploring attitudes towards homoeopathy and alternative medicine within the wider context of its cultural, medical and political standing. It also asks questions about perceptions of pharmaceutical attitudes within current the healthcare system in the United Kingdom (UK).

Homoeopathy, a system of alternative medicine developed by Dr Samuel Hahnemann in 1796, is based on the doctrine that 'like cures like'. He believed homoeopathy to be an instrument to be used for health and for a higher purpose of existence, and rooted it in a cosmology where all things seek a form of balance.¹ Hahnemann built on Paracelsus, who said: 'Nature... is an organism in which all natural things harmonise and sympathise with each other'.²

Opposition to this idea centres around allopathic reductionist philosophy that regards both medicine and our bodies in a mechanistic model.³ This opposition has led to homoeopathy being banned within the NHS and doctors mounting legal challenges to its practice.⁴ However, those who use it believe it works and consider it a vital part of an integrated medical approach. Homoeopathy has long divided opinion.⁵ The NHS considers it to be ineffective and costly, based on the opinion of the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, who suggested that 'homoeopathy is scientifically implausible'. The report adds 'there is no good quality evidence that homoeopathy is effective treatment for any

¹ Samuel Hahnemann, *Organon Of Medicine* (Germany, 1810), p. 9.

² Paracelsus, *Philosophia Et Medicinae Utriusque Compendium* (Basel, 1568).

³ Richard Gerber, *Vibrational Medicine* (London: Piatkus Ltd, 2000).

⁴ Clare Dyer, 'Homeopathy: Challenge to Prescription Ban Is Rejected by High Court', *BMJ*, 361 (2018), k2513, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k2513> [accessed 9 May 2019].

⁵ Aijing Shang et al., 'Are the Clinical Effects of Homoeopathy Placebo Effects? Comparative Study of Placebo-Controlled Trials of Homoeopathy and Allopathy', *The Lancet*, 366.9487 (2005), pp. 726–732, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(05\)67177-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(05)67177-2) [accessed 9 May 2019].

health condition'.⁶ Professor Edzard Ernst, a physician specialising in alternative medicine, and bioethicist Kevin Smith went further when saying: 'homoeopathy is immoral...we should start to think of complementary and alternative medicine as a controversial industry like tobacco, pornography and gambling. They are worthy of this badge of being morally tainted'.⁷ An opposing view comes from homoeopath Rachel Roberts, whose article, 'I don't know how but homoeopathy really does work', appeared in *The Guardian* in 2010, proclaiming her faith in it.⁸ HRH the Prince of Wales, a long-time advocate of homoeopathy, suggests it brings immeasurable benefit.⁹ A third position is that homoeopathy might work but it is a mechanism of placebo with no medical therapeutic reference, and that you need to believe in it in order for it to work.¹⁰

As a practising homoeopath, I believe that homoeopathy works with sub molecular and subatomic structures. It lacks scientific clarity and cannot be subjected to double-blind trials, and therefore requires a different orientation – one of imagination.

METHODOLOGY AND NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

John Cresswell and Panos Clark¹¹ and Judith Bell¹² value a mixed method research approach in order to gain a broad reflection of people's beliefs and attitudes, and this research was thus conducted via questionnaires and interviews. According to Hennick, Hutter and Bailey, qualitative research enables researchers to understand behaviour and beliefs within the context of their own experiences; additionally it is an appropriate tool for small group participation.

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in an in-depth interview. This allowed both an overview and a deeper enquiry into the issues. The questionnaire was designed to understand individual perceptions of homoeopathy and the relationship between choice of healthcare and factors that may influence that choice.

⁶ Professor Dame Sally Davies, 'Homeopathy' <http://www.nhs.uk> [accessed 19 April 2019].

⁷ E. Ernst and Kevin Smith, *More Harm Than Good?* (London: Springer, 2018), p. 22.

⁸ Rachel Roberts, 'I Don't Know How but Homeopathy Really Does Work', *The Guardian*, 2010, p. 11.

⁹ HRH The Prince of Wales, Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly, *Harmony* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010).

¹⁰ Steven Novella, 'A Debate: Homoeopathy – Quackery or A Key to The Future of Medicine', *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 14 (2008), pp. 9–15.

¹¹ John Cresswell and Panos Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Method Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2007).

¹² Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first time researchers in education, health and social science* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Open University Press, 2010), pp. 212–14, 233.

This research relies heavily on the individual stories gathered from methodical analysis of the interviews. Using a mythopoeic approach afforded a different methodological perspective and meaning making of the data. Edward Taylor and Patricia Cranton cite Mishler, who: ‘reminds us that in doing this type of research the researchers are also co-constructing narrative and meaning. “In this sense, the story is always co-authored”’.¹³ This understanding of co-authoring with the interviewee places the researcher in an important and highly sensitive position in regard to the material being researched and analysed, as ‘... ones philosophical and theoretical perspective, both tacit and overt, drives one’s approach to research’.¹⁴

Reflexivity is a participatory experience.¹⁵ As a practising homoeopath, I invited participants who I do not know within a clinical setting, to lessen the risk of my authority influencing the data obtained. Kim Etherington noted: ‘... to be fully reflexive we need to be aware of our personal responses and be able to make choices about how to use them’.¹⁶ I had to consider my context, intention and insider/emic position¹⁷ in relation to this research, for, as Denscombe suggested, we can never be entirely neutral and passive.¹⁸ I am aware of my potential bias, both as researcher-Near and practitioner-Near.¹⁹ I am also aware that the position of researcher carries with it ethical responsibilities towards my participants, the university, and my profession.

FINDINGS

Questionnaires

The target groups were two small groups: one group meets monthly as a book club in London, the second is a friendship circle that meets monthly in Whitstable to go on walks. All questionnaires were

¹³ Edward W. Taylor and Patricia Cranton, eds, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning*, (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012), pp. 64, 117.

¹⁴ Barbara Kawulich, ‘The Role of Theory in Research’, in *Teaching Research Methods in The Social Sciences*, ed. by Mark Garner, Claire Wagner, and Barbara Kawulich (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009), pp. 37–47 (p. 39).

¹⁵ Judith Okley, ‘Participatory experience and embodied knowledge’, in *Anthropology and Autobiography*, ed. by Judith Okley and Helen Callaway (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 1992), pp. 13–40. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203450536> [accessed 9 May 2019].

¹⁶ Kim Etherington, *Becoming A Reflexive Researcher: Using Ourselves in Research* (London: Kingsley, 2004), p. 19.

¹⁷ Monique Hennick, Inge Hunter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Sage, 2019), p. 109.

¹⁸ Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), p. 73.

¹⁹ L. Froggett and S. Briggs, ‘Practice-Near and Practice-Distant Methods in Human Services Research’, *Journal of Research Practice*, 8 (2012). Available at: <http://lrp.icaap.org/index.php/article/view/318/276> [accessed 24 April 2019].

emailed and resulted in 100% response rate from 17 people, 15 female and 2 male, with ages ranging from 18 to 65 years old.

The main opinions that emerged in both questionnaires and interviews are:

- Homoeopathy has medical value, relieves symptoms, and creates balance.
- It works, but we have yet to understand how – it could be a placebo effect, or as a result of creating balance.
- Concern over its ban within the NHS. (All - 100% - expressed concern.).
- Concern over increasing domination of our healthcare by pharmaceutical companies, including worry over side effects.
- Concern over cost of homoeopathy, both in defence of the decision to ban it and as something people disliked about it.
- Choice was unanimously important to responders; all data reflected an opposition to the ban.
- Choice appeared to all participants to be an intrinsically good thing.

The findings did not support Professors Dame Davies and Edzard Ernst's view that homoeopathy offers no benefit for any health condition. Responses revealed that 88.2% (15) of participants found it to be positive, 5.9% (1) partially helpful, and 5.9% (1) not at all. All (100%, 17) considered it unreasonable that doctors and pharmaceutical companies are able to ban it on the basis of not fully understanding how it works; 76.5% would still use homoeopathy even though it had not assisted them in treating a past complaint.

