

Britain: New Regulator for Alternative Medicine Soon

By Swaraaj Chauhan



The United Kingdom is poised to take a pioneering step this year by giving much-deserved recognition to alternative medicine that includes aromatherapy, reflexology, massage, nutrition, shiatzu, reiki, naturopathy, yoga, homoeopathy, cranial osteopathy and the Alexander and Bowen techniques. This major news is brought to us by **Nigel Hawkes, Health Editor, of The Times of London**. Hawkes adds that these therapies are to be regulated for the first time under a government-backed scheme to be established this year.

I am thrilled because I have been practising acupressure for the past two decades and Reiki for six years in India (and getting dramatic results in healing). "The new Natural Healthcare Council - which is being backed by the Prince of Wales - will be able to strike off errant or incompetent practitioners. It will also set minimum standards for practitioners to ensure that therapists are properly qualified.

"Patients will be able to complain to the council about practitioners and the new body will be modelled on the General Medical Council and other similar statutory bodies. Millions of Britons currently spend £130 million a year on complementary treatments and it is estimated that this will reach £200 million over the next four years.

"Research also shows that more than two thirds (68 per cent) of people in the UK believe that complementary medicine is as valid as conventional treatment. However, there have been long-standing concerns over its regulation. At present anyone can set themselves up as an acupuncturist, homoeopath, herbalist, or other complementary therapist. However, a poll for The Times found that three quarters of people assumed that anyone practising complementary therapy is trained and registered by a professional body.

"Although the scheme will initially be voluntary, it is hoped that all

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practitioners will be forced to join or lose business as the public will use the register as a guarantee of quality. The council will register only practitioners who are safe, have completed a recognised course, are insured and have signed up to codes of conduct.

"A number of high-profile cases in which therapists have assaulted clients have reached the courts in recent years. In 2000, a man claiming to be an aromatherapist was spared a jail sentence after being convicted of indecently assaulting a woman who came to him to treatment. An osteopath from Ipswich was jailed last February for seven and a half years after a series of sexual assaults.

"The work of setting up the council, which is likely to be finished by the spring, led by Dame Joan Higgins, has been funded by the Department of Health and it will follow the best-practice model set out by the department in its white paper on regulation, Trust, Assurance and Safety."

Photo courtesy Wikipedia: "This image depicts a pet dog receiving Reiki. Author: James Logan; Uploaded by Andy Beer with permission of the model. (The dog has not given explicit permission but doesn't look like he's going to get too stressed about anything.)

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Lynx —22 hours ago with 1 point

Homeopathy is a thoroughly discredited "alternative medicine", and it's shameful that it continues to be given credit it doesn't deserve.

I'm all for "alternative medicine" becoming part of mainstream medicine once it has passed the scientific vetting ALL treatments must pass. I appreciate the fact that many medical establishments are very full of themselves and will dismiss alternative medicine out of hand, but once you've been discredited, and homeopathy has been, you have no place in mainstream medicine.

More here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeopathy>

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