

Homeopathy Controversy: History and Present

Clara Beaumont

École Nouvelle des Sciences Appliquées, Lyon, France

Received : 11/01/2026 ; Accepted : 28/06/2026 ; Published : 02/08/2026

Abstract:

After its creation by Samuel Hahnemann in the late 18th century, homeopathy sowed discord among medical and scientific communities for quite some time. Based on the principle that "like cures like," homeopathy employs highly diluted medications to stimulate the body's inherent healing abilities. Despite its widespread use and enthusiastic backing, particularly as a supplementary medication, its effectiveness is still a matter of heated controversy. Reflecting on the development of homeopathy, its first successes, and the increasing wave of skepticism and scientific inquiry. fundamental disputes surrounding homeopathy, encompassing concerns regarding its efficacy, the role of the placebo effect, and the challenges of conducting comprehensive scientific investigations on homeopathy. In addition, the modern perspective on homeopathy, which considers patient stories, recent studies, and the evolving relationship between homeopathy and conventional treatment. Homeopathy may be considered an aspect of integrative medicine due to its continued popularity despite several critiques and its usage in some healthcare settings. further research is necessary to fill our gaps in knowledge on homeopathy's efficacy and its place in contemporary healthcare, with an eye toward balancing scientific rigor with patient-centered methods.

Keywords: Homeopathy, controversy, placebo effect, scientific scrutiny, Samuel Hahnemann, efficacy

Introduction:

There is some controversy about Samuel Hahnemann's homeopathic medical practice, which he founded in the late 18th century. Homeopathy, which adheres to the principle of "like cures like," asserts that by stimulating the vital force with very diluted substances, it can cure illnesses and return the body to a state of harmony. Despite homeopathy's widespread use and strong support among certain patient groups, it has been the object of considerable skepticism and criticism, particularly over its scientific validity and therapeutic effectiveness. During the 19th century, homeopathy rose to prominence as a medical system as people sought alternatives to the prevalent harsh and sometimes ineffective therapies of the time. Nonetheless, homeopathy was increasingly questioned as modern medicine advanced. The active chemicals in homeopathic remedies are sometimes diluted to the point where some doubt their efficacy. In addition, they attribute any beneficial effects that people may have to a placebo effect. There is ongoing debate on the efficacy of homeopathy, and everyone from medical professionals and academics to patients and the broader public has an opinion. Nowadays, homeopathy is often utilized as an additional treatment in contemporary medicine, particularly when conventional treatments have not worked. The effectiveness of homeopathy in treating stress-related disorders, allergies, and chronic pain has been confirmed by both patients and

homeopaths. Significant challenges, such as the lack of conclusive scientific evidence and the difficulty in completely assessing individualized treatments, prevent their broader adoption within the medical establishment. By delving into the past and present of homeopathy, we may learn about its controversial origins, assess the arguments for and against its effectiveness, and comprehend its role in modern integrative medicine. This research seeks to provide a balanced evaluation of homeopathy's role in the evolving healthcare system by analyzing its previous and current accomplishments. It stresses the importance of further studies to determine its therapeutic efficacy and role in patient care.

The Origins and Evolution of Homeopathy

In the latter half of the 18th century, Samuel Hahnemann was the pioneer in the field of alternative medicine by establishing homeopathy. After that, it went from being a controversial new technique to becoming a well-liked alternative therapy that has millions of adherents all over the world when it was first introduced. Over the course of several decades, homeopathy has been the subject of intense debate among medical professionals due to the fact that it has a mixed track record of success and controversy.

1. Origins and Principles of Homeopathy

Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, introduced homoeopathy in the late 17th century. Bloodletting and purging were common but ineffectual therapies during Hahnemann's period, therefore he sought a more compassionate method of therapy. Hahnemann established the basic idea of homoeopathy, which is based on the old belief in "like cures like" (*similia similibus curantur*). This principle states that substances that harm a healthy person can, when diluted, alleviate the same symptoms in a sick person.

Homoeopathic treatments were developed based on this idea. Hahnemann used a method of serial dilution and succussion (vigorous shaking) to make these medicines, which she thought made them more effective healers with less side effects. To highlight the holistic aspect of the treatment, the remedies were selected taking into account the full range of symptoms experienced by the patient, rather than relying on a specific diagnosis.

2. Early Successes and Widespread Acceptance

Homoeopathy was all the rage in the Americas and Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. Despite widespread belief to be incurable, the earliest homoeopathic practitioners had remarkable results in treating a wide range of ailments. A growing number of people, particularly those who had been disillusioned with the risks and ineffectiveness of conventional medicine, turned to homoeopathy in the hopes of finding relief from long-term health problems like asthma, arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems.

Homoeopathy became an important component of healthcare in the early 1800s when the first homoeopathic hospitals were founded in the US, France, and Germany. Indeed, numerous nations acknowledged homoeopathy as a valid medical practice by the middle of the nineteenth century, and homoeopathic institutions, hospitals, and journals thrived.

Notably, homeopathy's ascent paralleled a shift away from conventional medicine's increasingly mechanical and intrusive procedures and towards more holistic approaches to health. Its broad acceptance was aided by the success stories of its use, especially in the treatment of infectious infections and chronic disorders.

3. Challenges and Controversies in the 19th Century

There was increasing resistance to homoeopathy from the mainstream medical community, notwithstanding its early triumphs. The use of extremely dilute drugs in homoeopathy was challenged as medical research progressed, especially with the rise of germ theory and contemporary pharmacology. Some people thought that because homoeopathic treatments didn't have any real chemicals, they didn't work physiologically.