The data showed concerns that pharmaceutical companies increasingly dominate our lives: 58.8% (10) strongly agreed and 41.2% (7) agreed. There was concern about the side effects of conventional medicine: 41.2% (7) were very much and increasingly worried and 41.2% (7) worry a lot. All but one participant – 94.1% (16) – were aware of increasingly hostile attitudes to homoeopathy and consider this position untrustworthy.

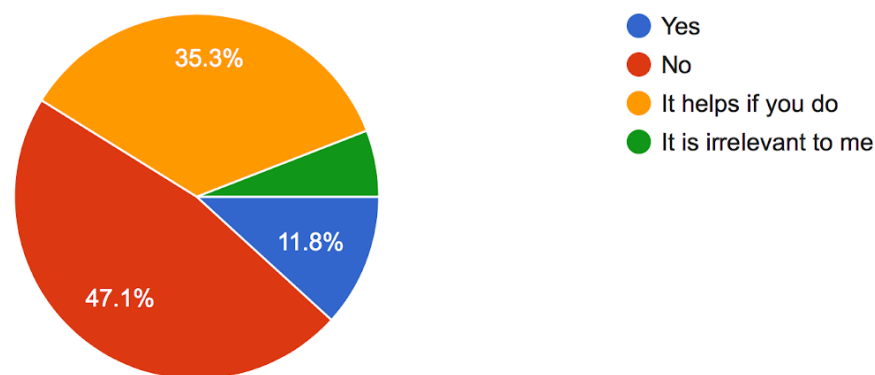
Interestingly, 82.4% (14) use alternative medicine and 17.6% (3) not, but 94.1% (16) consider that 'creating balance' is important to health and wellbeing, revealing that Paracelsus's doctrine, centuries after his observation that homeostasis is a key to good health, still holds true for many people.

As for it being important to believe in homoeopathy for it to work, 47.1% (8) did not consider it important, 35.3 % thought it helpful if you do, and 11.8% (2) thought belief was important; one

respondent said it was irrelevant either way. The majority of respondents said it is not necessary to believe in homoeopathy as it works on animals.

Even though Homoeopathy works on animals do you consider it important that you believe in it for it to work?

17 responses



Interview findings

The interviews, which enabled people to express a more personal account of their beliefs and opinions of homoeopathy, were based on establishing rapport, asking open-ended questions, and encouraging responders to speak in their own voice. I listened *for* depth in the interviewee and *from* depth in myself, remaining open and curious, aware of my own beliefs and bias as I attempted to adopt a position of neutrality and enter the world of the interviewee more consciously. Time spent with transcripts and recordings was an important part of the immersion into the material, it allowed me to pick up nuances and detail.

Below is a brief description of each interviewee; all names have been changed.

- Jane, aged 18, lives in Whitstable and has used homoeopathy all her life. Initially this would have been her parents' choice and now she also chooses it for herself, believing it to be safe and effective.
- John, aged 52, lives in Canterbury; he has used homoeopathy in the past. He feels uncomfortable in its lack of scientific base but has still seen it work; he also expressed concern over some of the claims made by homoeopaths.
- Catherine, aged 58, lives in London. She has experience of using homoeopathy successfully as part of an integrated healthcare approach alongside conventional methods for 25 years. She felt it possibly it was placebo but believes placebo to be a real physiological process.
- Margaret, aged 59, lives in Whitstable, would like more alternative treatments on the NHS, recognises cost is important, and also how choice is elusive because what people want is often unconsciously influenced by what is available. This view was also expressed by Jane.

What emerged more fully from the interviews was a feeling that people liked homoeopathy in principle. Despite not understanding how it works, they liked the safety of it. Two people (50%) commented that keeping homoeopathy available within the NHS kept it as a safe option for people, as it is monitored and prescribed by doctors within a clinical setting. The relationship between the pharmaceutical companies and their influence in medicine, politics and choice was discussed, as were the decisions of those who shape and create NHS practice and policy. Jane drew a parallel with another experience of ‘conventional’ medicine:

When I was 12 the school was strongly encouraging us to have [the] HPV vaccine. I was unsure... it was explained to me by a family friend that it is linked to sexual activity, I was happy not to have it (the vaccination) then.²⁰ But every other girl in my class had it and although I knew I had made the right choice for me, this fear came over me that made no real logical sense, it was strange, I felt genuinely scared about the fact that everyone was protected against something that I wasn't.

Jane said the ignorance around alternative medicine surprised her. On further questioning she said a high percentage of parents at her school were employed by Pfizer (a global pharmaceutical company with a large base in Kent). She realized this influenced her classmates, saying:

They were taught from a young age that all homoeopathy was bullshit...

When she attempts to talk to them now, she finds that:

They are all interested when I explain what [homoeopathy] is. My generation are really into plant-based and natural and are aware that chemicals are destroying the planet, so it's ignorance, it's a lack of information.

Cost was an issue for Jane's peers. In the UK we have a specific cultural relationship to healthcare: all participants grew up enjoying a universal healthcare system free at the point of contact. This relationship invites further research into choice and cost, especially as an estimated 9 million people in the UK use some kind of alternative health care, according to Dr Robert Verkerk.²¹ Interestingly, cost is cited by both the NHS (as justification for the ban) and 23.5 % (4) of participants in what they dislike about homoeopathy. In fact, homoeopathy accounts for less than 0.004% of the NHS budget, including doctor's salaries. Bristol Homoeopathic Hospital reported 70% of users benefitted from treatment in a 6-year study involving 6,500 patients,²² and 84% of medical students want conventional

²⁰ HPV is the human papilloma virus, a sexually transmitted disease linked to cervical cancer.

²¹ Robert Verkerk, 'Complementary Medicine Roundup December 2017', *College of Medicine and Integrated Health* (29 November 2017). Available at: <https://collegeofmedicine.org.uk/complementary-medicine-roundup-december-2017/> [accessed 28 April 2019].

²² David S. Spence, Elizabeth A. Thompson, and S.J. Barron, 'Homoeopathic Treatment for Chronic Disease: A 6-Year, University- Hospital Outpatient Observational Study', *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine*, 11(5) (2005), pp. 793–798.

medicine to include alternative therapies as they felt they could be beneficial, though it is unclear from this statistic how they measured alternative therapies' benefits.²³

Jane commented:

Cost was important – many of my friends (18–20 year olds) couldn't afford private healthcare. I think it's wrong that corporations or drug companies earn such big profits from ill people.

This was echoed by Margaret:

One of my big concerns is cost. Homoeopathy is an elitist thing in a way which is not good. In fact in some ways it is surprising that the NHS has banned it as I thought it was a cheap form of medicine. But I do understand that the NHS is stretched to breaking point.

Responses to whether homoeopathy could ever be considered a placebo drew a majority 'No'. One considered it to be placebo, 70.6% (13) considered it to be rational within its own context, and 23.5% (4) science based. Interviewees were wary of the term placebo, as they believed the word carried a negative connotation. When asked to explain their experience of a homoeopathic consultation, all described a positive experience of being listened to, feeling hopeful, and trusting the practitioner, who was described as empathic and warm. Responders commented that understanding their symptoms within a different and larger context than the conventional healthcare system to be useful, educative and revelatory, and felt they were participating in and/or taking responsibility for their own health. Interestingly, these responses are all considered markers of a placebo (Mattingly,²⁴ Brooks,²⁵ Peters,²⁶ Prevost²⁷).

All interviewees expressed concern at the trends in modern medicine, seeing it as aligning almost entirely with chemical drugs or surgical procedure; 2 people (50%) expressed concern over the failure of antibiotics and the opioid crisis and a lack of wisdom in approaching both issues.

All interviewees were unsure how homoeopathy works. Jane said:

²³ Rachel Champeau, 'Health and Behaviour', *Newsroom*, 2010. Available at: <http://http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu> [accessed 28 April 2019].

²⁴ Cheryl Mattingly, *A Paradox of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

²⁵ Michael Brooks, *13 Things That Don't Make Sense: The Most Intriguing Scientific Mysteries of Our Time* (London: Profile Books, 2010).

²⁶ D. Peters, *Understanding the Placebo Effect in Complementary Medicine: Theory Practice and Research* (United Kingdom: Churchill Livingstone, 2001).

²⁷ Marie Prevost, Anna Zuckerman, and Ian Gold, 'Trust and The Placebo Effect', *Oxford Scholarship Online*, <DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199680702.003.0005> [accessed 28 April 2019].

