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The Role Of The Nurse Practitioner In The Use Of Homeopathy In Healthcare

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**THE ROLE OF THE NURSE PRACTITIONER
IN THE USE OF HOMEOPATHY IN HEALTHCARE**

An Evidence Based Practice Project Presented to the
Graduate Faculty
of Mississippi University for Women in
Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Nursing

by

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Graduate Committee Approval

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hereby approves her project as meeting partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
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Date 7/31/06

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my research project to my family. To my husband, Bobby, thank you for staying by my side through all of my scholastic endeavors. Thank you for your unfailing love and support. To my mother, thank you for first encouraging me to become a nurse. Without your support, I would not be where I am today. To my father, thank you for teaching me a good work ethic. To my grandfather, the late D.L. Mathis, thank you for your love. You always encouraged me in the most dismal of circumstances. Thank you for teaching me how to work hard and play hard. I will always love and miss you.

**THE ROLE OF THE NURSE PRACTITIONER IN THE
USE OF HOMEOPATHY IN HEALTHCARE**

Misty Mathis Harris, MSN(c), RN

Mississippi University for Women, 2006

Supervising Professor: Dr. Brenda Smith

Abstract

Homeopathy is the administration of diluted substances, derived from plants, minerals, or animal products, that would in a healthy person induce symptoms of the disease treated (Skinner, 1996). Samuel Hahnermann, the founder of homeopathy, insisted that homeopathy is the restoration of the bioenergetic field surrounding the life force (Skinner, 1996). The purpose of this project was to develop a nurse practitioner knowledgebase regarding the use of homeopathy. Martha Rogers' Theory of Unitary Human Beings served as the theoretical foundation for this clinical project and guided the systematic review of literature. The consideration of the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners is warranted according to the literature review. In order for nurse practitioners to practice evidence-based treatments, he/she must be aware of non-traditional and holistic treatment modalities.

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CHAPTER I

Dimensions of the Problem

The delivery of holistic healthcare by nurse practitioners (NPs) is emphasized in nearly all Masters level programs of study. NPs are encouraged to focus on the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental components of each patient. NPs are taught that each patient must be treated individually in order for wellness to occur.

Alternative and complementary medicine may prove to be an effective treatment for some patients; however, alternative and natural remedies are often not taught or even discussed in many programs of study. Much of the current debate regarding the use of alternative and complementary medicine is surrounded by misinformed perspectives (Gates, 1994). This results in misguided nursing practice which may not be based on research (Gates, 1994).

Problem Statement

Homeopathy is a type of healing therapy that began in the 1700's (O'Brien, 2002). It was started by Samuel Hahnemann, a respected German physician and chemist (O'Brien, 2002). Homeopathy requires enduring study, and is a scientific based practice (O'Brien, 2002); therefore,

homeopathy should be considered in order to provide holistic health care to populations.

Homeopathy requires consensus between the nurse practitioner and patient in regards to the use of homeopathy (Gates, 1994). This consensus should take precedence over any individual feelings concerning homeopathy (Gates, 1994). Often times, biased opinions of homeopathy are presented as fact (Newell, 1999). This 200 year old practice is frequently described with a negative connotation and consequently dismissed by many providers as being flawed science (Newell, 1999).

There is an obvious need for large population studies on homeopathy; however, these studies are often not possible due to nature of the therapy (Newell, 1999). Homeopathy treats a set of symptoms rather than a specific disease process (Newell, 1999). In example, 25 individual patients with the same primary complaint may receive 25 different therapies (Newell, 1999). If the primary complaint was gastroenteritis, factors such as "emotional status, quantity of thirst, type of diarrhea, specific abdominal complaints, and so on" (Newell, 1999) would be considered. Due to the abstract nature of this therapy, substantial studies have not been performed and are unlikely to be accurate if they were performed (Newell,

1999). Although this deficiency in evidence-based research may be viewed as an obstacle for the credibility of homeopathy, it presents a tremendous opportunity for the nursing profession to expand her knowledge base.

If the goal of nursing practice is to provide cost-effective, holistic, and quality healthcare, homeopathy may be the answer. Homeopathy is a holistic, natural, economical, and effective remedy with little to no side effects (Newell, 1999). Homeopathy may be a feasible option for some patients.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to assess healthcare literature concerning the role of the nurse practitioner (NP) in the use of homeopathy in healthcare. In order for NPs to practice in a holistic manner, they must be aware of complementary and alternative therapies. Although some patients may not entertain the idea of these therapies, other patients may achieve a state of wellness unattainable with traditional treatments. Above all, NPs must be informed providers. It is important that NPs remain well-versed regarding trends in healthcare, one being homeopathy.

Significance of the Study

Although there is a moderate amount of published literature regarding the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners, the amount of understanding, regarding homeopathy, within the nursing profession is minimal. Although a great deal of theoretical literature is in circulation, nominal research based studies have been performed to evaluate the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners. A computer search utilizing CINAHL, ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER, MEDLINE, and COCHRANE revealed the following information listed in Table 1.

Table 1**Summary of Literature Searches**

Search Terms	Number of Citations	Database
Homeopathy	1454	CINAHL
	691	Academic Search
	3055	Premier
	30	Medline
Use of Homeopathy	10	Cochrane
	15	CINAHL
	3055	Academic Search
	4113	Premier
Utilization of Homeopathy	1	Medline
	1	Cochrane
	1	CINAHL
	2	Academic Search
Homeopathy and Nurse Practitioners	8	Premier
	1	Medline
	9	Cochrane
	6	CINAHL

Note. CINAHL = Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, MEDLINE = Medical Literature Online, COCHRANE = Cochrane Library (Cochrane Database of Systematic Review, Cochrane Database of Abstracts of Review of Evidence, and Cochrane Clinical Trials Register).

If, in fact, there is a correlation between the use of homeopathy in healthcare and wellness, NPs will better serve their patients if they are informed on the practice of homeopathy. This literature review will allow NPs to determine if the use of homeopathy is something they would like to incorporate in to their practice.

