Homeopaths ‘risking lives with bogus coronavirus treatments’

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One website claimed that homeopathy can be “very highly effective in treating flu, and Covid-19 is no exception”

Medical experts have condemned homeopaths they accuse of giving false hope to coronavirus victims by offering bogus treatments.

Across the country, hundreds of homeopathic practitioners have been identified using the pandemic to drive sales of “remedies” and consultations.

The Times built a database together with the Good Thinking Society, a pro-science charity, to identify practitioners selling virus-related products and services. The investigation uncovered a wide range of examples that experts say could place lives at risk.

Sage Homeopathy, a north London-based business, states on its website, that homeopathy can be “very highly effective in treating flu, and Covid-19 is no exception”.

It adds that in the past few weeks it has “treated the symptoms associated with this virus — high fever, dry persistent cough, difficult expectoration, intense muscle pain, chills, stabbing headache, loss of taste and smell, unquenchable thirst, relapsing symptoms and complete exhaustion with slow recovery”. The website states that fees are £25 a week for “all remedies and daily check-in by phone”.

The NHS advises that people should seek proper medical advice.

Over recent decades the Prince of Wales has consistently campaigned for homeopathic treatments. However, The Times understands that he did not receive homeopathic treatment when he contracted the virus.
Prince Charles is the patron of the Faculty of Homeopathy and once wrote a letter to the public titled “Science and homeopathy must work in harmony”.

Practitioners suggest a range of homeopathic treatments for coronavirus including phosphorus, bryonia and ipecac.

South Devon Homeopathy advises the plant aconite, for less severe symptoms, and arsenicum — highly diluted arsenic — “if the symptoms become more severe”.

Edzard Ernst, emeritus professor at Exeter University, warned that the public was being put at risk by the promotions. He said: “Such marketing is misleading, dishonest and endangers public health.

“To offer homeopathy for the treatment of or the prevention of coronavirus is unethical to the extreme.

“The Society of Homeopaths have the duty to forbid these things and protect the public; unfortunately, they also have a very poor track record for doing their duty.”

In a statement, the Good Thinking Society said that the Society of Homeopaths is failing to meet the standards required from it by the national regulator.

“Any responsible register — especially one which continues to enjoy the accreditation and conferred legitimacy of the government’s Professional Standards Authority — should make it absolutely clear that their registrants should not make any claims regarding coronavirus, and certainly should not be selling patients ineffective treatments during this crisis,” said Michael Marshall, project director at the Good Thinking Society.

The homeopaths advertising their services were approached for comment but had not responded by the time of publication.

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