It's not placebo ... there is an energetic connection about being given something and knowing that someone cares about you. It's a kind of consciousness of your own ability to heal, like having a faith, maybe a whole spiritual level that I don't know about but it is very interesting.

John said:

... in a consultation there is trust and hope and a feeling of being listened to. I think homoeopathy is closely related to placebo rather than science based or quantum physics...but I don't mean it negatively when I say that ...

Catherine commented:

I know nobody really understands how it works. ... I believe it's more than placebo but I believe placebo is really powerful. In fact if it turned out every homoeopathic treatment was placebo I don't mind ... there is probably a placebo involved in taking painkillers.

Margaret also struggled with defining how it works:

... let's face it, we don't understand how psychotherapy or counselling works, you talk and feel better ... there is something about the whole process of having an appointment, it makes you reflect on your lifestyle choices and the impact of that on your health. It's hard to quantify and put into words exactly how it works, placebo always feels like I am saying it's a trick or a con but I don't mean it like that.

As regards the NHS ban on homoeopathy, Jane commented further, suggesting:

... it comes from a lack of understanding and the NHS probably doesn't understand it, it undermines the institution of medicine that we've created in our society'.

Margaret contributed further:

Yeah and it's really tricky who gets to decide in terms of treatment, actually that doesn't constitute free healthcare that constitutes something else ... I just think we need to branch out in terms of what they are really allowing access to. If no one who works in alternative medicine has any authority over the NHS that's not a fair system is it? We need like a collaborative method between the public and the health care system.

Catherine, when talking of conventional medicine, commented:

It's like the whole difference between actually healing something or just numbing something. Nothing is 100% effective for every single person, that's not how it works, and that's what drug companies try and guarantee that makes them untrustworthy.

John said he likes homoeopathy or a methodology that includes physical and emotional aspects in treating the person, noting:

... emotional balance is really important to physical wellbeing... I think if you remain emotionally unbalanced for any length of time stresses your physical body start to develop as symptoms.

What he disliked and expressed concern about were false claims made by homoeopaths:

... I struggle with the whole concept of non-materialism in homoeopathy, the small doses involved. I feel uncomfortable when homoeopathy claims to cure cancer or autism or [to] stop you catching malaria.

As for banning, he said:

Freedom of choice should be your absolute right. ... It's really undemocratic to limit people's choice in what's available to them... The drug companies act in their own best interests... for their pockets, mate!

When asked about being able to choose to purchase homoeopathic medicine, he said:

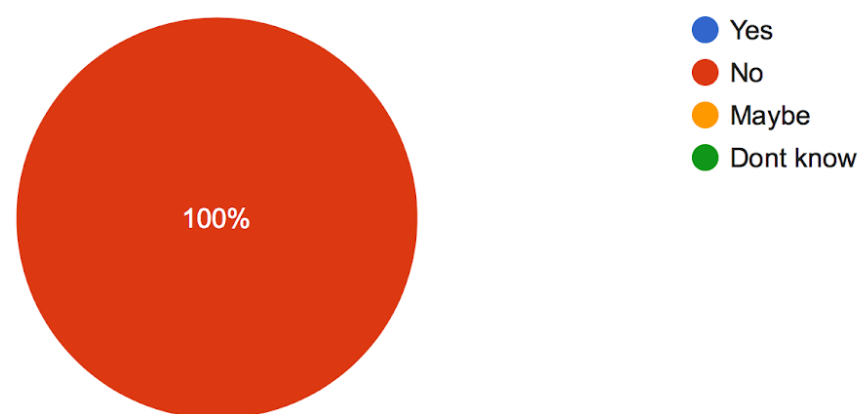
One hundred thousand percent it should be allowed, it shouldn't even be a question ... I really resent any infringement on personal freedom. Chemicals destroy the body and always carry a risk of side effects, not saying I never take conventional medicine I am currently doing so now. But honestly, I think drug companies are entirely driven by money and greed, a desire for profit.

Why do they think homoeopathy is such a threat ? ... surely from big pharma's point of view it should just be a mild irritant. ... on the one hand they want to ban and protect the public from it, on the other it is harmless and 'nothing'.

It should be available on the NHS, people would choose it ... But doctors would ultimately know whether or not a treatment was working and they have access to blood tests and scans etc ... to ensure patients are safe. I don't believe they got rid of it for cost, it must be one of the cheapest medical products on the market.

Do you think it is reasonable for UK doctors and drug companies to override patients choice by attempting to ban ho...t is not fully understood how it works

17 responses



Catherine commented that she loves homoeopathy's holistic approach:

It makes me feel that everything is linked and combined and emotions play as much a role in health as physical symptoms, the whole process, it's really important in maintaining health. It's like there is a philosophy behind it. Appointments take an hour, sometimes more, so different from going to a GP if you are in pain you are in and out of a doctor's office with pain killers in 5 minutes and then back in a week for more pills to stop the ulcer forming because of the painkillers ... so it's not really curative. Always a risk of side effects.

It feels like homoeopathy engages with something beyond us ... creates an internal balance.

It should absolutely not be banned, if it is being banned just because we don't know how it works that isn't good enough, I mean I don't know how a telephone works but I still use them and believe in them, anyway it's a positive wholesome approach to health.

Going back to placebo this [interview] is making me think more, I think we seek and embrace placebo in many areas of our lives unconsciously, and in many ways what a genius thing it is.

Many people can't afford it so for the NHS to ban it seems wrong. In fact someone taking and making that decision on behalf of the public is wrong in itself, just let it be there for those who want to use it.

Margaret commented:

I like homoeopathy it helped me get pregnant or I believe that it did. I went for an appointment and felt understood, a link was made between my emotional state and my physical one. It felt like a very holistic experience, educative as well about the impact of stress on my physiology.

So it's the cost thing that I don't like, not homoeopathy itself, we should have choice available within the NHS ... it protects the public against quacks.

I like that I used it on my children when they were babies and I felt a protective instinct to not put chemicals in their little bodies ... apart from Calpol occasionally. So I've had personal experience of it working brilliantly on my children.

I like the connections it makes me make...I know if I feel stressed I get lower back ache, for example. So in a strange way it makes me take more responsibility for my own health.

I think it should be available and included as a healing tool in an integrated medical approach ...I don't know exactly how the funding works but if all those who influence the decisions on the NHS are science-based, homoeopathy is not going to meet their criteria but that doesn't mean it should be unavailable. It means those people have the right to make those judgements about what is allowed which leads to a narrow focus of medicine.

I mean the misuse of antibiotics is having the most dreadful harm with many bugs being super bugs, the philosophy is all wrong I think bugs were the first form of life 13 billion years ago, to imagine we can destroy them with chemicals over a couple of decades seems flawed thinking to me. I mean the rise in side effects of these drugs worry me a lot I know modern medicine is brilliant in many ways but the rise of side effects and lifestyle diseases I think are badly managed. Maybe one day research will offer an explanation for how homoeopathy and many other alternative treatments work that would be a good thing.

In summary, the questionnaires allowed a broad analysis of responders' attitudes, beliefs and usage of homoeopathy. The final three questions gave responders an opportunity to express deeper feelings and thoughts. This provided the researcher with more general insights into the value placed on holistic treatments; in particular, it revealed an uneasy feeling of mistrust as regards pharmaceutical companies.

These themes were further expanded on in the interviews, bringing nuance and depth, as they all discussed using homoeopathy from a personal perspective and placed its importance to them within a

context of freedom of choice. The interviews were largely unstructured, beginning with a few open questions, allowing individual experiences and voice to come through.

A potential weakness in the paper is Q.13: it lacks clarity and the quantitative data was not reproduced in the qualitative interview data. Analysis of the interview data changed the position of placebo and created a different theory from that which the questionnaire data initially suggested.

All of the participants knew that I was a practising homoeopath, but it was not clear to what extent that influenced responders.

Conclusion

This research sought to discover what people thought of homoeopathy in the light of it being banned within the NHS due it being considered ineffective and costly.

Based on the findings of this research study, cost is not a good reason for stopping homoeopathy within the NHS, as it constitutes just 0.04% of the budget.

