



ASSOCIATION BELGE DES PATIENTS
DE L'HOMÉOPATHIE
depuis 1972

BELGISCHE PATIENTENVERENIGING
HOMEOPATHIE
sinds 1972

Madame Maggie De Block
Minister for Public Health and Social Affairs

Brussels, 17th November 2014

Subject: follow-up to the article "Only a glimmer of hope for alternative methods of treatment", published in *De Standaard*, 2nd November 2014

OPEN LETTER

Dear Minister,

Homeopathy patients are feeling weary. Not of the homeopathy that helps preserve their health and vitality, but because of a whole range of threats hovering over this ancient art of healing:

1. The **media**, which reduce homeopathy to a few ill-informed statements. You know what I mean: nothing but anodyne placebos, wishy-washy stuff without a single molecule of active ingredient, pure humbug, etc. Bah! Of course the media have to present news to their audience. And if distorted truths sell better than impartiality... well, that's business.
2. The **pharmaceutical industry**. Let's look at things how they really are: conventional medical drugs are so much more profitable than those horrid little homeopathic granules that won't and don't make all those pharmacists and labs rich. Big Pharma is able to brew up billions, not only to fund thousands of studies, but also universities. It's all about making those studies 'independent'. So let's pretend to believe them.
3. The **scientific world**, which starts to behave unscientifically once homeopathy is mentioned. All of a sudden, there's hysteria in the ranks of the scientists. We always thought these people acted rationally. But no: they automatically reject any study dealing with homeopathy. Don't be fooled: such scientific studies about homeopathy do exist. There aren't many of them, because research is expensive and the world of homeopathy doesn't have deep pockets (its priorities are elsewhere). In fact, if homeopathy had significant financial resources and grants like Big Pharma, the scientific proof to support it would be available in far more studies than is currently the case. But then that's a situation that everyone seems to want to avoid at all costs. It's true that homeopathy could cast doubt on all sorts of things, economic or scientific. But it feels far better simply to turn off the funding tap.
It is interesting to note that when the homeopathic doctors held a symposium on 18th October last at ULB in Brussels, putting forward an array of irrefutable scientific proof, the world of science didn't respond to the many invitations sent out. You yourself, Minister, were invited. The same kind of attitude is displayed to Professor Luc Montagnier, Nobel Prize winner, when he explains and demonstrates the action of homeopathy through physics, basing himself on some quite astonishing experiments conducted in Paris and Shanghai (at least in China, he isn't harassed). But conventional science wants nothing whatever to do with it. And we think that's cowardly. (We learn that Big Pharma, concerned about its profitability into the future, has begun secret research into electromagnetic function and the applications of homeopathy).
4. The **world of politics**. Politicians slavishly repeat the arguments made by the people who control the purse strings. It's tough, but that's how it is, particularly today. Oh, and here's

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another old chestnut from the hit parade: the concept of 'evidence-based'. Three reactions from patients on this:

- a. The 'evidence' that could contribute towards an improvement in medicine is reduced to silence, snubbed or aggressively attacked. This attitude is by no means new in History: it has already reared its ugly head many time before, such as when dangerous dissidents claimed that the Earth rotated on its own axis or that germs existed.
 - b. Estimates show that 60% of the Belgian population has already used homeopathy. The patients themselves are particularly satisfied with this art of healing. What is more, homeopathy makes people accountable for managing the precious capital of their own health properly, especially by advocating a healthier lifestyle. The way we patients see it, the proof is out there.
 - c. The scientist who realises that homeopathy prescribes remedies based on the specific nature of the patient and not the pathology, is able to deduce that for any particular condition, there are as many homeopathic remedies as there are patients. This means that conventional research, which tests the efficacy of a homeopathic remedy in relation to a specific ailment, is nonsense. And it is nonsense that is peddled to prove that homeopathy itself is nonsense. And part of the political world is aligned behind that reasoning. Which is a worry.
5. **Social security.** It costs the community billions. Yet homeopathic doctors slow that expenditure down. INAMI can detect them easily: they're the ones who prescribe virtually no antibiotics and who use other drugs with the greatest care. The savings for the State are considerable. And are patients unhappy about it? Quite the opposite! Many homeopathic doctors are overloaded and have to refer patients to colleagues. And have you ever heard complaints from patients about a homeopath? If you have, they are extremely rare. As an association of patients founded in 1972, we are well informed about these things.

We patients defend our right to the choice of treatment we want and the satisfaction we feel with that treatment. We are delighted at the Royal Decree that opens the way to a mandatory, accredited training programme for homeopaths. Homeopathy can be dangerous when a conventional doctor proclaims himself to be a homeopath after reading a few books or because he has attended a brief seminar. These practices harm the reputation and respectability of homeopathy; in fact they are manna sent from heaven for its detractors.

We are well aware that conventional medicine performs miracles. But we are also aware that it is not omnipotent and can fall short in its claims. We also know that homeopathy is capable of amazing feats. More than that, we know it is by no means a panacea. In reality, these two forms of medicine dovetail particularly well with each other. And we're delighted about that. Our process is empirical, it's true, because we have sufficient common sense to understand that reality is much broader than what the science of today is able (or is authorised) to demonstrate.

Homeopathy has been fighting for its survival for two centuries already. Which is as amazing for the patients themselves as it is for homeopathic doctors. We are calling on your common sense, Minister. As citizens as well as patients, we simply call on you to continue using this form of medicine with which we are so happy – but without setting aside conventional medicine. Homeopathy does not deceive or threaten anybody. Its patients merely demand to be respected.

Yours respectfully,

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President

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