

HOMOEOPATHY SHAKES THE FOUNDATIONS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

by Linda McCann

With the publication in the December edition of the *Lancet* of Dr. David Taylor Reilly's latest research at the Homoeopathic Hospital in Glasgow, we may be witnessing the homoeopathic foot firmly and permanently wedged in the door of medical science.

Respect

It is due, in no small measure, to the respect that orthodox medicine has for Dr. Taylor Reilly's scrupulous and careful research methods which, with a meta-analysis of his previous allergy trials, allows him to claim that the odds against chance being a factor in the results are 10,000 to one.

Challenge

Equally challenging and unsettling to scientists is the conclusion that such randomised controlled testing, the very foundation of pharmacological research and practice, does not work or that Homoeopathy does.

But is Science prepared to take up the challenge - or even acknowledge it - the scientific debate now stressing not whether Homoeopathy works, but why.

Modern Trial

This 'double blind' trial of 24 patients with allergic asthma produced an improvement in symptoms within one week, which persisted for up to 8 weeks, alongside similar trends in respiratory function and bronchial reactivity tests. The significant result in the subsequent meta-analysis of this and two previous hay-fever trials, was a **33% average improvement in those on homoeopathic immunotherapy** (a 30c potency of allergen material) and only 10% in the placebo patients, all of whom continued with their normal conventional treatment.

Reports

The extensive reports in the national Press that these important trials have generated concluded along with the *Lancet* by pointing out that any homoeopathic improvement was nowhere near the benefit obtainable with

conventional medicine, thereby creating the possibility of destroying any interest that asthmatic readers with no knowledge of Homoeopathy may have expressed. Hopefully, most will be able to weigh up the benefits of homoeopathic treatment versus the side-effects of certain drugs and make their own decisions as to their future treatment. Steroids offer symptomatic relief but only rarely do they effect a cure of the underlying condition, although remissions sometimes do occur. Even aspirin can produce, in some patients, asthma attacks with bronchospasm and an estimated 5% of asthmatics are aspirin-sensitive.

These trials were designed to re-evaluate the placebo hypothesis rather than the efficacy of Homoeopathy, Dr. Taylor Reilly talking unassumingly of Homoeopathy having "something to offer" rather than prematurely professing any curative ability.

Long Term Benefit

Should the placebo response theory at last be shaken rather than stirred, and hopefully annihilated, perhaps some forthcoming research could either compare the significant differences of prescribing high and low potencies or concentrate on any long-term improvement in health attributable to Homoeopathy. Scientists may be encouraged now to examine the 'How' of Homoeopathy, the interesting correlation in conventional immunotherapy of low-dosage poisons proving beneficial, and such issues as the possibility that succussion encourages some kind of biophysical 'coding' or transmission of the homoeopathic remedy to the composition of the water/alcohol solution.

The understanding and acceptance of Homoeopathy amongst Physicians and Patients alike has increased remarkably and any research of the calibre of Dr. Taylor Reilly's can only enforce this trend.

BHA

HOMOEOPATHY AT THE NATIONAL CAT SHOW

Enid Segall reports

The National Cat Club Championship Show 1994 at Olympia in December had a different air about it. For a start all stall holders were given Santa hats to wear and there was a huge central stand sponsored by Whiskas. They always sponsor the show but there had never been a stand like this at previous shows. Another innovation was sections run by different Cat Breed Associations to show the public the various types of cats and enable them to talk to the expert enthusiasts. A similar set up was tried at Crufts Dog Show last year with great success. Then I noticed that BBC Television was filming and I realised that this was why the usual format has been re-vamped.

The Cat Charities were there in strength with stalls full of donated goods to sell as well as the Crafts people who specialise in exquisite silver cat jewellery and ceramics. Every whim is catered for by the firms selling food, toys, climbers, scratching posts and cages for travelling and boarding. There is even a video for cats!

The BHA's stand is always in the gallery.



Photo: Enid Segall
Two judges deliberate over the fate of a disinterested feline in the domestic cat section.

Not only does it cost less, there is more room to take a deep breath - there's no doing that in the crush downstairs. Furthermore, the cats in the gallery are household pets whose proud owners bring them along for the joy of sharing their love of cats and I much prefer being with them. Mr George Macleod (BHA Council Member), the famous homoeopathic vet, was with us to answer the many questions put by his devoted followers as well as people new to homoeopathy, looking for an answer to their cats seemingly intractable problems. Itchy skins, bladder problems in

neutered males, epilepsy, Queens who come into season too often, Queens who never come into season etc. George fielded them all with his usual aplomb.

The TV people got to us towards the end of the day and Jessica Holm interviewed George but they kept having to stop as announcements over the loudspeakers were drowning them out. In the end they didn't use it, more's the pity.



Photo: Enid Segall
Mr George Macleod with Jessica Holm of BBC2.



Photo: Enid Segall
George drinking a toast to Homoeopathy.