It is clear from this research that people use and believe in homoeopathy. These beliefs echo famous proponents of homeopathy like HRH The Prince of Wales, who has also claimed that in his experience, it works on his farm animals. A similar viewpoint was espoused by homoeopath Rachel Roberts, whose article in *The Guardian* newspaper said that she is less concerned with how it works but believes that it does work. To suggest, as Ernst has, that *homoeopathy is immoral* is not supported in the findings; indeed findings suggest that a majority of the participants consider many pharmaceutical drives to be questionable. As for banning homoeopathy within the NHS, all participants stressed the importance of freedom of choice and stated that it should not be banned – in fact the research suggests people would like it to be more widely available.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research paper it seems further research should be considered into more transparency in decisions of medical choice available within the NHS, and to consider the emerging academic research, driven in large part by Harvard Medical School, about placebo studies

and its place in our physiology. Even within the current framework of pharmaceutical medicines, homoeopathy could be considered a mechanism of placebo or employed as an open label placebo.²⁸

It appears that this debate tends to be between those who believe there are no forces operative in nature other than material ones, based on knowledge gained only from observable phenomenon in a material world, and those who believe that imagination, harmony and intuition offer another avenue to medical knowledge. Homoeopathy is medically valued by the small section of the population represented in this research, who however have no voice within the medical framework in the UK.

²⁸ Ted Kaptchuk and Franklin Miller, 'Open label placebo: can honestly prescribed placebos evoke meaningful therapeutic benefits?', *BMJ* 2018;363:K3889. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k3889> [accessed 08 May 2019].

APPENDIX

A: Questionnaire Responses

Are you	What age range are you ?	Do you live in the UK	Do you use any form of Alternative Medicine	Do you think creating balance physically and or emotionally is important in health and wellness	Have you ever consulted a professional homoeopath	how often have you used homeopathic medicine	Even though Homoeopathy works on animals do you consider it important that you believe in it for it to work?	Would you ever self-prescribe over the counter remedies	Do you think using homoeopathy regularly can be a means of preventative medicine?	Do you consider homoeopathy safe for babies and children?	Did consulting a qualified practitioner help you explore and understand your symptoms in greater detail?	I consider the practice of homoeopathy to be	Do you consider homoeopathy could be harmful
Female	25-45	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Regularly weekly or monthly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Occasionally 2-3 times a year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Regularly weekly or monthly	It helps if you do	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	18-25	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Randomly	It helps if you do	Maybe	Yes	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Yes	Placebo	Maybe
Female	over 60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Occasionally 2-3 times a year	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Science based	Maybe
Male	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Occasionally 2-3 times a year	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Science based	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Regularly weekly or monthly	It helps if you do	Yes	Don't know	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Randomly	No	Yes	Yes	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Yes	Science based	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Randomly	No	Yes	Maybe	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Gave me insights I had not considered	Rational within its own context	Maybe
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Occasionally 2-3 times a year	No	Maybe	Maybe	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Gave me insights I had not considered	Rational within its own context	Maybe
Female	Option 45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Occasionally 2-3 times a year	It helps if you do	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Partially	Rational within its own context	No
Male	25-45	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Regularly weekly or monthly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Randomly	It helps if you do	Only with advice from shop or pharmacy staff	Maybe	Yes	No	Rational within its own context	No
Female	18-25	Yes	No	Fairly Important	No	Never	Yes	Yes	No	Only when prescribed by a Practitioner	Gave me insights I had not considered	Rational within its own context	Yes
Female	18-25	Yes	No	Very important	No	Never	It helps if you do	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	Maybe
Female	45-60	Yes	Yes	Very important	Yes	Randomly	No	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Rational within its own context	No
Female	45-60	Yes	No	Very important	No	Randomly	It is irrelevant to me	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Yes	Science based	No

A: Questionnaire Responses, continued

Is it important for you to be able to buy remedies without consulting a practitioner?	How important is it to you to have the choice of buying and using homoeopathy whether or not you personally believe in it?	If your personal experience of homoeopathy in treating a specific condition did not assist would you still consider using it?	Do you think it is reasonable for UK doctors and drug companies to override patients choice by attempting to ban homoeopathy, because it is not fully understood how it works	There is a dramatic rise in medical induced illness (iatrogenic illness) how much does that worry you ?	Pharmaceutical companies seem to be dominating more and more of our lives, do you agree?	Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly hostile to homoeopathy do you think this position is a trustworthy one?
Yes	Essential	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Strongly agree	No
Yes	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Strongly agree	No
Yes	Essential	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Strongly agree	No
Only from a health food shop or pharmacies	Very important	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Agree	No
Yes	Very important	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Agree	No
Yes	Very important	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Strongly agree	No
Yes	Essential	Maybe	No	A lot	Agree	No
Only from a health food shop or pharmacies	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Strongly agree	No
Yes	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Agree	No
Only from a health food shop or pharmacies	Important	Yes	No	A lot	Strongly agree	No
Maybe	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Agree	No
Yes	Essential	Yes	No	Very much and increasingly so	Agree	No
Only from a health food shop or pharmacies	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Strongly agree	No
Maybe	Very important	Yes	No	A lot	Strongly agree	No
Maybe	Important	Maybe	No	A lot	Strongly agree	Maybe
Yes	Very important	Maybe	No	Very much and increasingly so	Strongly agree	No
Maybe	Very important	Maybe	No	A lot	Agree	No

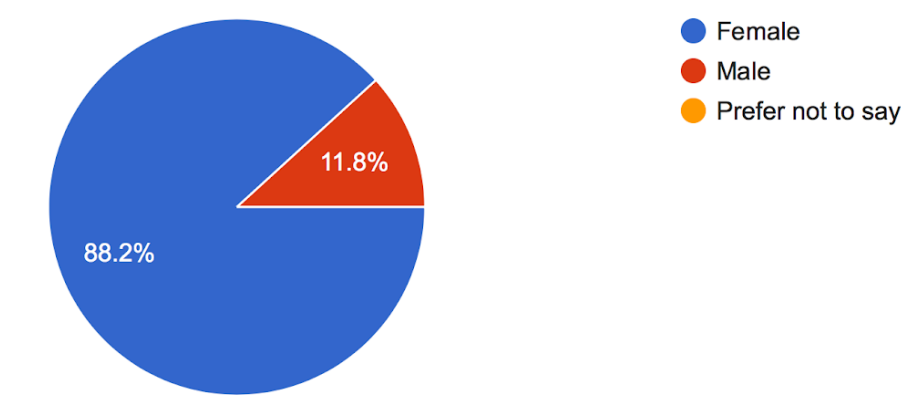
A: Questionnaire Responses, continued

What do you like about homoeopathy	What do you dislike	In your own words is there anything you would like to add	Would you be willing to participate in an interview
It is safe	N/A	I am worried about drug companies stopping alternative medicine from a financial point of view rather than a true medical point of view	No
N/A	N/A	No	Yes
Gets to the root cause of the issue & helps YOU heal YOURSELF	Nothing	Big pharma are way too pushy, powerful and corporate - no one likes it	Yes
I like the fact that it provides the opportunity to get a natural and personal form of treatment which is specific to your emotional as well as physical state and that it encouraged you to become more in touch with your body and how to treat yourself both mentally and physically in order to assist your own healing.	I dislike that is not currently widely accessible and there is a lack of information and understanding around it publicly.	No	Yes
Simplicity	Nothing	I would trust it to work and not be harmful	Maybe
That the patient is treated holistically	N/A	No	Yes
It helps me reduce physical symptoms	It's hard to get hold of reliably	It should not be banned	No
It makes sense	Nothing to dislike	I am appalled that the banning of homeopathy is even being contemplated.	Yes
Holistic approach.	N/A	Whilst I said that homoeopathy maybe could be harmful, I meant in the wrong hands (as with any other discipline)...not as a practice itself.	Maybe
It's about taking responsibility for your own health and asking yourself what might work. Feels connected to the natural world.	That it's only available to those who can pay.	No	Maybe
That it's gentle yet powerful and it treats all aspects of a condition - mental, spiritual, emotional, physical and that the homeopath considers the whole being not just the 'disease'.	Not being able to consume mint/use minty toothpaste whilst using it.	Thank you!	Yes
It is safe	Nothing	Choice of healthcare is important to me	No
It seems relatively harmless compared to traditional pharmaceutical medicines	Would like to know more about the evidence base	Re the above I understand that this is difficult given that published research is often based on large randomised RCTs which typically are funded and influenced by the pharmaceutical industry. This makes it harder to "prove" the benefits of non-traditional or alternative medicines, when the scientific and research arena is less invested in researching this.	Maybe
Seems quite rational	Not fully grasping it	N/A	Yes
The fact that it is natural and there are several different ingredients and plants that can be used for a lot of ailments	The lack of accessibility	It should be more popular	Yes
That it is a holistic medicine that takes account of the whole person taking into account, emotional health, diet etc., unlike typical medicine that seems to predominantly treat the symptoms (driven by the pharmaceutical industry, a paradigm of western science and other resourcing factors). when considering my health issue science t	that you can't get it on the NHS and thus not accessible to all	when considering my health issues, I want to be able to think about and understand how the issues can be resolved in the longer term and without the use of pharmaceuticals where possible since I feel the industry is so profit driven, which is unethical and potentially damaging to people's health	Yes
It feels gentle, unaggressive. Holistic and natural.	N/A	n/a	Maybe