Theoretical Foundation

Martha E. Rogers' theory of the Science of Unitary Human Beings was used as the theoretical foundation for this project. Rogers equates the basic science of nursing to the Science of Unitary Human Beings (George, 2003). Rogers defines the human being as a whole rather than a collection of parts (George, 2003). According to Rogers, the human being and the environment are inseparable energy fields which directly affect each other (George, 2003). The human being, in itself, is an energy field (George, 2003). Each field can be identified by a single wave like pattern occurring in a pandimensional world (George, 2003). The principles behind the Science of Unitary Human Beings are "resonancy or continuous change to higher frequency, helicy or unpredictable movement toward increasing diversity, and integrality or the continuous mutual process of the human field and the environmental field" (George, 2003).

Rogers addressed each of the four major concepts within the nursing profession including: human beings, environment, nursing, and health. George, 2003, summarized Rogers' findings as stated below:

Human beings are unitary persons, being irreducible, pandimensional energy fields identified by pattern and integral with the environment. Environment is also defined as an irreducible, pandimensional energy field that is identified by pattern and is integral with the human field. Rogers repeatedly emphasized that nursing is a noun that referred to the body of knowledge and area of study that is unique to this profession. However, she also emphasized that nursing is both a science and an art. She wrote eloquently and passionately of the role of nursing in society. Rogers viewed health as a value term. She stated "unitary human health signifies an irreducible human field manifestation" (90a, p. 10; 1994, p.248) and "disease and pathology are value terms applied when the human field manifests characteristics that may be deemed undesirable" (1992, p.33). Rogers believed that health is relative and infinite. She did not view health and illness as dichotomous, but as expressions of the life process.

Rogers insisted that in order for one to be able to apply her theory of Unitary Human Beings, a paradigm shift must first occur to facilitate application of the conceptual system (George, 2003). Rogers encouraged nurses to incorporate new worldviews with old worldviews (George, 2003).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

Homeopathy

Theoretical. Homeopathy is "a system of therapeutics based on the theory that like cures like. In practice, homeopaths dilute drugs with milk sugar in ratios of one to ten to achieve the smallest dose of a drug that seems necessary to control the symptoms in a patient and prescribe only one medication at a time" (Mosby, 1994).

Operational. According to Skinner, homeopathy is a system of holistic health care that requires practitioners to evaluate the complete person, assessing every characteristic of physical and emotional existence. Homeopathy is based on the law of similars. This law ascertains that "various compounds, taken in large amounts, will produce a specific set of symptoms that mimic the diseases the drug is used to treat. In the infinitesimal doses used by homeopathic practitioners, however, these remedies - all derived from natural substances - stimulate a person's self-healing mechanism" (Skinner, 2004). Homeopathy is the administration of diluted substances, derived from plants, minerals, or animal products, that would in a healthy person induce symptoms of the disease

treated (Skinner, 2004). Samuel Hahnermann, the founder of homeopathy, insisted that homeopathy is the restoration of the bioenergetic field surrounding the life force.

(Skinner, 2004).

Nurse Practitioner

Theoretical. "A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse with advanced academic and clinical experience, which enables him or her to diagnose and manage most common and many chronic illnesses, either independently or as part of a health care team. A nurse practitioner provides some care previously offered only by a physician and in most states has the ability to prescribe medications. Working in collaboration with a physician, a nurse practitioner provides high-quality, cost-effective and individualized care for the lifespan of patient's special needs" (The Nurse Practitioner Association, 2005).

Operational. Nurse practitioners are advanced practice nurses who are responsible for making independent and collaborative health care decisions (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002). NPs are consultants, educators, administrators, and researchers (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002). NPs are unique health care providers who engage in advanced practice in areas such as family, adult, pediatric, gerontologic, women's health, school

health, occupational health, emergency, neonatal and acute care (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002). NPs assess and manage medical and nursing problems (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002). NPs emphasize health promotion and maintenance, disease prevention, and management of acute and chronic diseases (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002). NPs function as health care providers and consultants within a variety of settings (American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 2002).

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following research questions were established:

1. Is homeopathy beneficial to the client?
2. How can the NP use homeopathy therapy in practice?

Delimitations

Literature was delimited, for the purpose of this integrative literature review, to the following:

1. Literature that was related to homeopathy
2. Literature that was available in the English language or translated into English abstracts.
3. Literature available through CINAHL, MEDLINE, COCHRANE Libraries, and ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER.

4. Literature that was available through the Mississippi University for Women Fant Memorial Library and the Interlibrary loan program.

Limitations

For the purpose of this investigation, the obtained information cannot be generalized beyond the scope of the research reviewed. Information obtained from the systematic literature review cannot be generalized beyond the scope of the research reviewed. The lack of nursing research, related to the role of the nurse practitioner in the use of homeopathy in healthcare, largely impacted the inability to generalize findings of the study.

Summary

Provision of cost-effective, quality, individualized, holistic health care is the main goal of advanced practice nursing. Nurse practitioners must be aware of different techniques to meet these demands. If provision of homeopathy is desired by a patient population, advanced training in this area of study may prove to be beneficial to the population.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This integrated literature review summarizes qualitative and quantitative data for the purpose of: establishing a nursing knowledgebase to promote evidence-based practice within the profession. This literature review will aid in the following: development of a research problem; orientation to the known and unknown; identification of any discrepancies within the research; determination of the need for duplicate studies; development of clinical skills to evaluate experimental research; detection of pertinent theoretical foundations within the research; recognition of appropriate designs and data collection methods for the study; detection of authorities in the discipline who could be used as a consultant throughout the research process; assistance in analysis of results of the research; development of implications and suggestions (Polit & Beck, 2004, p. 88). Literature reviewed totaled 12 references of 57. In this chapter, an overview of the literature is presented.

