

# Code of Ethics & Practice

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## Introduction

- This Code has been drawn up by the Registration Society of Homoeopathy UK, (RSH UK), in accordance with the Objects of the Association.
- The purpose of this code is to provide a high ethical and professional standard of conduct for members to follow in order to preserve and enhance the practice of homeopathy as a healing art and to protect the general public.
- These guidelines and rules are essential for the integrity of the RSH UK as a responsible professional body and its self-regulation.
- The Society has a duty to ensure that the Code of Ethics and Practice is adhered to.
- It is the responsibility of all members to be acquainted with the provisions of the current Rules, Aims, and Objects and to sign a statement to this effect and return it to the Registrar of the RSH UK. Members shall comply with this Code of Ethics and Practice and any other regulations or amendments ordained by Society which shall be binding at all times in their professional activities.
- Failure by a Member to adhere to the Code will result in disciplinary action. If the unsatisfactory conduct is continued, or if there is gross negligence or misconduct, the name of the practitioner will be removed from the register and the appropriate authorities will be informed of such action. All privileges of membership will be withdrawn.

- This Code applies to all Members, i.e. Fellows, Full Members and, where applicable, to Students. (Please note: Student members may not prescribe for members of the public without permission and supervision from their college).
- The Society may amend the Code of Ethics and Practice when necessary with the agreement of members.
- Members of the RSH must have satisfied the Society that they are competent to treat patients presenting with a wide variety of conditions.

## General Rules

- A Member's prime concern must be for the welfare of the patient.
- Members of the RSH UK shall conduct themselves at all times with dignity, and behave in an honourable manner in their relations with patients, the general public, other members of the Association, members of other professional bodies and other practitioners.
- Members must act at all times in a manner which promotes public trust in the Homeopath's knowledge, ability, and judgement, and enhances the good standing and reputation of the profession.
- In order to maintain a high standard of professional competence, Members must regularly review their level of professional knowledge and expertise, and continually update their knowledge through professional journals, meetings, and participation in continuing educational programmes of the RSH UK and other organisations.
- Members must endeavour to co-operate with professional colleagues and members of other health professions for the benefit of their patients and the public.
- A Member must uphold the honour and dignity of the profession, and not engage in any activity which may bring the profession into disrepute.
- It is the responsibility of Members to be acquainted with and comply with the Laws of their country, as they apply to the practice of homeopathy. Overseas Members must abide by the laws of the country in which they practice.
- Members must be aware of notifiable diseases and restrictions upon claims to treat cancer and venereal diseases (see Appendix).
  - a) attendance at childbirth must be with the consent of the patient and hospital.
  - b) where the patient's symptoms indicate either a life-threatening condition or a notifiable illness, the Member should refer the patient to a Society tent for further diagnosis or as deemed appropriate by the laws of the country in which they practice.
  - c) there may also be provisions of the Medicines Act, which place restrictions on the giving of injections unless fully trained to do so.
  - d) where patients' records, including names and addresses, are stored on computer Members are legally obliged to register under the Data Protection Act 1984, in the UK.

- Members are responsible for personal malpractice insurance, negligence, and third party insurance.
- Members' names will be removed from the register and they will not be permitted to use the designated MRSH or FRSH after their name if their annual fees are not paid within one month of the due date.
- Members must immediately advise the RSH UK and the insurance company of any official enquiry into their practice from whatever source.

## Homeopathic Treatments & Relationship with Patients

- All Members must maintain exemplary standards of professional conduct.
- Courtesy, patience, and understanding should be shown to patients and their families at all times.
- The patient's welfare must be paramount at all times. Members should be aware of the limits of their competence and be ready to refer the patient for further investigation when necessary.
- Members should not discourage patients from seeking other forms of treatment that may be appropriate.
- Patient showing signs and symptoms of an underlying pathological condition should be advised to seek a medical diagnosis.
- Members will keep full records of all their patients. The records must include:
  - Name, address, telephone number and date of birth.
  - GP's name, address and telephone number (at patient's discretion).
  - Full details of medical history.
  - Full details of current and non-homeopathic drugs and dosage.
  - Dates of treatment and details of treatment prescribed.
- A Member may not disclose information obtained in confidence from or about a patient or the patient's family to anyone without prior consent from the patient or the appropriate guardian unless the interest of the patient or the Law requires such disclosure.
- Patient records are to be kept confidential at all times and access restricted to the Member, practice assistant, and patient. The only exceptions are:
  - if consent has been obtained from the patient or patient's family for the disclosure of specific information.
  - in an emergency or other dangerous situation where the information may prevent possible injury to the patient or another person.
  - if required to do so by Law.
  - in the case where the patient is under the age of 16, Members may have to decide whether to release information to a parent or guardian without the consent of the child, where they believe it to be in the child's best interests. Much will depend on upon the maturity of the child concerned and their relationship with the parent or guardian.