B. Charts

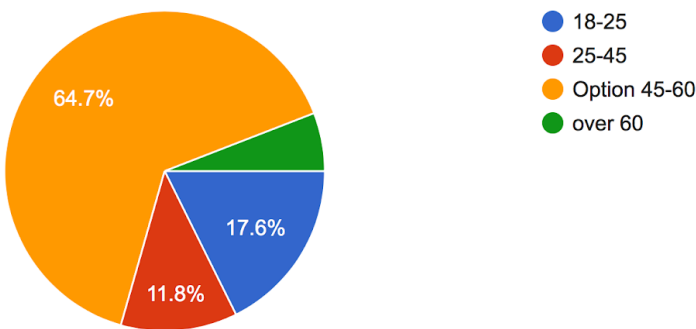
Are you

17 responses



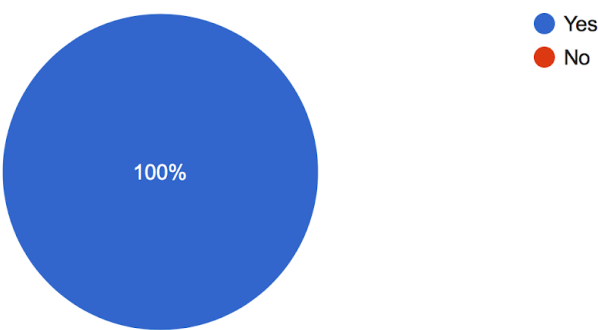
What age range are you ?

17 responses



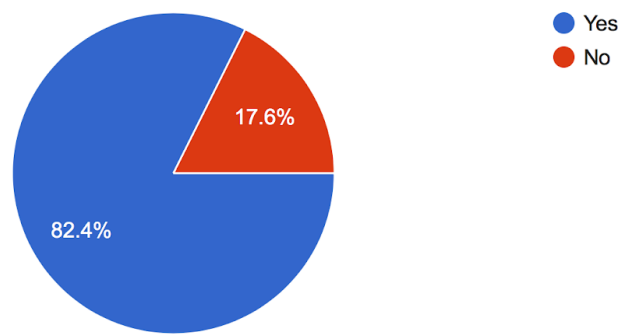
Do you live in the UK

17 responses



Do you use any form of Alternative Medicine

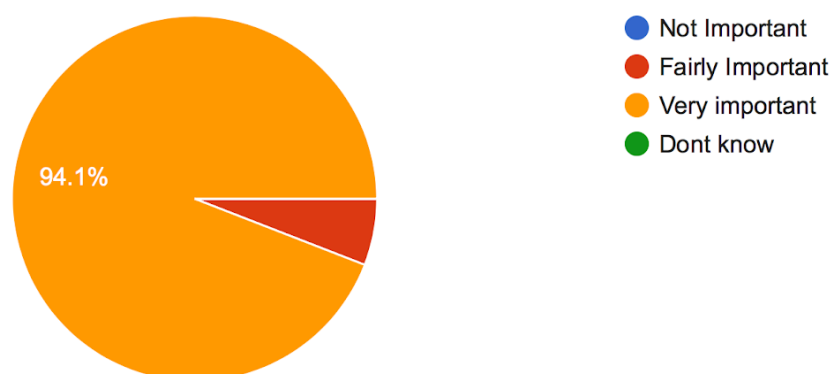
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

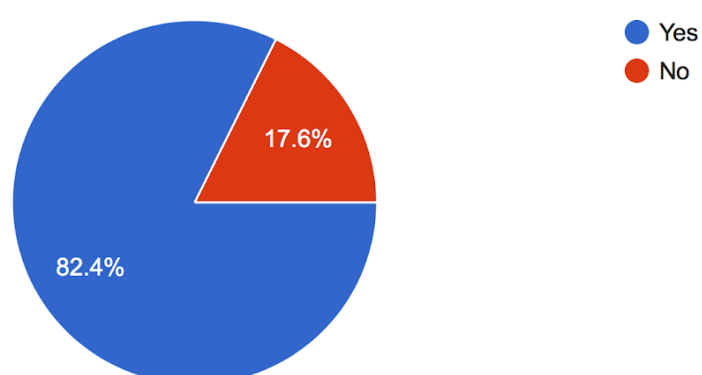
Do you think creating balance physically and or emotionally is important in health and wellness

17 responses



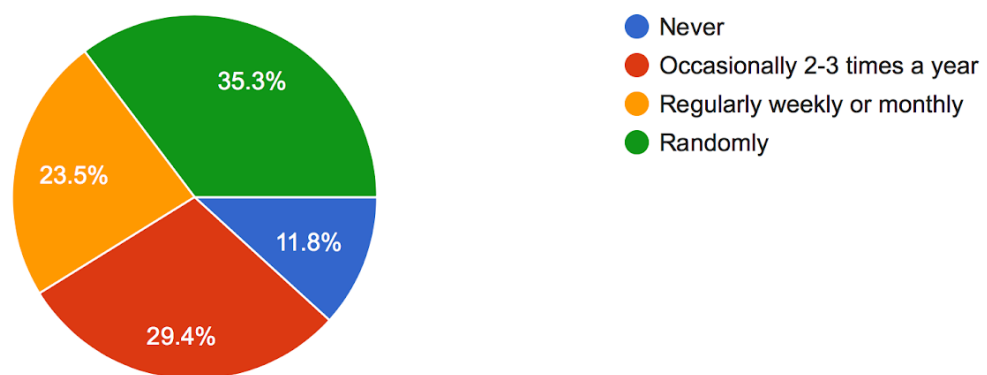
Have you ever consulted a professional homoeopath

17 responses



how often have you used homeopathic medicine

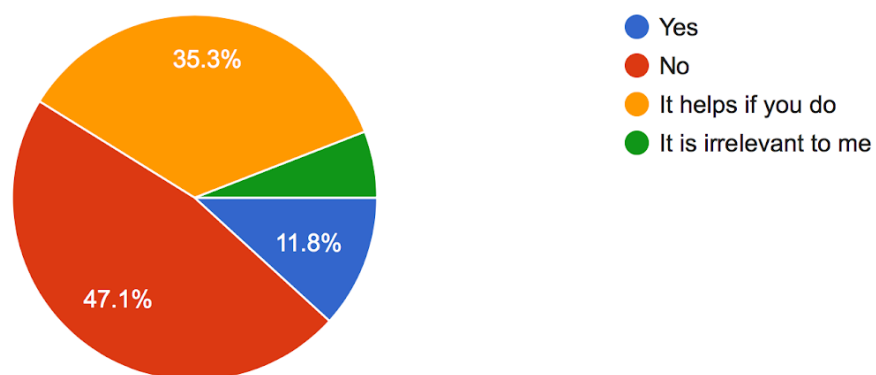
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

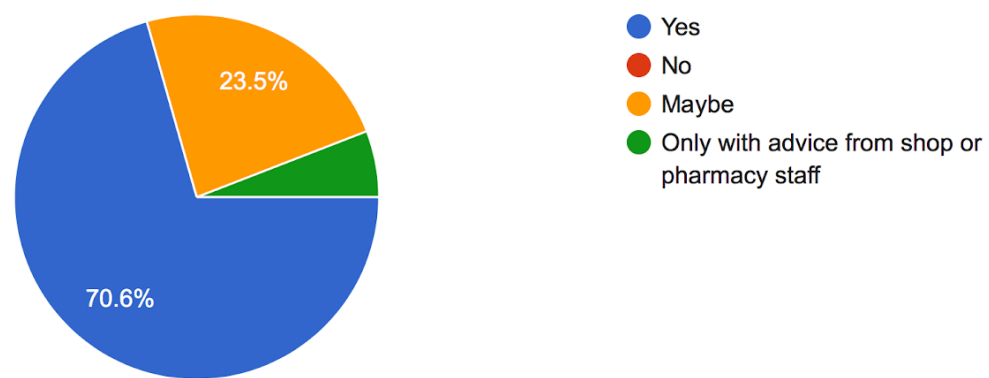
Even though Homoeopathy works on animals do you consider it important that you believe in it for it to work?