**An Overview of the Healthcare Literature
Regarding the Use of Homeopathy by Nurse Practitioners in
Healthcare**

Thomas Newell, a homeopathic nurse practitioner, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Nurse Practitioner* journal. He stated that he felt that a very biased view of homeopathy was presented in an April 1999 article. He felt as if the authors needed a better knowledge of homeopathy to prevent such a negative review (Newell, 1999).

Newell discussed the inappropriate use of an example of homeopathy that was presented in the 1999 article. He stated that poor representation of homeopathy and limited research contributes to the misunderstanding of the 200 year old practice (Newell, 1999). Newell stressed that there is not one "cure all" for patients, as the article insinuated (Newell, 1999). Many factors are considered before a remedy is prescribed (Newell, 1999). He claimed that holistic evaluation of a patient is essential in the homeopathic process (Newell, 1999).

Newell continued to discuss the reason for limited research on the practice of homeopathy. He stated that large population studies are almost impossible due to the holistic nature of the therapy (Newell, 1999). In addition, Newell stated that drug companies are unwilling to conduct

homeopathic studies due to the limited profits of the remedy (Newell, 1999).

Although this response by Newell was strictly his opinion, based on his clinical experience, the passion and dispute behind the practice of homeopathy was well demonstrated; however, no formal research, research design, or theoretical foundation was presented by Newell. A strength in Newell's response was his call for further investigation in the field of homeopathy. Opportunity for further research was indicated by his response.

A theory based article entitled, "The World According to Homeopathy," published in the United States (US) and indexed through CINAHL , presented several concepts for exploration (Skinner, 1996). The concepts of importance were homeopathy-history, nurse practitioners, plants and medicine, symptoms, and government regulations. Skinner's article was a peer reviewed journal article with case studies, tables, and charts. Martha Rogers' theory of Unitary Human Beings was the theoretical framework for this article.

One strength of the article was the implicit introduction to the history and practice of homeopathy. A weakness of the article was that it was filled with the author's personal opinions. Opportunity for the study

include encouragement towards incorporation of homeopathy into practice. Threats include limited usefulness due to the opinionated nature of the literature.

Key findings within this article involved the distinguishing characteristics between a conventional practice and a practice utilizing homeopathy. The following factors are evaluated before a homeopathic remedy is prescribed: chief complaint, medical history, personality, character, traumatic events, sensitivity to heat or cold, food and drink cravings, sleeping position, etc.. (Skinner, 1996). A typical interview lasts 1 ½ hours for an adult, and 45 minutes for a child.

A useful historical perspective of homeopathy was also presented. Homeopathy was discovered in 1784 by a German physician and chemist named Samuel Hahnemann (Skinner, 1996). He was convinced that he could no longer practice 18th century medicine ethically (Skinner, 1996). He began to translate *Cullen's Materia Medica*, a botanical medicine text, from English to German (Skinner, 1996). Following Hahnemann's study, he ascertained that there was in fact a "universal law of nature that like can be cured by like" (Skinner, 1996).

An additional journal article entitled, How Homeopathy Works, was published in *RN* in 1996 by Skinner. The article

was published in the US and indexed through CINAHL. Concepts explored were homeopathy, eczema-therapy, and migraine-therapy. This journal article was an anecdote with a case study and continuing education opportunities. Once again, Martha Rogers' theory of Unitary Human Beings was Skinner's theoretical foundation. One strength of this article was Skinner's review of quantitative research based literature. A weakness of this article was the limited explanation of data from these studies. Opportunities presented included increased understanding of the basic principles pertaining to homeopathy. Threats included decreased generalizability of findings due to individual case studies.

Key findings were: homeopathy evaluates the whole person rather than one specific disease process; effectiveness of homeopathic remedies may be limited in some populations; the Office of Alternative Medicine has been established by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate alternative practices such as homeopathy; the Office of Alternative Medicine is currently funding studies to evaluate the scientific validity of homeopathy; well designed clinical studies on acute diarrhea and allergic asthma have proven that there are benefits to using homeopathy for these conditions; a review of 107 controlled

trials found benefits in the use of homeopathy (Skinner, 1996).

Published in Nation's Health in November of 1997, the American Public Health association issued a statement concerning the validity of homeopathy. This article was indexed in Academic Search Premier and explored the following concepts: alternative medicine, homeopathy, material medica, and therapeutics. No theoretical foundation was presented in this article. Strengths of this article were reference to 89 studies regarding the use of homeopathy. Weaknesses were lack of discussion of these research findings. Opportunities arose for further investigation of these research findings. Threats include limited explanation of research design and methodology.

Key findings of this study indicated that homeopathic remedies appear to work, but the basis for their success is unknown (American Public Health Association, 1997). More research about homeopathy is warranted (American Public Health Association, 1997). Collective results of 89 studies, showed that homeopathy is twice as effective as placebo; however, when poorly designed studies were removed only 26 reports remained (American Public Health Association, 1997). In these 26 reports, homeopathy was

only considered to be 1.6 times more effective than placebo (American Public Health Association, 1997).

Fraser and Mason, (1994), presented an article in *Health* entitled "Homeopathy passes a test." The article was published in the US and indexed through Academic Search Premier. Terms of importance were diarrhea in children and homeopathy treatment. One strength of the article was the presentation of a double-blind research study conducted in Nicaragua. A weakness of the article was the decreased clarity in the assumptions of the author. An opportunity identified was the need for exploration of findings of the study in Nicaragua. One identified threat was decreased generalizability of findings within the US due to the study being conducted in Nicaragua.

Several key findings were expressed in the article. According to a solid study of Nicaraguan children with diarrhea, homeopathic treatment was proven beneficial (Fraser & Mason, 1994). Half of the children were given homeopathic medicine and the other half of the children were given placebo (Fraser & Mason, 1994). There was a 20% reduction in the duration of the diarrhea in the children who received homeopathic remedies (Fraser & Mason, 1994). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published these findings in the American Medical Journal of Pediatrics

(Fraser & Mason, 1994). Although the AAP continued to discourage the use of alternative remedies, the academy did encourage readers not to ignore the results of the study (Fraser & Mason, 1994).

