

This submission addresses the suggested reclassification of homeopathic remedies by the TGA.

It is logical that all homeopathic remedies must retain their classification as therapeutic goods and must be administered under the advice of a practitioner trained in their use.

By nature, homeopathic remedies are so highly individual that there it will likely never be possible to do any clinical trial into their efficacy. It is also a fact that there are many factors involved in the workings of the human body that modern science still does not understand, which is why we cannot instantly correct cancers, abnormal foetal developments, autoimmune diseases such as MS or Motor Neurone disease.

My experience is that homeopathy works extremely well, for my children in particular, for things such as relief from teething or bringing down a fever as you might with paracetamol. Fairly mild uses - my daughter has had open heart surgery several times and leukaemia and homeopathy was not going to fix either of those things, but from time to time it has helped keep her well and kept her sisters well when otherwise they would have been ill or distressed. Most notably after our most recent cardiac admission I gave her a pain and fever remedy which she took much more readily than the paracetamol liquid because it tasted nicer. Her distress abated at least as quickly and for as long as if she had taken the paracetamol, without the force required in administration of the paracetamol and the anguish involved for both of us in my forcing her to take something she hates when it's the only option available. When your child is thoroughly at the end of her medical tether, pleasant options are a godsend.

What is important in the current classification of homeopathic remedies as therapeutic goods is that a trained and knowledgeable practitioner is advising patients on which remedies are correct for which situations. You don't have one remedy for one symptoms, it's a more specific system than that. Not all skin irritations are the same, so you need someone who is trained in which group of symptoms fit which remedy. No pharmacist or 7-Eleven owner can possibly be so trained. Only someone who has done a thorough study can properly use a system of healing. It is so in all the healing arts - just as I wouldn't take pharmaceutical advice from a naturopath, I wouldn't take homeopathic advice from a GP.

Of course there are dodgy practitioners in all areas of healthcare. There are people who think more of their abilities than can be demonstrated, but by and large healthcare practitioners are dedicated, smart, capable and knowledgeable. I have found this to be true across all the disciplines we've used - and over the last few years we've been frequent flyers in the areas of both pharmaceutical/surgical medicine and natural/complementary medicine.

In the hands of just anyone homeopathic remedies are lolly water just as in the hands of anyone an assisted communication device is a fun toy. They need to be classified correctly so that they can be put to their proper uses.

Whether some people like it or not, many people stay healthier and stay out of hospital because of natural medicine, saving the Australian taxpayer many Medicare dollars. Homeopathic remedies are an essential part of my parental toolkit, especially with a child whose health can be unpredictable and for whom any form of support is valuable. Having the practitioners there to advise how best to use them again minimises the severity of illnesses as much as possible, keeping my children out of hospital.

What I noticed about the document which discussed changing the classifications of various therapeutic devices etc there was a clear bias demonstrated particularly in terms of noting which items the author thought it would be beneficial for the public to have confidence in and which items the author thought it would be beneficial for the public to have less confidence in. Unless I am mistaken, the TGA's job is to decide what items are therapeutic and which are not, rather than what

the TGA staff support and do not support in terms of people's healthcare choices. I do hope that this attitude is not carried through this process and that the people actually deciding on what to change or leave as-is will be able to oversee this process in an unbiased fashion, with the full understanding that very few people's healthcare choices will be exactly the same and that even in the one family certain modalities might work wonderfully for one whereas other modalities will work better for others. We must have options and where there are a significant number of voices stating that something does benefit them, our government organisations must listen to those voices. Such is the case with homeopathy and it must be administered properly, with tertiary educated and certified individuals assisting people to use them correctly.