17 responses



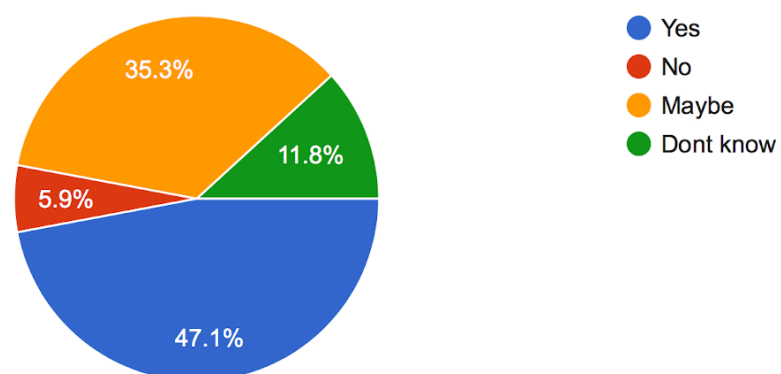
Would you ever self prescribe over the counter remedies

17 responses



Do you think using homoeopathy regularly can be a means of preventative medicine?

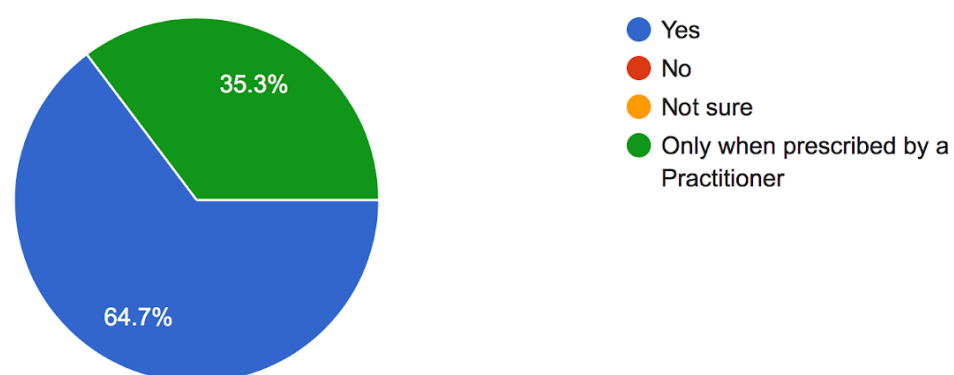
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

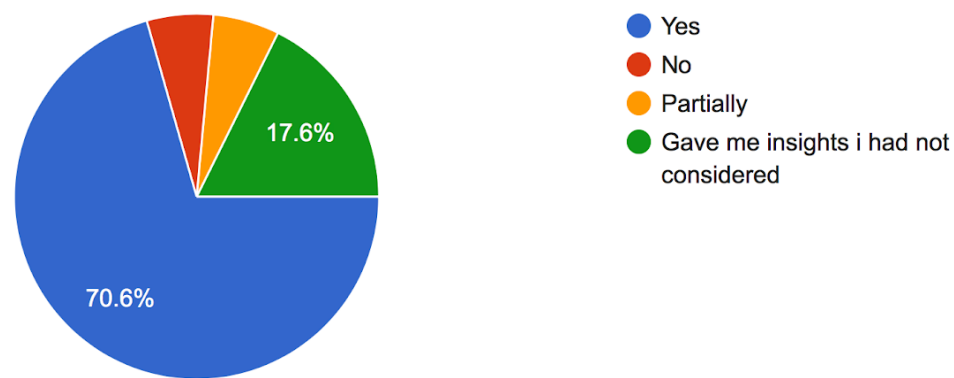
Do you consider homoeopathy safe for babies and children?

17 responses



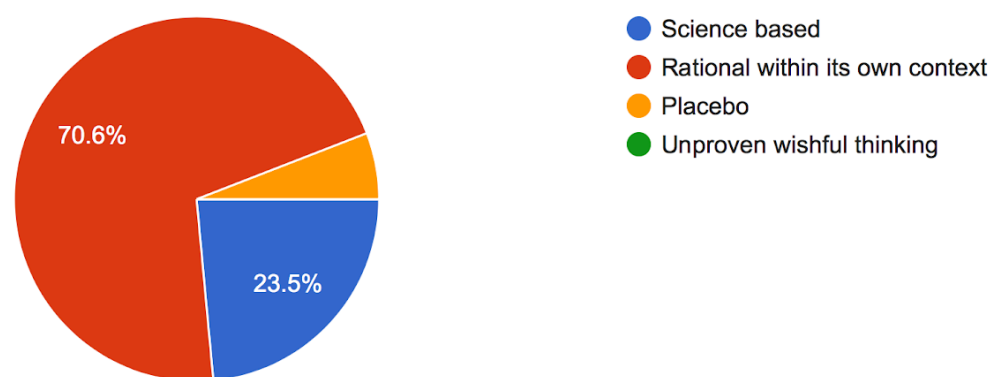
Did consulting a qualified practitioner help you explore and understand your symptoms in greater detail?

17 responses



I consider the practice of homoeopathy to be

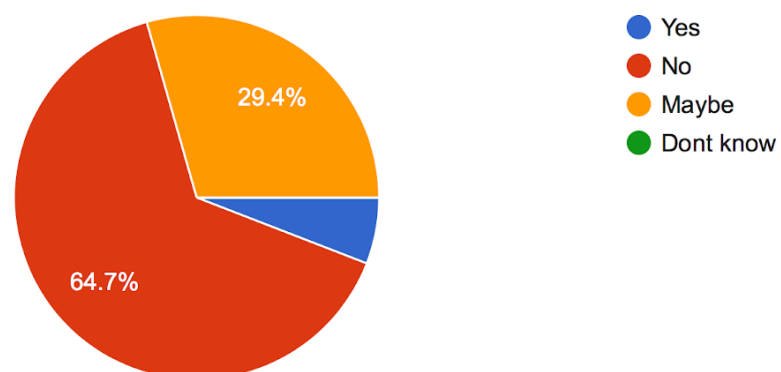
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

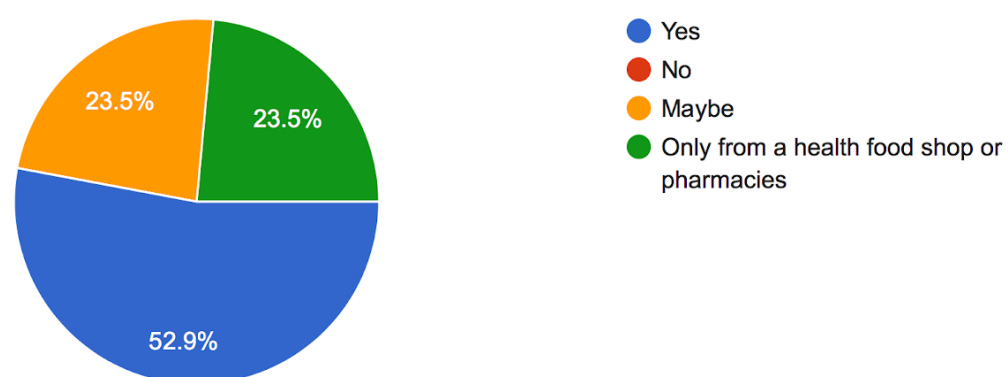
Do you consider homoeopathy could be harmful