A journal article entitled, "Therapists face tighter controls," published in *Nursing Standard* explored the terms alternative medicine, nurse and patient, nurse practitioners, nursing law and legislation, and therapeutics. The article was published in the US and indexed through Academic Search Premier. Strengths of the article included encouragement towards regulatory bodies for alternative therapies (Nursing Standard, 2005). Weaknesses of the article included decreased applicability of information by American practitioners due to the article concerning alternative therapies in the United Kingdom. Opportunities for development of alternative therapy regulatory bodies were identified in this article. Threats within this article were decreased generalizability of information.

After reviewing this article, it was found that tighter monitoring of alternative therapies in Great Britain is in progress (Nursing Standard, 2005). The Prince of Wales's Foundation has donated one million pounds to establish regulatory bodies for practitioners providing

therapies such as homeopathy, aromatherapy, and reflexology. All specialties will have their own regulatory body in which safety and quality will be managed. These measures have been taken in order to ensure quality alternative therapies by competent providers (Nursing Standard, 2005).

Siviglia, 1993, wrote an article entitled "Nature's Way." The article was published in the US and indexed through Academic Search Premier. Key terms of interest were homeopathy, material medica and therapeutics, and sports medicine. This article discussed the use of homeopathic medicines for strains, sore muscles, bruising, stiffness, and torn ligaments (Siviglia, 1993). Many athletes are seeking homeopathic remedies for common athletic injuries (Siviglia, 1993). Many of the remedies listed in Table 2 are available at health food stores (Siviglia, 1993).

!

Table 2***Musculoskeletal Homeopathic Remedies***

Signs and Symptoms	Homeopathic Remedy
Sprains	bryonia
Stiffness, aches and torn ligaments	rhus toxicodendron
Pain worsened with movement	ruta graveolens
Pain of a fracture	eupatorium perfoliatum
Healing of fractures after the bone has been set	symphyturn
Bee stings	ledum
Generalized pain	valerian root or capsicum
Prevention of infections	calendula

Note. Information obtained from Siviglia, 1993.

Weede & Hoang, 2005, wrote an article entitled "The Homeopathy Guide." The article was published in the US and indexed through Academic Search Premier. The article was published in *Natural Health* and explored the terms allergy,

alternative medicine, chronic diseases, homeopathy, and immunologic diseases (Weede & Hoang, 2005). Weede and Hoang stated that the practice of homeopathy focuses on the cure of many acute and chronic diseases. These diseases include, but are not limited to, earaches, colds, flu, allergies, migraines, fibromyalgia, arthritis, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, and chronic fatigue (Weede & Hoang, 2005).

Homeopathic research has been inconsistent. Some results have shown that homeopathy is no more effective than placebo and other results have been more positive (Weede & Hoang, 2005). The American Medical Association (AMA) does not approve the use of homeopathy, but does not reject the remedy either (Weede & Hoang, 2005). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does recognize homeopathic treatments as drugs; however, the FDA is not required to evaluate the remedies for safety and effectiveness (Weede & Hoang, 2005). This is because the very weak dilutions of homeopathic substances are not considered to be likely to produce harm (Weede & Hoang, 2005). Although the FDA does not regulate homeopathic remedies, the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States (HPUS) do provide regulation of the substances (Weede & Hoang, 2005). According to HPUS, adequate verification in the form of controlled studies or clinical experience must be present

in order for a homeopathic remedy to be approved (Weede & Hoang, 2005). The standards for approval are: strength, quality, purity, and packaging (Weede & Hoang, 2005).

Weede and Hoang (2005) presented constitutional types of patients based on "family and personal history, physical appearance, personality, temperament, food likes and dislikes, fears, emotional states, and responses to stress and environmental factors." See Table 3 for examples of these constitutional types. In order to be certain of a patient's constitutional type, consultation by a homeopath is necessary (Weede and Hoang, 2005).

Table 3

Examples of Constitutional Types

Constitutional Type	Traits	Appearance	Food Likes	Key Uses
Calcium carbohydrate	Shy, contemplative, healthy, diligent, may be mildly depressed when ill, afraid of failure, prone to worry	Good appetite may lead to weight gain and tiredness, pale complexion with large pores	Sweet, sour, starchy foods; cold drinks and ice cream; eggs and oysters; prone to odd cravings	Anxiety, menstrual problems, digestive disorders, joint and bone pain
Ignatia	Usually female, sensitive, artistic, cultured; high-strung, high ideals; faults self when things go wrong; difficulty expressing emotions, especially grief; dislikes crowds	Usually thin, dark-haired, possible circles under eyes, strained expression, blinks or sighs a lot	Sour foods, dairy products, coffee (but upset by it), bread	Depression and mood swings, headaches, insomnia

Lachesis	Insightful creative, ambitious, egocentric, jealous in relationships, resist commitment, likes neck and throat uncovered	Usually freckled redheads, possibly overweight, bloated appearance; may also be dark-haired, lean, and energetic	Sour and starchy foods, alcohol; upset by wheat and hot drinks	Menopause, circulatory problems, left-sided ailments
Sulfur	Intellectual, belligerent, critical of minor points, may give time and money generously, may be a male executive with lots of ideas, surrounded by clutter	Either plump and red-faced or lean and lanky with a slouch; dry, course hair and dry rough skin; looks untidy	Sweet, fatty, spicy, sour, and raw foods; alcohol; dislikes eggs, milk and hot beverages	Skin conditions like eczema, digestive complaints and stress

Note. Information in Table 3 obtained directly from Weede & Hoang, 2005.

