



e-Journal of Media & Society

HOMEOPATHY IN MALAYSIA

Mohamad Arif Aizuddin Mohd Ramli
Muhammad Danial Abd Rashid
Hanisah Nurizzati Mohamad Hood
Muhamad Imran Ariff Hisham

Universiti Teknologi MARA

*correspondent: hanisah.nurizzati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Advancement of technologies throughout the year have produce different kind of medicine. Despite that people seeks homeopathy as source of medication, especially in Malaysia. Debate for the best form of medicine has been going around between homeopathy and conventional medicine. This study is conduct to identify the level of awareness between the effectiveness of homeopathy and modern medicine. The study indicated that the public are more aware that effectiveness of modern medicine is more high (M= 3.309) and homeopathy were (M= 2.81).

Keywords: homeopathy, modern medicine, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

History of Homeopathy and Social History of Medicine. The Institute for the History of Medicine (IGM) was established in 1980 by the Robert Bosch Foundation, in Stuttgart, Germany, on the basis of a collection of documents and other small objects belonging to Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy. However, since its very inception, its directors considered that the history of homeopathy also had a role to play in the larger picture of the history of medicine. On the other hand, the history of homeopathy was not restricted to the account of the development of ideas and careers of practitioners, but it would give a significant advantage by approaching it from the perspective of social history, including the study of institutions, patients' views, lay supporting societies and publications. There were more than 20 Homeopathic medical schools in America. In that time, homeopathy was equally accredited and accepted along side conventional medicine in the eye of the public. It was so equally standing that three of the main medical school in America started as Homeopathic medical school.

According to the website homeopathycenter.org, Homeopathy is a natural system of healing that works with your body to relieve symptoms, restore itself and improve your overall health. It stated that it does not have any side effects even with small children and pets. Homeopathy are used to minor illness like colds, migraines, ear infections and sore throats. It also can treat chronic conditions like asthma, depression, autism and arthritis. They are also extremely affordable. Homeopathic remedies when used as directed, are completely safe for everyone – including pregnant and nursing women, infants, children, and adults. They are given in such small doses that they don't cause side effects. Homeopathy are made from natural substances (e.g. plants, minerals) and is supervised by FDA and it is environment friendly.

In 1960's this group formed first 'Homeopathic Society of Malaysia' at Taiping and later Pak Yaakub formed another Homeopathic Bumiputra at Johor Baharu. The members in 1960 – 1980 were about 100 only but most of them are part time practitioners who are practicing at home.

In 1970 Nik Omar bin Nik Daud and Mr Ahmad Shukry the son of Burhanuddin Helmy were the first two Malays who studied formal homeopathic education overseas at Pakistan Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital, and both of them qualified in 1975. Dr Nik Omar furthered his homeopathic education at London, U.K. while Dr Ahmad Shukry continued his

study up to Master of Business Administration, MBA at Punjab University, and continued to further his education in Japan and was never involved in Homeopathy at all.

In 1977 Dr Nik Omar returned from homeopathic studies in London and started the first modern and well equipped homeopathic clinic right in his hometown of Kota Bharu. Although homeopathy was little known and widely misunderstood at that time, the cures brought about by his expertise in homeopathy won much acclaim for homeopathy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Homeopathy is familiar within the user itself but not to public. Aside from homeopathy users, others consume modern medicine. Based on Homeopathic British Association, homeopathy is a medicine that is form naturally and has a user over 200 million people globally and it is to treat critical conditions. Homeopathy fully functional as a cure medicine and it is safe to use as it rarely gives side effects. In defence of homeopathy, an article produced by Janette Winterson on 'In defence of Homeopathy', it is mention that homeopathy provide treatment of HIV in Africa (Sullivan, 2018).

Homeopathy can be use by people from all ages including babies, children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. In Malaysia, Homeopathy is quite hard to find as it does not provide in the conventional medicine, clinic or hospital. People now days are more aware with the existence of homeopathy medicine and it is not a new thing to the users because it provides better effects than conventional medicine. In addition of the awareness, World Homeopathy Awareness Organization actively organized event regarding on public awareness towards homeopathy called 'Homeopathy Awareness Week' that was held on 10-16 April 2018 in Phoenix Arizona. In Malaysia, youngsters are well aware about homeopathy as they consume that medication in their daily life. According to Healthwise Stuff (2018), homeopathy works as a cure for long term diseases such as allergies, atopic dermatitis, rheumatoid arthritis and irritable bowel syndrome. Other than cure this illness, homeopathy also cures minor injuries.