17 responses



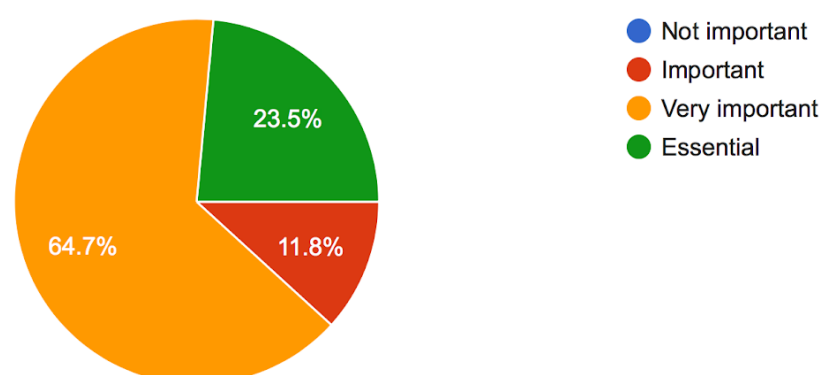
Is it important for you to be able to buy remedies without consulting a practitioner?

17 responses



How important is it to you to have the choice of buying and using homoeopathy whether or not you personally believe in it?

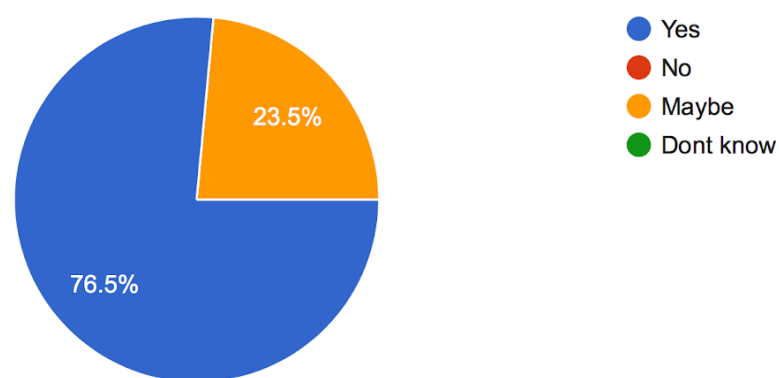
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

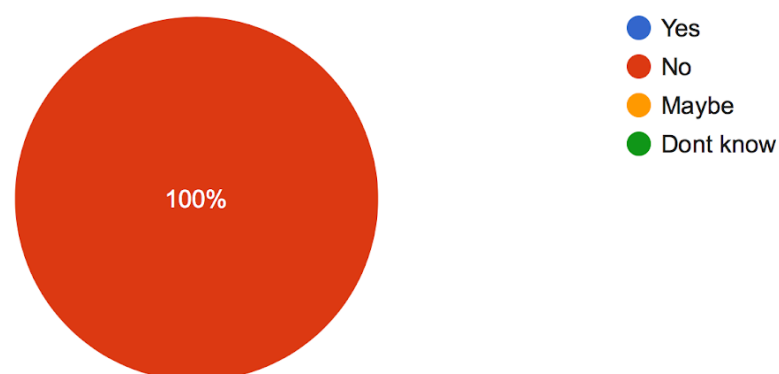
If your personal experience of homoeopathy in treating a specific condition did not assist would you still consider using it?

17 responses



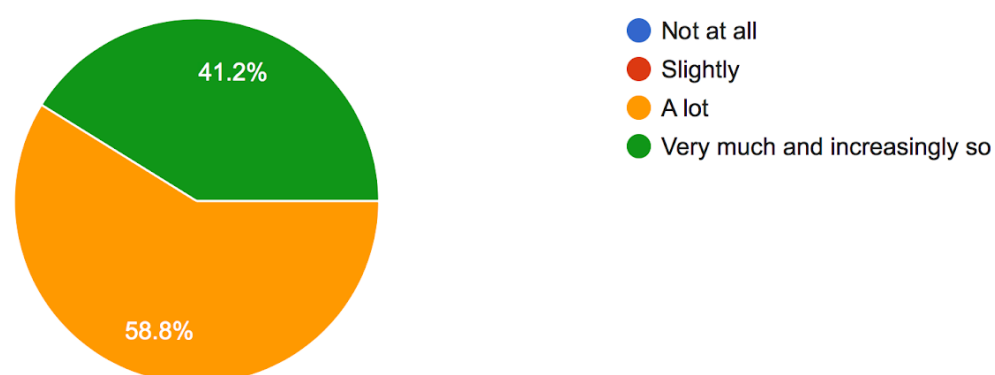
Do you think it is reasonable for UK doctors and drug companies to override patients choice by attempting to ban ho...t is not fully understood how it works

17 responses



There is a dramatic rise in medical induced illness (iatrogenic illness) how much does that worry you ?

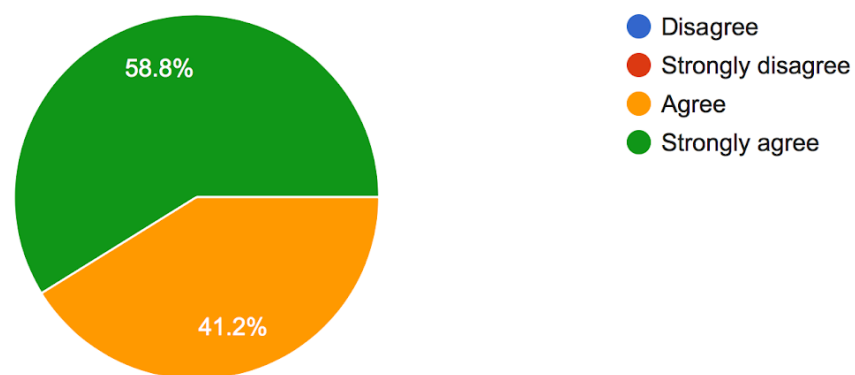
17 responses



B. Charts, continued

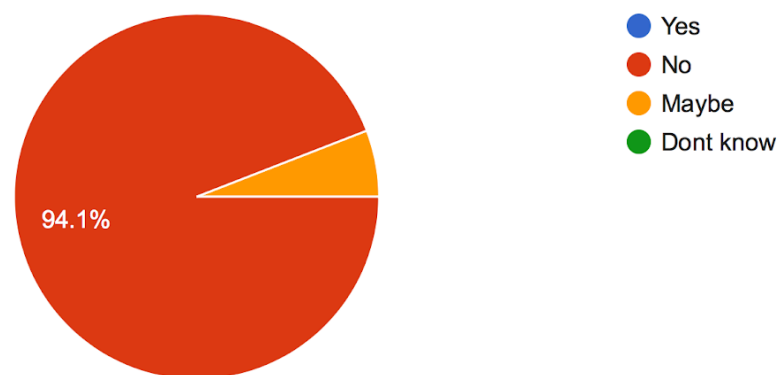
Pharmaceutical companies seem to be dominating more and more of our lives, do you agree?

17 responses



Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly hostile to homoeopathy do you think this position is a trustworthy one?

17 responses



C. What do you like about homoeopathy 17 responses

It is safe

Gets to the root cause of the issue & helps YOU heal YOURSELF

I like the fact that it provides the opportunity to get a natural and personal form of treatment which is specific to your emotional as well as physical state and that it encouraged you to become more in touch with your body and how to treat yourself both mentally and physically in order to assist your own healing.

Simplicity

That the patient is treated holistically

It helps me reduce physical symptoms

It makes sense

Holistic approach.

It's about taking responsibility for your own health and asking yourself what might work. Feels connected to the natural world.

That it's gentle yet powerful and it treats all aspects of a condition - mental, spiritual, emotional, physical and that the homeopath considers the whole being not just the 'disease'.