Vickers and Smith (2005) performed a review of research entitled, "Homeopathic Oscillococtinum for Preventing and Treating Influenza and Influenza-Like Syndromes." This study was published in the US and indexed through The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Data

extraction and assessment for methodological quality were used as data collection and analysis methods. Variables of interest were influenza, oscillococcinum, homeopathy, respiratory tract, infection, cough, virus, and fever (Vickers & Smith, 2005). Three prevention trials (N=2265) and four treatment trials (N=1194) were evaluated (Vickers & Smith, 2005). Strengths of the study were large sample sizes. A weakness of the study was: there was only sufficient information to complete data extraction fully on two studies. Opportunities for further studies were presented upon review of the study; however, the data was not strong enough in the study to make recommendation for the use of oscillococcinum (Vickers & Smith, 2005). This study ascertained that homeopathic oscillococcinum does not prevent influenza, but may shorten the duration of the illness (Vickers & Smith, 2005). More research is needed (Vickers & Smith, 2005).

Smith (2003) presented a series of reviews of labor induction and cervical ripening using homeopathy, entitled "Homeopathy for induction of labour." The review was published in the US and indexed through The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Key terms of interest were homeopathy, cervical ripening, induction of labor, and caulophyllum (Smith, 2003). The review, (N=133), involved

evaluation of two randomized controlled trials with two-staged methods of data extraction (Smith, 2003).

Strengths of the study were placebo controlled and double blind trials (Smith, 2003). One weakness of the review, according to Smith, was the low quality of the study. Opportunities presented were the need for higher quality studies on this subject (Smith, 2003). Threats included lack of evidence to recommend the use of homeopathy as a method of induction (Smith, 2003). Based on the review of this literature, there is not enough evidence to recommend the use of homeopathy to induce labor (Smith, 2003). Evaluations of homeopathic therapies for the induction of labor are needed (Smith, 2003).

Huebscher, (2000), published an article entitled "Homeopathy: Let Likes Be Cured by Likes, Part II" in *Nurse Practitioner Forum*. This article was published in the US and indexed through Interlibrary Loans/Fant Memorial Library/Mississippi University for Women (MUW). Huebscher's work was an expert peer reviewed journal article.

General concepts of importance were: homeopathic certification, title, organizations, and nurse practitioners in homeopathy. Strengths of the article were inclusion of a clear definition of homeopathy and certification requirements. Weaknesses included increased

complexity of certification requirements. Perceived opportunities included greater understanding regarding credentialing of homeopathic providers. Threats included the need for additional clarification of certifications.

Huebscher (2000) defined homeopathy as "a system of medicine based on the principle that like cures like." Homeopathy is based on the theory that any substance that has the ability to create specific symptoms, may in fact, cure the previously existent symptom or disease (Huebscher, 2000). Homeopathy, essentially, promotes health by amplifying the body's natural defense mechanisms.

There are several homeopathic certifications, titles, and organizations within the US (Huebscher, 2000). Huebscher (2000) stated that the Council of Homeopathic Certification (CHC) requires satisfactory completion of a written and oral examination in order to receive a CCH (Certificate in Classical Homeopathy). Huebscher goes on to say that the North American Society of Homeopaths (NASH) requires all members to receive this certification before obtaining RSHom (Registered Society of Homeopaths North America) credentials. NASH requires: completion of 500 hours of training in classical homeopathy; or an apprenticeship of 2,000 hours of study within three to six years; or completion of at least four years of homeopathic

practice and/or training and experience (Heubscher, 2000).

See Table 4 for a complete listing of credentials and requirements.

Table 4

Credentials and Requirements

Credentials	Abbreviations	Requirements	Education and Training
Certificate in Classical Homeopathy	CCH	Required by the North American Society of Homeopaths (NASH) to be a member	500 hours of training in classical homeopathy, completion of apprenticeship of 2,000 hours within three to six years, or completion of at least four years of homeopathic practice or a combination of training and experience
Registered Society of Homeopaths North America	RSHom (NA)	Must pass CCH examination	Open to persons without credential in other professions i.e. nursing, medicine, naturopathy
Diplomate of the Homeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians	DHANP	General membership is open to anyone interested in homeopathy; Board certification membership is open to licensed naturopathic	Degree from a four year accredited naturopathic medical college approved by the American Association of

		physicians (NPs) who have met homeopathic requirements; must pass a written and oral HANP exam	Naturopathic Physician (AANP); a minimum of 250 classroom hours of homeopathic education, 100 hours of preceptorship in an approved setting
Diplomate of homeotherapeutics	DHt	Available to medical and osteopathic physicians and dentists; granted by the American Board of Homeotherapeutics (ABHt)	Must pass a written and oral examination; three years of homeopathic practice; minimum of 150 hours of approved homeopathic education credits; experience with 10 chronic patients who have been treated for a minimum of one year; unquestionable moral and professional standards to which two members of the ABHt have attested

Note. The information in Table 4 was directly obtained from Heubscher, 2000.

Lia Bello, a nurse practitioner who has been practicing homeopathy for 25 years and certified in

homeopathy since 1995, stated that it is important to know when an allopathic or homeopathic workup on a patient is needed (Heubscher, 2000). She recommended increased credentialing and research within the field in order to promote recognition (Heubscher, 2000). Bello, writes of the significant time required to perform an adequate homeopathic evaluation (Heubscher, 2000). She stated that the preliminary evaluation requires about 1 ½ to two hours for an adult and about one hour for children (Heubscher, 2000). Bello related traditional charges for homeopathic services. See Table 5 for these listings.

Table 5

Traditional Homeopathic Charges

Type of visit	Charges
Initial adult homeopathic evaluation	\$335
Initial child homeopathic evaluation	\$225
Return visits	\$55 to \$95
Acute visit	\$55

Note. Information directly derived from Heubscher, 2000.

O'Brien, 2002, wrote "Healing with homeopathy. An Introduction to Basic Tenets." This journal article was published in *Advance for Nurse Practitioners* in the US and indexed in MEDLINE. Key terms of interest were nurse practitioners, homeopathy, primary health, evidence-based medicine (O'Brien, 2002). Strengths of the study included

encouragement towards the incorporation of homeopathy into practice. Weakness included the opinion based nature of the article. Opportunities included the encouragement towards lifelong homeopathic study. Weakness included decreased generalizability of findings.