However, comparison of modern medicine and homeopathy treatment has always been the issue based on their safety and functionality towards the user and how effectively this alternative medicine work. Article that stated by Salzberg, studies prove that alternative medicine does not work towards the users (Sullivan, 2018). According to Australian report in 2014-2015, (HRI) put on a conclusion that the trustworthy of effectiveness of homeopathy is

not that strong and categories this medicine as the same percentage with other conventional treatments. Nonetheless, homeopathy users have believe that homeopathy does cure their disease in some way but not user is compatible with homeopathy cure as it depends on our antibody system weather it is acceptable or not.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ 1: What is the level of effectiveness of Homeopathy

RQ 2: What is the level of effectiveness of Conventional Medicine

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

RO 1: To study the level of effectiveness of Homeopathy

RO 2: To study the level of effectiveness of Conventional Medicine

Homeopathy is safe to use together with conventional medicine

Although a few people say homoeopathy, a kind of elective prescription, is sheltered and prompts better results when utilized alongside customary drug, others state it very well may be destructive, and it is unscrupulous for specialists to prescribe it.

Homoeopathy depends on the possibility that "like fixes like," implying that infections can be treated with substances that would create side effects in solid individuals that are like the indications of the malady. (For example, lethal nightshade for cold and influenza, or toxic substance ivy for rashes.)

Supporters of the training likewise trust that the substances utilized in medications ought to be weakened, in light of the fact that lower dosages of treatment are in reality progressively powerful. In any case, this implies numerous homeopathic cures are weakened so much that not a solitary atom from the first "dynamic" substance would stay, as indicated by the National Institutes of Health (Rettne, 2015).

Homeopathy can enhance immune system naturally

Homeopathy obviously fits into the class of therapeutic methods that augment the body's own defences. The basis of homeopathy, called the principle of similar, suggests that a micro dose of a substance will heal whatever pattern of symptoms this substances causes in a large dose. This principle is also observed in the use of vaccinations and allergy treatments, though

homeopathic medicines are both considerably smaller and safer in the dose and more individualized to the person they are being used to treat.

Homeopathic medicine does not simply stimulate the body's immune system to treat ill people, for they can also call it when this is necessary for the healing of the individual. An example of this latter effect was observed in a study of the homeopathic treatment of people with rheumatoid arthritis, a condition which is considered an autoimmune illness. People with autoimmune ailments suffer because their body's immune system is over-active and it attacks the person's own cells, not just bacteria, viruses, or foreign substances (Ullman 2017).

Homeopathy is safe to use for all ages

Some parents turn to homeopathic therapies because they worry about giving medicine to their children. Up to 10 per cent of children is given homeopathic remedies, especially for ear, nose and throat problems (ear infections, teething pain) and for respiratory conditions.

At one time, homeopathic therapies were prescribed for individual patients by homeopathic practitioners. Now, some homeopathic products are widely available in stores. People are self-prescribing - or choosing products for their children. Parents call Poison Control with questions about how these products work and if they are safe (Soto, 2014).

Homeopathy works due Placebo effect

Though that it is true that homeopathy effective, but the main reason why it works is due to placebo effects. In 2005, the medical journal, The Lancet, conducted a meta-analysis for over 110 studies of Homeopathy and 110 studies of matched conventional-medical studies and found that there was a weak evidence for a specific effects of homeopathic remedies and the findings are compatible with the notion that the clinical effects of homeopathy are placebo effects (Shang, A., & et., 2005).

It is not recognize by professional doctors

A lot of people believe that modern medicine actually worked better than homeopathy. Homeopathy actually took a longer time to see the effectiveness. By using the special method of preparation called potentization. The idea is that diluting and agitating the ingredients activates their curative powers and enhance their effect. After dissolving the ingredients in

alcohol or distilled water, homeopaths take one part of the solution and mix it with the nine parts of water, diluting it down to one tenth of its original concentration, and shaking it. In Homeopathy is believed that, the extreme dilution is supposed to make the ingredients more potent, but on physical level, this doesn't make any sense. Most homeopathic remedies are diluted so much that not a single atom of the active ingredient is left in them. So in a nutshell you are actually drinking water instead of taking a medicine. Dr. John Byrne believes to believe this act of treatment is actually magical thinking (Harrison, 2015).

Homeopathy in curing deadly diseases

It's proven to be impossible for it to be done. The European Journal of cancer, conducted a meta-analysis of 6 studies and found insufficient evidence to support clinical of efficiency of homeopathic therapy (Millazo, Russel, Ernst, 2006).

