

## "Comments about the LANCET article"

SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE ARTICLE:

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"ARE THE CLINICAL EFFECTS OF HOMEOPATHY PLACEBO EFFECTS? COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PLACEBO-CONTROLLED TRIALS OF HOMEOPATHY AND ALLOPATHY" (Shang et al., THE LANCET, vol. 366, 2005)

The article of Dr. Egger, apparently well conducted, represents only one amongst several papers about meta-analysis in homeopathy published over the last 20 years. It was a surprise to me to verify how strong reactions it caused in the media at this time. It was a kind of disproportional wave.

It is easy to observe, using Medline database, that almost 1000 articles about the theme were published in the last five years. Taken these publications together, the contradictions of data are clearly observed: a significant number of articles, also well performed, considering the methodological point of view, present conclusions that diverge completely from that of Dr. Egger, mainly those related to in vitro studies.

The question of homeopathy is very complex. It would be not very prudent to consider that "homeopathy is over", based on just one clinical article, as well as it would be also imprudent to take only one article to establish homeopathy as a completely solved and proved question. Clinical trials performed under good quality parameters (double-blinded RCT) are good but sometimes insufficient to solve the main trouble of homeopathy: the similia principle, since most of them are not built to check it as a biological phenomenon. Instead, they are built according to standard protocols based on the drug-receptor paradigm.

According to the GIRI member studies, performed and discussed since 1986, isopathy, classical, clinical and complex homeopathy have different biological properties and different levels of therapeutic limitations. They could never be considered as being the same thing. It means that scientists, sometimes, are looking to the wrong side! In this case, the naïf establishment of inadequate outputs could represent bias even in a golden

standard protocol. Therefore, a meta-analysis from this kind of study could multiply the bias.

The polemic will be solved only after a reasonable number of articles designed properly had been published, focusing the best way to modeling the similia principle and its variations from in vitro and experimental studies, without, of course, abandon the high criteria of methodological quality. And this is not easy at all! The only way to be followed is the improvement of research, with institutional support, and the education of new researchers able to deal with these conceptual particularities.

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