O'Brien, a family nurse practitioner who has incorporated homeopathy into her practice for eight years, recommends integrated practice (O'Brien, 2002). She stated that the integration of homeopathy into practice is challenging but also rewarding (O'Brien, 2002). She stressed the importance of lifelong study in the field of homeopathy (O'Brien, 2002). O'Brien stated that the AMA officially opposes homeopathy; however, she also stated that a poll of physicians belonging to AMA revealed that 49% were interested in homeopathy (O'Brien, 2002). O'Brien stated that traditional providers may find benefit from incorporating homeopathy into their practice or by referral of patients to homeopathic providers (O'Brien, 2002).

An article entitled, "Homeopathy Effects Similar to Placebo," was published in the US in a journal called *Nurses' Drug Alert*. This article was obtained by an Interlibrary Loan from Fant Memorial Library at MUW. Meta-analysis of placebo-controlled trials found the effects of homeopathic medicine to be insignificant when compared with

placebo (Shang, Huwiler-Muntener, Nartey, 2005). In this study, a homeopathic remedy was compared to a conventional treatment for the same disease process (Shang, 2005). All trials were of parallel-group design and random assignment (Shang, 2005). 110 homeopathy trials were identified and matched to conventional trials (Shang, 2005). Clinical topics investigated were respiratory tract infections, pollinosis and asthma, obstetrics and gynecology, pollinosis and asthma, surgery and anesthetics, and gastroenterology (Shang, 2005).

Strengths of this study were that homeopathy was considered of modest benefit when trials of higher methodologic quality were evaluated; however, high quality trials of conventional methods of treatment revealed more significant outcomes (Shang, 2005). Weaknesses of the study were that only 19 percent of the homeopathy trials and 8 percent of the conventional-medicine trials were of exceptional quality (Shang, 2005). The necessity for higher quality research was indicated after evaluation of this review. Threats included the visualization of homeopathy by the consumer as deceptive due to the lack of evidence-based practice.

Summary

Homeopathy is a time tested remedy that has been practiced for over 200 years; however, gaps in evidence-based research prevailed throughout the literature review. It is essential that medical treatment is guided by evidence based-research; therefore, implications for practice may be limited.

Deficiencies in evidence-based research presented a tremendous opportunity for the expansion of the knowledgebase of nursing by further research. The nature of the care provided by NPs fosters an ideal environment for further research within the field of homeopathy. Nurse practitioners are encouraged to provide preventive, holistic, cost-effective, and quality healthcare. These concepts are the foundation behind the practice of homeopathy. The desired research, regarding the use of homeopathy, could be initiated by nurse practitioners in this field of study.

CHAPTER III

Design and Methodology

This chapter will present the precise parameters applied within this research project. The method of research was that of an integrated literature review. The approach, literature selection, and analysis procedure is detailed in this chapter.

Approach

An integrated literature review, which is a review that accumulates inclusive data on a topic, considers evidence, and amalgamates data for deduction, was used for this study (Polit & Beck, 2004). This investigation was an evidence-based methodical assessment (Polit & Beck, 2004). An integrative literature review examined research on a particular concept of importance, placed the research problem in an appropriate perspective, and identified gaps and flaws in preceding studies. The identification of these flaws were expressed in order to substantiate innovative research (Polit & Beck, 2004). A summary of the current literature regarding the role of the nurse practitioner in the use of homeopathy was provided.

Literature Selection Procedure

A search of CINAHL, MEDLINE, the COCHRANE Library, and Academic Search Premier databases was performed in order to

obtain pertinent literature regarding the role of the nurse practitioner in the use of homeopathy. The reference list of each significant article was then reviewed in order to obtain further information. Articles were chosen based on the minimal incorporation of at least one applicable variable of interest.

The systematic review was initiated by first exploring CINAHL. Next, MEDLINE and the Cochrane database were explored. Then, Academic Search Premier was searched. After appropriate articles were identified, journal articles were requested through MUW and The University of Alabama libraries, via internet database and interlibrary loans. In order to provide a thorough review, data reviewed was not limited to nursing literature.

All references considered in this review were appropriate and significant to this analysis of literature. All data was acquired from scholarly journals. The evidence-based practice method was initiated by utilization of the following steps (Straus, Richardson, Glasziou, & Haynes, 2005, p.3-4):

1. Synthesis of information into research questions.
2. Identification of the best evidence that answered the questions.

3. Critical appraisal of the evidence for validity, impact, and applicability.
4. Assimilation of the critical appraisal with clinical capability and unique characteristics of the patient.
5. Assessment of the efficacy in the execution of the previous steps.

Literature Analysis Procedure

Data obtained in the systematic literature review was scrutinized in order to determine the significance of the conclusions as related to the clinical problems. The existent body of knowledge regarding the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners is presented and discussed in Chapter four.

Summary

An integrated literature review was used for this research project. CINAHL, MEDLINE, Academic Search Premier, and the Cochrane Library were searched in order to provide this integrated literature review. After the searches were completed, findings were synthesized. Chapter four discusses the conclusions of the review.

CHAPTER IV

Knowledgebase Findings and Practice-Based Application

The purpose of this chapter is to synthesize findings from the systematic literature review and to present the resulting knowledgebase of literature. Significant aspects of this review will be presented within this chapter. Conclusions, implications, and suggestions for practice will be presented.

Knowledgebase Findings

A systematic literature review of CINAHL, MEDLINE, Academic Search Premier, and Cochrane Library was performed. 12 documents were reviewed and incorporated into this literature review. Two research questions were presented in Chapter One and will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

Research Question One

Research question one asked: Is homeopathy beneficial to the client? Literature searches for variables such as homeopathy, use of homeopathy, utilization of homeopathy, and homeopathy and nurse practitioners yielded many results; however, a large portion of this literature was not pertinent to my project. In order to limit my results, literature pertaining to homeopathy and the nurse practitioner and the use of homeopathy were considered for

this study. Searches for these two topics yielded 29 citations; however, only 24 of these were available for review of which 12 were discussed in this literature review. CINAHL, MEDLINE, Academic Search Premier, and the Cochrane Library were used to obtain this literature. After thorough review of the acquired literature, deficiencies in the amount and quality of data-based research were identified. Thus, the need for further research on the use of homeopathy was indicated. See Table 6 for the characteristics of citations reviewed.

