

Led by the erstwhile Professor Ernst of the Peninsula Medical School in Exeter 'the UK's first professor of complementary medicine' (less we need reminding!) the attacks on homeopathy in the UK go on unabated. For 200 years homeopathy has suffered the slings and arrows of the conventional medical establishment and Professor Ernst and his sceptic colleagues are keeping up the tradition.

His most recent attack comes within the context of a book he has co-authored with another sceptic Dr (PhD) Simon Singh called 'Trick or Treatment'. A clever title but even cleverer has been their well orchestrated publicity campaign to sell the book which has seen a plethora of articles in most UK papers, an interview in the New Scientist, appearances on radio and television etc. And their best trick is that they have dedicated the book to the Prince of Wales and headlined their publicity campaign with a call for two publications on CAM from the Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health' to be withdrawn. No better way to get attention than to go for the Prince of Wales! One thing that is clear about Prof. Ernst - he loves publicity and has perfected the art of getting it.

While directly accusing homeopaths and other CAM practitioners of being liars in his New Scientist interview he actually tells a few lies himself. One example is his assertion over the evidence base for homeopathy. The author of some fairly low quality trials himself (he stopped doing trials some years ago, far easier to sit back and criticise other people's) he maintains that the overall trial quality in the evidence base of homeopathy is low, but then nonetheless goes on to use it to mount his assertion that there is no evidence for homeopathy's effectiveness. This assertion is simply untrue. There are many trials showing evidence for its effectiveness together with others which do not. It is common in research that some trials yield positive results and others negative. This is why meta-analyses and literature reviews are carried out. Eight out of nine meta-analyses and literature reviews have shown homeopathy to have an effect. (A paper listing the positive trials can be found at the end of this article.)

Of course more higher methodological quality research is needed. One reason the 'UK's first professor of CAM' has been such a disappointment to CAM researchers is that he has offered nothing in the way of constructive advice to researchers on improving methodology, surely something such a professorial chair should have done, but has just taken the lazy way out of criticising others' work.

Ernst and his sceptic friends are stuck in the bio-chemical model of understanding how living beings function. Homeopathy is clearly NOT functioning according to that model but at an overall organisational level acting through the bio-energetic field which surrounds and permeates each living being. When the organising life-force leaves the human body at death the structural chemical body of the dead person immediately begins to decline into chaos and decay. Conventional medicine attempts to manage the chemical body with drugs and correct the faults in the structural body with surgery. Homeopathy attempts to regulate and restore balance to the living system at the energetic organisational level. For two hundred years homeopathy has been successfully treating people at this level. Fortunately other branches of science are now catching up with homeopathy and the mechanism of action of potentised medicines will soon be explained, hopefully within Professor Ernst's lifetime.