

21 October 2017

Submission to the NHS England consultation on items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care: A Consultation on guidance for CCGs

The Royal Society and the Academy of Medical Sciences welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the proposed national guidance for CCGs on medicines which can be considered to be of low priority for NHS funding.

The Society and the Academy are the UK's national academies of science and medical science respectively. They are both self-governing Fellowships of many of the world's most distinguished scientists and medical researchers working across a broad range of research areas in academia, industry, charities and the public sector. We draw on the expertise of our Fellowships to provide independent and authoritative scientific advice to UK, European and international decision makers.

This consultation requests views on the proposed national guidance for CCGs on medicines which can be considered to be of low priority for NHS funding. Included within this proposed guidance is a recommendation that clinical commissioning groups should ensure that homeopathic treatments are not initiated for any new patients due to a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness.

The Royal Society and the Academy of Medical Sciences support NHS England's proposed guidance on homeopathic treatments. Scientific evidence should be at the heart of decision-making about medical interventions, and be derived from research that uses robust and reliable scientific methodologies, and that minimises bias as best as possible.¹ It is important that patients can make an informed choice about their treatments and should be able to access clear information about the likely benefits and/or potential harms.

Homeopathy was recently considered by the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) and they released a [statement](#) in September 2017 after having reviewed the existing evidence and concluded that there is no robust, reproducible evidence that homeopathy is effective beyond the placebo effect. EASAC share our concern that consumers and patients must be supplied with evidence-based, accurate and clear information in order to be able to choose treatments appropriately. They also recommend that evidence-based public health systems should not reimburse homeopathic products and practices unless they are demonstrated to be efficacious and safe by rigorous testing.

For further information, please contact Becky Purvis, Head of Public Affairs on 020 7451 2261 or becky.purvis@royalsociety.org or Elizabeth Bohm, Head of International on 02031413217 or elizabeth.bohm@acmedsci.ac.uk

¹ Academy of Medical Sciences (2017) Enhancing the use of scientific evidence in judging the potential benefits and harms of medicines. <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/policy-projects/how-can-we-all-best-use-evidence>