Table 6
Characteristics of Citations Reviewed

Citation	Type	Database
Vickers & Smith, 2005	Data-based Systematic Literature Review	Cochrane Library
Citation	Data-based Systematic Literature Review	Academic Search Premier
Fraser & Mason, 1994	Data-based Literature Review	Academic Search Premier
Nursing Standard, 2005	Theory-based Article	Academic Search Premier
Siviglia, 1993	Theory-based Article	Academic Search Premier
O'Brien, 2002	Theory-based journal article	MEDLINE
Shang, Huwiler- Muntener & Nartey, et al, 2005	Data-based Systematic Literature Review	Fant Memorial Library Interlibrary Loan
Huebscher, 2000	Theory-based journal article	Fant Memorial Library Interlibrary Loan
Weede & Hoang, 2005	Theory-based journal article	Academic Search Premier
Newell, Glisson, Crawford, & Street, 1999	Theory-based journal article	CINAHL
Skinner, 1996	Theory-based journal article	CINAHL

Note. Total number of citations reviewed = 11

Research Question Two

Research question two asks: How can the NP use homeopathy therapy in practice? Based on the articles reviewed, homeopathy can be integrated into primary care practice by nurse practitioners. In order to directly provide homeopathic remedies, the NP would have to receive additional training in the field of homeopathy; however, if the NP did not wish to become certified to provide homeopathy, referral to a homeopath could also be beneficial to the patient.

NPs may be able to provide cost-efficient, quality, holistic, preventive, and effective healthcare by using homeopathic remedies. Further research should be conducted on the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners. Continued research on this subject would help expand the knowledgebase of nursing. See Table 7 for characteristics of citations reviewed.

Table 7**Characteristics of Citations Reviewed**

Citations	Type	Database
Skinner, 1996	Theory-based journal article	CINAHL
O'Brien, 2002	Theory-based journal article	MEDLINE
Shang et al., 2005	Data-based Systematic Literature Review	Fant Memorial Library Interlibrary Loan
Huebscher, 2000	Theory-based journal article	Fant Memorial Library Interlibrary Loan
Weede & Hoang, 2005	Theory-based journal article	Academic Search Premier
Newell, Glisson, Crawford, & Street, 1999	Theory-based journal article	CINAHL
Skinner, 1996	Theory-based journal article	CINAHL

Note. Total number of citations reviewed = 7

Practice-Based Application

Nurse practitioners can become certified in homeopathy by receiving additional training. Patients with common illnesses such as diarrhea, vomiting, headaches, asthma, eczema, and ear infections may experience cure of and/or lessening of disease manifestations. Although NPs not certified in homeopathy may not be able to provide direct homeopathic remedies for these problems, referral to a certified homeopath may provide relief or cure to the patient.

Research Question One

Research question one asks: Is homeopathy beneficial to the client? According to the literature, deficiencies in research regarding homeopathy are prevalent; therefore, current recommendations for the use of homeopathy are not for or against the therapy. Due to many discrepancies in the literature, the need for further research is indicated; therefore, practice based application is limited.

Research Question Two

Research question two asks: How can the NP use homeopathy therapy in practice? Practice-based applications regarding the use of Homeopathy by NPs are also limited. This is due to the lack of research and uncertainty surrounding homeopathy.

Homeopathic remedies are not regulated by the FDA, but are regulated by the HPUS. The FDA does not regulate the substances because they believe that homeopathic remedies are diluted to a degree in which they would cause not harm; therefore, many homeopaths believe that this fact proves that homeopathy may be used without fear of causing harm.

Summary

Homeopathy is a 200 year old remedy that many deem effective and some ineffective; however, most agree that homeopathy is not harmful. High quality research studies on homeopathy are not prevalent due to the obscure nature of the treatment. The need for further high quality research on the use of homeopathy and the use of homeopathy by NPs is significant.

CHAPTER V

Evidence-Based Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this systematic literature review was to provide meticulous investigation of the role of the NP in the use of homeopathy in healthcare. Based upon the literature review, there is a great need for further high quality research to be performed in this area. Although there was a notable deficiency in quality research on this topic, homeopathy did prove to be a topic in which NPs should be aware; however, implications for practice are limited.

Many patients or parents of ill children desire options other than traditional treatment (O'Brien, 2002). Many cases can be treated effectively with homeopathic therapy or a combination of homeopathic and conventional therapies (O'Brien, 2002). The mother with the colicky baby, the two year old with chronic ear infections, or the 15 year old with signs of bipolar disorder may all benefit drastically from the use of homeopathic remedies (O'Brien, 2002). Homeopathic remedies may successfully treat many illnesses that do not respond to conventional therapies (O'Brien, 2002).

This chapter will summarize the integrated literature review. Findings will be clarified and conclusions will be presented. In addition, limitations of the review and suggestions for further research will be discussed.

Summary of the Investigation

The purpose of this investigation was to explore the literature regarding the role of the NP in the use of homeopathy in healthcare. Literature related to the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners was limited. Rogers' theory of Unitary Human Beings served as the framework for the investigation. Interruption in the literature, with reference to the role of the NP in the use of homeopathy in healthcare, were present; therefore, the need for further research on this subject was identified.

The systematic review of literature on this subject exposed limited quality research on the benefits of homeopathy as well as the use of homeopathy by NPs in healthcare. The official position of the AMA, in regards to homeopathy, is that they do not reject nor approve homeopathy. This nature of ambivalence was prevalent throughout the literature review.

Agreements that NPs are in an ideal position to provide holistic, quality, cost-efficient, preventive, and effective healthcare were prevalent throughout the

literature review. NPs who actively prescribe homeopathic remedies advocate for the use of homeopathy, in order to provide care in the above stated manner.