The advent of modern scientific medicine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries posed the greatest threat to the legitimacy of homoeopathy. A more mechanical view of illness and healing emerged with the advent of medicines, vaccinations, and surgical procedures, leaving little place for the vital force idea that supports homoeopathy. As a result of fast medical developments, homeopathy's popularity started to fall by the early 20th century.

Scepticism about homoeopathy was further intensified when the placebo effect was proposed as a potential explanation for its purported advantages. Some have suggested that the effectiveness of homoeopathic remedies may be due more to the patient's faith in the treatment than to the remedies themselves.

4. Decline in Popularity and Resurgence in the 20th Century

As a result of its inability to compete with contemporary pharmaceutical therapies, homoeopathy lost ground in mainstream medicine throughout the twentieth century, especially in Europe and the United States. There was a decline in the prominence of professional organisations, and a number of homoeopathic hospitals went out of business. Still, there was a devoted subset of medical professionals and alternative medicine practitioners that kept homoeopathy alive and well.

Homoeopathy, along with other forms of alternative medicine, saw a revival in popularity in the second part of the twentieth century. The rising tide of discontent with traditional medicine, worries about pharmaceutical misuse, and a shift towards more integrative health care all played a role in homeopathy's meteoric rise to prominence again. More and more people were looking for alternatives to conventional medicine, and homoeopathy became linked with that. People were also interested in natural and non-invasive treatments.

5. Modern-Day Homeopathy

Currently, homoeopathy is popular all across the globe, but especially in some regions of America, Europe, and India. There are a lot of people that believe in homoeopathy and seek out treatments for things like allergies, mental health concerns, and chronic ailments. Homoeopaths take a holistic approach to healthcare, addressing the full person rather than just the symptoms of illness.

Nonetheless, homoeopathy is still very contentious. Many people still don't believe that homoeopathy is based on science. They say that there isn't enough proof that it works and that the ideas behind it aren't legitimate. Many people believe that the beneficial effects that patients describe might be due to the placebo effect. On the other hand, homeopathy's proponents argue that its effectiveness is supported by clinical experience and patient outcomes, even in the absence of large-scale, well-controlled studies.

The efficacy of homoeopathy has been the subject of mixed findings in recent systematic reviews and individual investigations, with some research demonstrating beneficial effects and

others revealing no benefit beyond placebo. The role of homoeopathy in contemporary medicine is being shaped by the continuing discussion on its effectiveness and scientific validity.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of homoeopathy's history, there have been periods of widespread acceptance as well as periods of intense debate. Samuel Hahnemann is credited with establishing homeopathy in the latter half of the 18th century. The unique approach that it took to treating a variety of maladies, along with its early successes, contributed to the quick rise in popularity of homeopathy. However, as pharmacology and other types of modern medicine gained ground, there was an increase in skepticism regarding homeopathy. Although homeopathy was still practiced by a tiny but dedicated group, its overall popularity decreased as the medical world moved its focus to scientific evidence and the production of contemporary medical therapies. This was a result of the widespread adoption of modern medical practices. One of the factors that has led to the recent revival of homeopathy is the surge in interest in complementary and alternative medicine. This is despite the fact that homeopathy has its critics within the scientific community and in skeptical sectors. Homeopathy is appealing because it takes a patient-centered, holistic approach to health treatment, addressing the whole person rather than simply the symptoms of the individual. The presence of this patient-centered philosophy has contributed to the continued relevance of homeopathy among persons who are looking for natural and non-invasive therapeutic choices. Furthermore, in order to uncover the true efficacy of homeopathy, it is required to do additional rigorous study. This is because there is ongoing controversy regarding homeopathy, particularly concerning its scientific legitimacy and the placebo effect. The experiences that both practitioners and patients have had in the clinic lend legitimacy to the practice of homeopathy as an alternative therapeutic option. This is despite the fact that there has been a dearth of comprehensive study on homeopathy. By conducting a more nuanced and scientifically rigorous review of the effectiveness of homeopathy, it may be possible to gain a clearer understanding of the future of homeopathy in contemporary medicine. For the sake of summarizing, homeopathy continues to be a highly contentious topic, with proponents and opponents working together to define the course of its development. As a result of its extensive history and ongoing applications, homeopathy has the potential to serve as a complementary treatment to conventional medicine by offering a more all-encompassing and individualized method of treating patients. It is difficult to predict what the future holds for homeopathy in the field of medicine; nonetheless, it will be contingent on the satisfaction of patients and the existence of strong scientific evidence that demonstrates its effectiveness. As more study is conducted, our understanding of the function that homeopathy plays in medical care will expand.

Bibliography

1. Arya, A., & Sharma, P. (2018). Study about the efficacy of Homoeopathic medicines in the Management of "allergic respiratory tract disorders in children. *Innovative Research Thoughts*, 4(4), 19–27. Retrieved from <https://irt.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/789>

2. Sharma, A. (2024). The Use of Homeopathic Medicine in Paediatric Healthcare: A Critical Analysis. *Indian Journal of Ayurveda & Alternative Medicines*, 1(1), 34–40. <https://doi.org/10.36676/ijaam.v1.i1.6>
3. Devidas N. PATIL. (2022). Ethnobotanical studies of Nawegaon National Park, District - Gondia, Maharashtra, India. *International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar*, 13(4), 87–91. Retrieved from <https://jrps.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/288>
4. Arya, A., & Sharma, P. (2018). Study about the efficacy of Homoeopathic medicines in the Management of "allergic respiratory tract disorders in children. *Innovative Research Thoughts*, 4(4), 19–27. Retrieved from <https://irt.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/789>
5. BANERJEE. PROSAD. - Allergy in Homoeopathy. Shiva and Company. Medical Publishers, Howrah. Page: 54, 59.