RESEARCH METHADODOLOGY

This study employed the quantitative study approach (explanatory study) to identify the level of people awareness of Homeopathy in Malaysia. For sampling, by referring to Raosoft sample size calculator, 32 million populations in Malaysia can be equal to 279 sample of respondents by keeping the margin error as 5.87%, confidence level of 95% and response distribution as 50% (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al. 2015). The study involving 279 respondents and a structured questionnaire was used for data collection. This data was collected through a survey questionnaire that were made using Google Forms. The methods that is used to distribute the questionnaire is using our social media platform such as *Whatsapp messenger, Instagram and Twitter*. A Likert scale was used for the respondents to answer question relating to the effectiveness of homeopathy (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018).

RESULT AND DISSCUSION

Results and Discussions

a) Demographic

The profile of the sample is discussed in terms of six demographic characteristics: sex, ethnic, age, relationship status, occupation and education.

Table 1: Demographic

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	102	38.1
Female	166	61.9
Ethnic		
Malay	240	86
Chinese	20	7.2
Indian	15	5.4
Other	2	1.4
Age		
>19	31	11.1
20 - 25	188	67.4
26 – 34	29	10.4
35>	31	11.1
Relationship status		
Single	169	60.6
Dating	61	21.9
Married	44	15.8
Divorcee	5	1.8
Working Status		
Student	189	67.7
In training	16	5.7
In a work field	63	22.6
Unemployed	11	3.9

Current Level of Education

SPM	21	7.5
Matriculation/Foundation/STPM	33	11.8
Diploma/Degree	212	76
Master/ PhD	13	4.7

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents from Malaysia. Based from findings, most of the respondents who are answered the questionnaire are female (61.9%), Malay ethnic (86%), aged between 20- 25 (67.4%) and single (60.6%). Most of the respondents are student (67.7%) and either diploma or degree holders (76%) .

b) Knowledge on Homeopathy

Table 2: Knowledge about homeopathy

Issues	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you know about homeopathy?		
Yes	190	68.1
No	89	31.9
Have you ever used homeopathy?		
Yes	177	63.7
No	101	36.3
Do you know anyone that have used homeopathy?		
Yes	134	48
No	145	52
Do you believe in homeopathy?		
Yes	198	71
No	81	29

Table 2 shows about the awareness of homeopathy between the respondents. Most of the respondent are aware and know the existence of homeopathy in Malaysia (68.1%), the respondent also has used homeopathy (63.7%). Most of the respondent does not now anyone that have used homeopathy (52%). A third of the respondents actually believe in homeopathy

(71%). This is quite surprising considering homeopathy is not a well-known compared to conventional medicine

c) Awareness of Homeopathy Effectiveness

Table 3: Awareness of Homeopathy effectiveness

Awareness	Mean
I believe homeopathy is highly effective	3.80
I believe everyone should get prescription from doctor to use homeopathy	3.06
I believe homeopathy can enhance our immune system naturally	2.95
I believe to homeopathy works effective it is to give it time and consume regularly	2.97
I believe homeopathy can used as supplements	2.93
I believe homeopathy is safe for people of all ages to consume	2.78
I believe homeopathy is easily accessible	2.65
I believe homeopathy can cure chronic diseases	2.60
I believe homeopathy is safe to use together with conventional medicine	2.57
Overall	2.81

Based from the Table 3, majority of respondents believe homeopathy is highly effective (M=3.80). This finding is supported with the annual profit of the pharmacies sell homeopathic medicine worth more than 500 million euros. (The Star Malaysia, 2017). Respondents also believe that everyone need to consult to their doctors about the usage of homeopathy (M=3.06). This is because a patient need to find a suitable medicine for their illness or diseases. (Harrison, 2015) The medicine may claimed that it safe to be use but it's not guarantee that your body might experiencing side effects such allergic reaction. Few people were quite sceptical about the capability for a homeopathy can cure chronic diseases (M=3.60). According of Journal of Cancer, It is less likely for homeopathy to be effective in curing a chronic diseases due to how

the medicine have a very low dose effective ingredients. (Millazo, Russell, Ernst, 2006). Overall the level of awareness of homeopathy effectiveness is high (M=2.81)

d) Effectiveness of Modern Medicine

Table 4: Awareness of Conventional Medicine effectiveness

Awareness	Mean
I believe there is a lot of options of medicine in modern medicine	3.23
I believe modern medicine can cure a lot more diseases or illness	3.08
I believe modern medicine works faster in curing diseases	3.06
I believe drug is essential ingredients in medicine	3.02
I believe modern medicine can cure chronic diseases	3.01
I believe that modern medicine works better than homeopathy	2.96
Overall	3.04