Although homeopathic NPs advocate for the use of homeopathy, they also reveal the importance of extensive training in order to provide quality homeopathic care. O'Brien, 2002, stated that "Homeopathy requires lifelong study." Although any provider with prescriptive privileges can prescribe homeopathic remedies, practicing homeopathic NPs recommend that treatment only be given by certified homeopaths.

Interpretation of Findings with Conclusions

Findings based upon this integrated literature review revealed numerous inconsistencies. A portion of the literature supported homeopathic remedies while the other portion refuted the effectiveness of the therapy; therefore, no formal conclusions can be made at this time to recommend or dissuade providers regarding the use of homeopathy. The obscure nature of these findings indicate the need for further research regarding the benefits of homeopathy and the use of homeopathy by NPs.

Research Question One

Research question one asked, "Is homeopathy beneficial to the client?" Very little scientific research has

actually been performed to evaluate the efficacy of homeopathy (Roden, 1994). The efficacy of homeopathy has been difficult to prove through high quality double blind experimental procedures (Roden, 1994). Various results have been derived from performed studies; therefore, a definitive position regarding the benefit of homeopathy has yet to be established. Due to this discrepancy, the need for further research regarding the benefit of the use of homeopathy is implied.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "How can the NP use homeopathic therapy in practice?" According to some literature, homeopathic therapy can be used by nurse practitioners to provide quality, cost-effective, preventive, holistic, and effective care. Many practicing homeopathic NPs recommend the use of homeopathy either alone or in combination with conventional treatment; however, these recommendations are opinion based and generally not the result of any formal documentation or study. Therefore, the need for further documentation and research is needed.

Many individual case studies were presented throughout the literature review which revealed the positive effects of homeopathic remedies; however, these individual case

studies cannot be generalized to all. These types of discrepancies prevent formal recommendations regarding the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners.

Limitations

Limitations of the review include the inconsistencies throughout the literature review as well as limited high quality research studies. Also, the potential for literature selection bias was possible due to the small volume of available high quality research studies.

Implications and Recommendations

The exploration of the literature, in reference to the role of the NP in the use of homeopathy in healthcare, resulted in implications and recommendations focused upon nursing theory, nursing research, advanced practice nursing, nurse practitioner education, and health care policy. Each of the above listed subjects will be discussed.

Nursing Theory

Martha Rogers' theory of Unitary Human Beings was used as the theoretical foundation for this study. Rogers' theory identified unitary man as "an irreducible, four dimensional energy field identified by pattern and manifesting characteristics that are specific to the whole and which cannot be predicted from knowledge of the parts"

(Skinner, 1996). This theory is similar to the homeopathic theory being that, "a self-sustaining, spirit-like vital force animates the organism and, in health, maintains all parts of this living being in harmony" (Skinner, 1996). No additional recommendations for theoretical development were identified.

Nursing Research

In order to provide evidence-based care, nursing research is essential. Few recommendations for practice were made regarding the use of homeopathy by nurse practitioners. This was due to the limitation of high quality double-blind research studies on the topic. NPs should be aware of complementary and alternative practices and have a clear understanding of their efficacy; therefore, further research regarding the benefits of homeopathy and the use of homeopathy by NPs is recommended.

Advanced Nursing Practice

The goal of the NP is to provide quality, cost-effective, holistic, preventive, and effective health care. If homeopathy is eventually proven to be beneficial as a result of further research, NPs may be able to provide the nature of care desired by the profession and patient by the use of homeopathy. At this time, further research will

dictate the implications and recommendations for advanced nursing practice.

Nurse Practitioner Education

Many graduate level nursing programs are reluctant to incorporate or do not incorporate the study of alternative or complementary therapies. This is often because many of these therapies are not approved for use by the FDA or other regulatory bodies; however, it is the responsibility of NPs to be aware of current health care trends, alternative, and complementary therapies. Although these therapies may not be officially recommended, appropriate teaching regarding these practices should be provided. This recommendation for nurse practitioner education may create a more holistic and informed approach to the provision of health care.

Health Policy

Several regulatory bodies exist within the field of homeopathy. It is recommended that homeopathic practitioners are certified in the field of study; however, in reality, anyone with prescriptive privileges can prescribe homeopathic remedies. Currently, there are no regulations requiring certification in order to practice homeopathy. NPs who work in collaboration with physicians must receive permission from his/her collaborating

physician in order to provide homeopathic services. Recommendations regarding the establishment of health policy requiring certification to practice homeopathy is needed.

Summary

This chapter offered conclusions, implications, and recommendations that were derived from this integrative literature review. Implications and recommendations for nursing theory, nursing research, advanced practice nursing, nurse practitioner education, and health policy were presented as were limitations of the review and interpretation of the findings.

In order to develop a NP knowledgebase regarding the role of the nurse practitioner in the use of homeopathy in healthcare, this Evidence Based Practice (EBP) project was performed. The research questions asked were: (a) Is homeopathy beneficial to the client? (b) How can the NP use homeopathy therapy in practice?

A Boolean computer search of CINAHL, MEDLINE, Academic Search Premier, and Cochrane Library was performed in order to provide this systematic review. Medical and Nursing literature was reviewed in order to identify data-based, theory-based, and randomized controlled trials.

Martha Rogers' theory of Unitary Human Beings was used as the theoretical foundation for this project. This theoretical foundation directed the systematic review of literature. Literature reviewed totaled 12 citations, which represented an additional 57 references.

A large amount of literature has been written regarding the use of homeopathy; however, a large portion of the debate is based on little knowledge concerning the therapy (Gates, 1994). Due to this deficiency in knowledge, advanced practice nursing may not adequately provide evidence-based medical care (Gates, 1994). Because of the controversial nature of the practice of homeopathy and conflicting research, no recommendations for the use of homeopathy can be made. The need for further high quality research is needed on this subject. It is also important that NPs are aware of current health care trends as well as alternative and complementary practices such as homeopathy.

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