

Dear Health Minister

We are writing to alert you to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recent comments that they do not recommend the use of homeopathy for HIV, TB, malaria, influenza and infant diarrhoea. As a group of early-career medics and researchers from the UK and Africa, we wrote to the WHO in June this year raising concerns about the aggressive promotion of homeopathy for these serious diseases, which puts lives at risk (www.senseaboutscience.org.uk/index.php/site/project/331/).

We have received the following responses:

Dr Mario Raviglione, Director, Stop TB Department, WHO: *"Our evidence-based WHO TB treatment/management guidelines, as well as the International Standards of Tuberculosis Care (ISTC) do not recommend use of homeopathy."*

Dr Mukund Uplekar: TB Strategy and Health Systems, WHO: *"WHO's evidence-based guidelines on treatment of tuberculosis...have no place for homeopathic medicines."*

Dr Teguest Guerma, Director Ad Interim, HIV/AIDS Department, WHO: *"The WHO Dept. of HIV/AIDS invests considerable human and financial resources [...] to ensure access to evidence-based medical information and to clinically proven, efficacious, and safe treatment for HIV... Let me end by congratulating the young clinicians and researchers of Sense About Science for their efforts to ensure evidence-based approaches to treating and caring for people living with HIV."*

Dr Sergio Spinaci, Associate Director, Global Malaria Programme, WHO: *"Thanks for the amazing documentation and for whistle blowing on this issue... The Global Malaria programme recommends that malaria is treated following the WHO Guidelines for the Treatment of Malaria".* (These guidelines do not include any use of homeopathy.)

Joe Martines, on behalf of Dr Elizabeth Mason, Director, Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development, WHO: *"We have found no evidence to date that homeopathy would bring any benefit to the treatment of diarrhoea in children...Homeopathy does not focus on the treatment and prevention of dehydration – in total contradiction with the scientific basis and our recommendations for the management of diarrhoea."*

The office of Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, stated on 14th August 2009 that these responses *"clearly express the WHO's position"*.

We ask that you publicise this advice to healthcare agencies in your country and join our effort to combat the promotion of ineffective therapies such as homeopathy (which rarely contains any active ingredient) for these serious diseases. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

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Our call for a communication is also supported by the following experts and organisations:

The AIDS Care Watch campaign (ACW)

www.aidscareswatch.org - a civil society partnership of over 400 organizations

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