



## Is There Research to Support Homeopathy?

Yes! So why does the media frequently use the “soundbite” that “there is no research?

Some people think the only research that is valid are the randomized, double blinded, controlled (RCT) study. As the National Institute for Health notes in the quote below there are many kinds of research.

“Intervention studies can be placed on a continuum, with a progression from **efficacy** trials to **effectiveness** trials. **Efficacy** can be defined as the performance of an intervention under ideal and controlled circumstances, whereas **effectiveness** refers to its performance under 'real-world' conditions.”<sup>1</sup>

Research follows a developmental model. Various types of data collection emerge as “clinical evidence”, often case studies or multiple case studies suggesting modes of treatment that the experience of clinicians in the field have found, ameliorate the conditions they are encountering.

As a body of clinical experience develops, funding becomes available for researchers to pick up the ball and begin to set up ways of collecting systematic data to determine the effectiveness of a treatment. Randomized, double blinded, placebo control studies are considered the “gold standard” of epidemiologic studies. Actually according to a 2015 literature review of medical research:

“The majority of studies (71.2%) explicitly concluded that RCT samples **were not broadly representative of real-world patients and that this may limit the external validity** of the RCT.”<sup>2</sup>

In medicine there is a term called prescribing “off label”. This means doctors proficient in a particular field of medicine, have found a specific treatment which has not as yet been studied in a randomized controlled study, to be useful for a specific condition. They use it, trying to afford their patients relief from their illness before it has been studied in the laboratory. This has been the tradition in medicine for centuries, to see if we can use something others have found effective and help out patients.

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Research has always proceeded in a step wise fashion. Someone tries a treatment which in their clinical judgement they think will help. It works, they write about it, others try it, it works for many but not all, and finally it ends up in a laboratory to be “studied.” The process going from the clinical picture to the study of it—from effectiveness in the real world, to efficacy in the laboratory—should it work, is the process of collecting data. RCT’s start with treatment in the research environment and try to see if it could work for this condition-efficacy.

Homeopathy has two plus centuries of data which shows homeopathy is effective-it has worked in the real world, not only in the laboratory but in hundreds of cases.<sup>3</sup>

Since RCTs were introduced in the 1950’s, homeopathic practitioners have worked to both demonstrate effectiveness AND efficacy. In 2017, Iris Bell MD and her colleagues<sup>4</sup> have catalogued over 6000 pieces of homeopathic research including many RCT’s.

Pub Med<sup>5</sup>, the research tool medical people use to seek out research lists over 5,699 homeopathic studies.<sup>6</sup>

So next time someone trots out that old tired soundbite “there is no research,” just know that they are incorrect.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **A Primer on Effectiveness and Efficacy Trials - NCBI - NIH**  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3912314/>

<sup>2</sup> **A literature review on the representativeness of randomized controlled trial samples and implications for the external validity of trial results.** Kennedy-Martin et al, *Trials*. 2015; 16: 495.  
Published online 2015 Nov 3. doi: [10.1186/s13063-015-1023-4](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-015-1023-4)

<sup>3</sup> Annals Homeopathic Physician 1881-1892, Homeopathic Recorder 1886-1955. Homeopathic Links 2007-current date

<sup>4</sup> Iris Bell, MD, PhD et al Homeopathic Research Evidence Based 2017, [www.homeopathyusa.org](http://www.homeopathyusa.org)

<sup>5</sup> Pub Med on NIH.gov, Institutes, NCCIH 2018, Cam on Pub Med

<sup>6</sup> See National Center for Homeopathy, <http://www.homeopathycenter.org> for research on specific conditions helped by homeopathy.

<sup>7</sup> Homeopathic Research Institute <https://www.hri-research.org/resources/essentialevidence/>