

Prompted by the interview with Simon Stevens of NHS England on the Today Programme, on 31st March, the Society of Homeopaths deplores the lack of balance in the BBC's coverage of Homeopathy and urges you to review your approach to coverage of the subject.

During the Today interview, following wide-ranging discussion of issues around the future of the NHS, Sarah Montague suddenly threw in a question about the amount spent on Homeopathy within the NHS, evidently catching Mr Stevens unawares.

The annual budget of the NHS is approximately £110billion. Of this, £4million per year (0.0036 of the NHS budget) is spent on Homeopathy. This hardly justifies the unbalanced and hectoring approach from Sarah Montague.

We acknowledge that it is not always possible or necessary to achieve balance on a particular topic within a single programme but the BBC seems to have a consistent line across all of its platforms of opposition to, and disparagement of, Homeopathy. A recent example is a piece on the Health section of the BBC website in October 2016 by Nick Tiggie which displayed no balance at all and denigrated Homeopathy and Homeopaths with little or no space given to alternative views.

From these and other instances, it seems clear that the BBC has a biased attitude towards Homeopathy, which may be the result of relying too heavily on a small number of 'experts', who openly and persistently campaign against complementary and alternative medicine. These 'experts' operate in a similar way to climate change deniers, referring to a limited range of research, often of poor quality, to support their claims that there is 'no evidence for homeopathy'.

We look forward to BBC programmes which fulfill its mission to explain and provide balance and coverage of the positive effects of Homeopathy.

Mark Taylor
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Society of Homeopaths