It is safe

It seems relatively harmless compared to traditional pharmaceutical medicines

Seems quite rational

The fact that it is natural and there are several different ingredients and plants that can be used for a lot of ailments

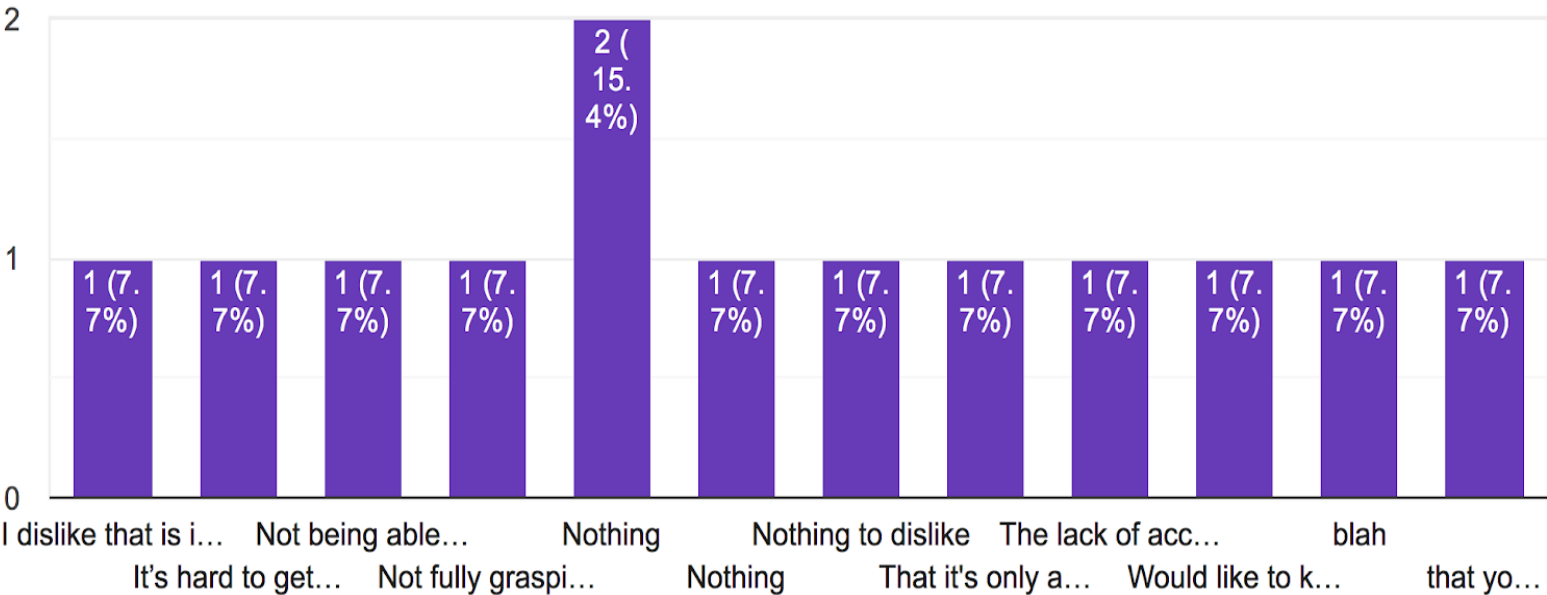
That it is a holistic medicine that takes account of the whole person taking into account, emotional health, diet etc., unlike typical medicine that seems to predominantly treat the symptoms (driven by the pharmaceutical industry, a paradigm of western science and other resourcing factors). when considering my health issue science t

It feels gentle, unaggressive. Holistic and natural.

C. What do you dislike about homoeopathy 13 responses

What do you dislike

13 responses



D. In your own words is there anything you would like to add? 17 responses

No

fine

I am worried about drug companies stopping alternative medicine from a financial point of view rather than a true medical point of view

Big pharma are way too pushy, powerful and corporate - no one likes it

No.

I would trust it to work and not be harmful

It should not be banned

I am appalled that the banning of homoeopathy is even being contemplated.

Whilst I said that homoeopathy maybe could be harmful, I meant in the wrong hands (as with any other discipline)...not as a practice itself.

Thank you!

Choice of healthcare is important to me

Re the above I understand that this is difficult given that published research is often based on large randomised RCTs which typically are funded and influenced by the pharmaceutical industry. This makes it harder to “prove” the benefits of non-traditional or alternative medicines, when the scientific and research arena is less invested in researching this.

N/A

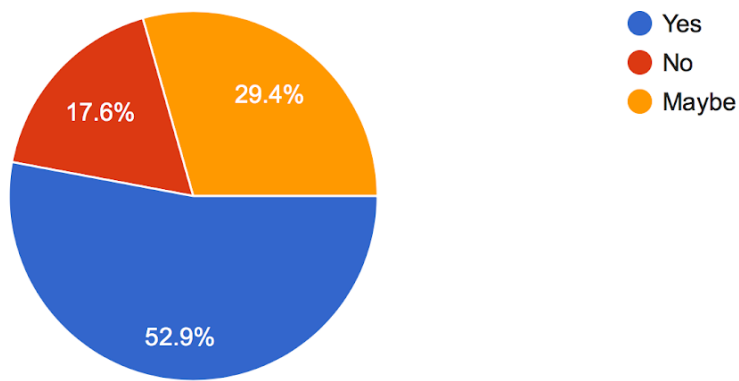
It should be more popular

when considering my health issues, I want to be able to think about and understand how the issues can be resolved in the longer term and without the use of pharmaceuticals where possible since I feel the industry is so profit driven, which is unethical and potentially damaging to people’s health

n/a

Would you be willing to participate in an interview

17 responses



BLANK QUESTIONNAIRE

Perceptions of Homoeopathy

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST

This survey is asking for your thoughts and opinions on homoeopathy and your opinion about choice within medical healthcare.

It is an academic survey for a research module conducted by Victoria Young a research student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

It will take about 20 minutes to complete

CONFIDENTIALITY

Thank you in advance for your participation. Please be aware that this is entirely confidential and anonymous, nothing will be stored kept or shared that could identify you.

*** Required**

Please tick before continuing *

☐ I agree to my information being used for this research module

Are you *

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

What age range are you ? *

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 25-45
- ☐ Option 45-60
- ☐ over 60

Do you live in the UK *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you use any form of Alternative Medicine *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think creating balance physically and or emotionally is important in health and wellness *

- ☐ Not Important
- ☐ Fairly Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Dont know

Have you ever consulted a professional homoeopath *

☐ Yes

☐ No

how often have you used homeopathic medicine *

☐ Never

☐ Occasionally 2-3 times a year

☐ Regularly weekly or monthly

☐ Randomly

Even though Homoeopathy works on animals do you consider it important that you believe in it for it to work? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ It helps if you do

☐ It is irrelevant to me

Would you ever self prescribe over the counter remedies *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Only with advice from shop or pharmacy staff

Do you think using homoeopathy regularly can be a means of preventative medicine? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Dont know

Do you consider homoeopathy safe for babies and children? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Only when prescribed by a Practitioner

Did consulting a qualified practitioner help you explore and understand your symptoms in greater detail?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially
- ☐ Gave me insights i had not considered

I consider the practice of homoeopathy to be *

- ☐ Science based
- ☐ Rational within its own context
- ☐ Placebo
- ☐ Unproven wishful thinking

Do you consider homoeopathy could be harmful *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Dont know

Is it important for you to be able to buy remedies without consulting a practitioner? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Only from a health food shop or pharmacies

How important is it to you to have the choice of buying and using homoeopathy whether or not you personally believe in it?

*

- ☐ Not important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Essential

If your personal experience of homoeopathy in treating a specific condition did not assist would you still consider using it? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Dont know

Do you think it is reasonable for UK doctors and drug companies to override patients choice by attempting to ban homoeopathy, because it is not fully understood how it works *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Dont know

There is a dramatic rise in medical induced illness (iatrogenic illness) how much does that worry you ? *

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Very much and increasingly so

Pharmaceutical companies seem to be dominating more and more of our lives, do you agree? *

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly hostile to homoeopathy do you think this position is a trustworthy one? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Dont know

What do you like about homoeopathy *

What do you dislike

Your answer

In your own words is there anything you would like to add *

Your answer

Would you be willing to participate in an interview *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

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