Evans, SJ; (2009) Homoeopathic product licence Back to square one. BMJ (Clinical research ed), 338. b2332. ISSN 0959-8138 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b2332

Downloaded from: http://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/5148/

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b2332

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/policies.html or alternatively contact researchonline@lshtm.ac.uk.

Available under license: Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/
Letters Homoeopathic product licence

Back to square one

BMJ 2009; 338 doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b2332 (Published 10 June 2009) Cite this as: BMJ 2009;338:b2332

Stephen J Evans, professor of pharmacoepidemiology

1 London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London WC1E 7HT

stephen.evans@lshtm.ac.uk

It is tragic that we now have a respected body, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), granting a licence for a product for which there is not only no evidence of efficacy but good evidence against any efficacy.1 I have some sympathy with the MHRA in the face of a European Directive which has to be obeyed but which is almost totally irrational. However, I think that because “efficacy” appears in the directive and there is evidence against efficacy, it could have resisted granting a licence.

This fiasco takes us back to the days before drug regulation was introduced, partly to prevent the hazards of snake oil-type remedies. While this product may have no benefit, it probably has no direct harm either. But it may have major indirect harms—not only in individual patients who may not benefit from other effective remedies but also in a general sense by undermining the rational basis for medicine.

Notes

Cite this as: BMJ 2009;338:b2332

Footnotes

- Competing interests: SJE is a former employee of the UK Medicines Control Agency (now MHRA) and a member of the Pharmacovigilance Working Party of the CHMP at the European Medicines Agency.

References

1. Cohen D. Drugs agency grants its first licence to homoeopathic product. BMJ 2009;338:b2055. (20 May.)