Based from Table 4, majority of people agreed that there is lot of options for modern medicine compared to homeopathy (M=3.09). This is because that there's more general pharmacist that the homeopathy specific pharmacy. Respondents also agree that modern medicine works faster than homeopathy (M=3.06). With high potency of the medicine, it easier for human body to combat to the disease. (Shang et al., 2005)

CONCLUSION

Table: Descriptive statistics of people awareness about homeopathy

Constructs	N	Mean
Awareness of Homeopathy effectiveness	279	2.81
Effectiveness of Modern Medicine	279	3.03
Overall		2.92

Table showed the mean score achieved for all respondents on this dimension is 2.92. It shows the level of people awareness about the harm of plastic straw use is at high level. The highest mean is effectiveness of modern medicine (M=3.03) and followed by awareness of homeopathy effectiveness (M=2.81). It shows that Malaysians are more aware about the effectiveness of modern medicine. This finding was supported by US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health. According to Ajai R. Singh (2010), Modern medicine has done much in the fields of infectious diseases and emergencies to aid cure. In most other fields, it is mostly control that it aims for, which is another name for palliation. Physician endorsed prescriptions and advances in medicinal treatment have helped individuals keep away from incapacity and passing brought about by illness, brought down by and large treatment costs, and has brought down death rates for coronary illness, stroke, malignancy, and other fatal sicknesses for a very long while (Sullivan, 2018).

References

Abdul Rauf Ridzuan, Jusang Bolong, S. Salahudin Bin Suyurno, Rusydi Bin Mohamad Kamal, Fakrulnizam Bin Jafri (2015). Developing Sns Factors Structures Towards Constructing Sns Survey Questions, *Journal Of Human Capital Development*, 8(2), 25-35.

British Homeopathic Association. (2019). What is homeopathy? - British Homeopathic Association. [online] Available at: <https://www.britishhomeopathic.org/homeopathy/what-is-homeopathy>

Goldacre, B. (2007). What's wrong with homeopathy, by Ben Goldacre. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2007/nov/16/sciencenews.g2>

Harrison, G. (2015). Doctor Prescribes a Reality Check for Homeopathy. [online] Psychology Today. Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/about-thinking/201511/doctor-prescribes-reality-check-homeopathy> [Accessed 11 Jun. 2019].

Homeopathy real or fake. (2017) Pressreader.com. The Star Malaysia <https://www.pressreader.com/>
HRI. (2015). The Australian report. [online] Available at: <https://www.hri-research.org/resources/homeopathy-the-debate/the-australian-report-on-homeopathy/>

Milazzo, S., Russell, N. and Ernst, E. (2006). Efficacy of homeopathic therapy in cancer treatment. *European Journal of Cancer*, 42(3), pp.282-289. doi: 10.1016/j.ejca.2005.09.025

Ridzuan, A.R., Ridzuan, A.R. and Ridzuan, M. (2018). Research Methods and Communication Research. *Malaysian Journal of Media and Society*. 1, 1-10.

Rettne. R., (2015). Homeopathic Treatments: Do They Help or Harm?. Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/51556-homeopathy-treatments-placebo-dangerous.html>

Singh A. R., (2010, January) Modern Medicine: Towards Prevention, Cure, Well-being and Longevity. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3031942/>

Shang, A., Huwiler-Müntener, K., Nartey, L., Jüni, P., Dörig, S., Sterne, J. A., ... Egger, M. (2005). Are the clinical effects of homoeopathy placebo effects? Comparative study of placebo-controlled trials of homoeopathy and allopathy. *The Lancet*, 366(9487), 726–732. doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(05)67177-2

Soto, P., (2014, February 6). Homeopathic Medications for Children Know the Risks and Proper Usage. Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/51556-homeopathy-treatments-placebo-dangerous.html>

Staff, H. (2018). Homeopathy | Michigan Medicine. [online] Uofmhealth.org. Available at: <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/aa104729spec> [Accessed 11 Jun. 2019].

Sullivan T., (2018, May 6). Modern Medicine vs. Alternative Medicine: Different Levels of Evidence. Retrieved from <https://www.policymed.com/2011/08/modern-medicine-vs-alternative-medicine-different-levels-of-evidence.html>

Ullman, D. (2017, January 23). Homeopathy and Immune Response. Retrieved from <https://homeopathic.com/homeopathic-medicine-and-the-immune-system/>