

Outcome and costs of homoeopathic and conventional treatment strategies: a comparative cohort study in patients with chronic disorders.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:

To evaluate the effectiveness of homoeopathy versus conventional treatment in routine care.

DESIGN:

Comparative cohort study.

SETTING:

Patients with selected chronic diagnoses were enrolled in medical practice.

INTERVENTIONS:

Conventional treatment or homeopathy.

OUTCOME MEASURES:

Severity of symptoms assessed by patients and physicians (visual rating scale, 0-10) at baseline, 6 and 12 months and costs.

RESULTS:

The analyses of 493 patients (315 adults, 178 children) indicated greater improvement in patients' assessments after homoeopathic versus conventional treatment (adults: homeopathy from 5.7 to 3.2; conventional, 5.9-4.4; $p=0.002$; children from 5.1 to 2.6 and from 4.5 to 3.2). Physician assessments were also more favourable for children who had received homoeopathic treatment (4.6-2.0 and 3.9-2.7; $p<0.001$). Overall costs showed no significant differences between both treatment groups (adults, 2155 versus 2013, $p=0.856$; children, 1471 versus 786, $p=0.137$).

CONCLUSION:

Patients seeking homoeopathic treatment had a better outcome overall compared with patients on conventional treatment, whereas total costs in both groups were similar.