Homeopathy: the need for robust evidence to inform consumer choices
Response to the EASAC statement in Hungary

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Response to the EASAC statement in Hungary: Current status of Homeopathy in Hungary

- Registered and used as medicinal products, based on EU and national regulations, without the requirement to demonstrate clinical efficacy and label on the exact composition
- Hungary’s population is among the middle range of homeopathic products consumers (2-4%)
- Clinical doctors increasingly use them for the treatment of various diseases of low-middle severity based on the “proof of experience”, especially in pediatrics
- Not covered by the National Health Insurance Coverage
• Headline news in main national webpages evaluating the statement as a milestone in the struggle against fake-science
• Semmelweis University (the largest medical school in Hungary) has suspended education of homeopathy subject
• 2017.08.15. Public initiation of a referendum
Response to the EASAC statement in Hungary: Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS)

- EASAC statement was immediately put on the official webpage of the HAS
- A 15 member **Presidential Committee for Health**, founded in, by the President of HAS, László Lovász in response to the initiation of the Medical Section of HAS in order to address, analyse and work out solutions to the challenges of the 21st Century Healthcare

**Major topics**

- Trends of public health (aging population, increases/decreases of incidence of diseases)
- Forms of healthcare (expert hot spots, centers, remote)
- Population databases, informatics, e-health
- Medical research (translational medicine, bioinformatics)
- Cost analyses of the technology development in medicine
- Rationalization of medical needs
- Teaching of health (pre-gradual, gradual, postgradual, public)
- Communication, public outreach
- Adjustment of ethical and legal framework to developing technologies
- Shaping of health-conscious environment
What should be the 21st Century healthcare like?


Outstanding Issues:

- The healthcare and medicine is in global crisis, because
- Technology development breaks the existing framework of healthcare due to increasing costs
- Aging population worldwide imbalance between needs and sources
- Medicine is no longer a universal practice
- Increased evidence based knowledge/decreased trust in healthcare, emerging “Complimentary/Alternative medicine”
- New ethical and legal frameworks are necessary

- Launch of the science.hu webpage to interpret debated topics of science, like homeopathy
- A series of articles, written by scientists will be published in the official periodical of the HAS for both scientists and the lay public on the topic of homeopathy
2018/6: Statement on Complimentary-Alternative Medicine of the Medical Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

- Claiming agreement with the statement of EASAC that there is no evidence that homeopathy is more effective than placebo. Therefore HAS **does not regard homeopathy as the part of complimentary - alternative medicine**

- Suggesting urgent revision of legal regulation of the complimentary medicine – taken into account the principles of the evidence based medicine and the necessity for **scientific proof on efficacy**

- Efforts are planned to obtain **legal approval** of exclusion of homeopathic products from medicinal products as homeopathy is clearly outside the field of interventions, which are evidence based
Response to the EASAC statement in Hungary: Response of the medical professionals

• 2017.10.03. National Pharmacist Chamber: It is not possible to ban homeopathic medicine in a national framework: EMA should step at first
• 2017.10.10. National Physician Chamber:

“It should be decided by the MD, whether he prescribes or not homeopathic medicine. Homeopathy has legitimacy, however, the physician should carefully consider to prescribe a drug without proof of effect especially in cases, when effective treatment is needed…”
Response to the EASAC statement in Hungary: Response of the Politicians: controversial

HR state secretary Bence Rétvári: „Homeopathy is a worldwide used practice, and it relies on the practitioner’s knowledge and responsibility that he uses it for the given patient or not."

HR minister Miklós Kásler: „In complete agreement with the opinion of HAS and Hungarian Medical Research Council. Homeopathy is not the part of the evidence based medicine“
Increased alertness on "fake medicines" on the Facebook page of a patient organization

Frequently used elements of fake medicine in the digital space:

- Wonder drug: no side effects as it is natural
- Dr. Med. Hans Nichtvorsisting, professor of University of Fictional Sciences recommends
- Fictive Patients opinion: it causes immediate and complete recovery
- Aggressive marketing strategy, fake quality certificates
- No contact person
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