- Intimate physical examination of adult patients may only be conducted in the presence of a witness unless prior written consent from the patient has been obtained.
- Physical examination of a child under the age of 16 should only be performed in the presence of a parent or guardian.
- Members may not enter into an emotional, intimate or sexual relationship with a patient they are treating.
- Members should be aware of the nature of any prescribed medical treatment their patients may be receiving, and are advised to obtain a current National Formulary of their country for reference.
- Members may not make any unsolicited approach to another homeopath's patients without prior arrangement with the homeopath.
- Members may accept patients who have been receiving treatment from other homeopathic practitioners. However, before treatment begins, written permission from the patient should be obtained, and the other practitioner informed. Permission need not be obtained if at least six months have elapsed since the last treatment.

## Relationships with the Medical Profession and other health professionals

- Although homeopathy has the potential to treat a wide variety of conditions, it may not always be the most appropriate treatment. Where members feel this is the case, they should advise their patients of other therapeutic options and refer them to the medical profession or other health professionals.
- Members must not disparage the professional services of other homeopaths or health professionals, nor make claims of superiority, either expressed, or implied.
- Members shall maintain a readiness to Society professional colleagues when appropriate.
- Members are advised to encourage their patients to inform their General Practitioner that they are undertaking homeopathic treatment.
- When a patient seems to be suffering unacceptable adverse effects from a prescribed medication, he or she should be advised to seek the GP's co-operation in changing or withdrawing the medication.
- When a patient's health improves as a result of homeopathic treatment, thus allowing their prescribed medication to be reduced or stopped, Members should encourage the patient to seek the GP's co-operation in reducing or withdrawing medication.

## Premises

- Practising Members should comply with the Local Society Regulations and advice of the Environmental Health Officer regarding adequate facilities, such as heating,

- lighting, ventilation, toilets, electrical installations, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Working conditions must be arranged so as to protect the safety of the public and those people working on the premises.
  - A First Aid kit must be available at all times. Reference should be made to the Shops and Offices Act of the country in which they practice.
  - A regular review of the facilities and working practices should be carried out to ensure they comply with current standards. Members should be aware of their responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation, (Health & Safety at Work Act of their countries) whether employer, employee or self-employed.

## Advertising and the Media

Members may advertise their professional services as follows:

- Name Plates of a modest size may be displayed outside the Member's clinic.
- No Member may use the title Doctor or Physician in their Homeopathic advertising unless entitled to do so in their country. In the UK unless registered with the General Medical Society.
- If the title Dr is used in other forms of advertising, then it must be stated clearly what the qualification refers to (e.g. Ph.D.).
- Advertising must be discreet and not designed to mislead the public.
- No advertisement may claim or imply any superiority over the professional services provided by other practitioners, nor give the impression that the Member is a specialist in the treatment of a particular disease.
- No advertising may be used that claims to cure named diseases in accordance with the laws of their country.
- No Member may use their Association membership in the commercialization of any product or remedy.
- Members who write articles or broadcast homeopathy must make clear that their views do not necessarily reflect those of the RSH UK.

## Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures

- The procedures and powers set out are in accordance with the Rules, Aims, Objects and Code of Ethics & Practice of the RSH UK and shall provide a mechanism for patients, members of the public, other professionals and Members of the RSH UK to raise allegations of professional misconduct and for a Member accused of misconduct to have the right to respond to any such allegations.
- Patients, members of the public, other professionals and Members of the RSH UK have the right to complain if they perceive that a Member of the RSH UK has not treated them or conducted himself/herself in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Practice. Members have the right to expect support from the RSH UK in the

event of any unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations made against them whilst carrying out their professional duties.

## Investigation of complaints against members

### Scope of investigation

- It is not the role of the RSH UK to settle differences of opinion or misunderstandings between Members or between Members and their patients which are not covered by the Code of Ethics and Practice.
- An investigation shall be carried out where the conduct of a Member appears to directly contravene the Code of Ethics and Practice of the RSH UK, or raises serious doubts about the Members overall professional competence, or which may be considered serious enough to bring the profession into disrepute, such as abuse of patient's trust or position of privilege, alcohol or drug abuse, dishonesty or behaviour resulting in criminal proceedings against the Member.
- Any complaint shall be made to the Secretary of the RSH UK within 6 months of the alleged incident and if the complaint is not in writing full written details must be supplied to the secretary within 28 days thereafter.

## Professional Conduct Committee

- The Professional Conduct Committee appointed by the Society shall consist of a Chairperson and 3 other persons all of whom shall be either an elected Society Officer or a co-opted Officer of a Society Committee.

### *Preliminary investigation*

- On receipt of a complaint, the Chairperson of the Professional Conduct Committee shall appoint one person from the Committee ("the Preliminary Investigation Officer") to conduct a preliminary investigation to ascertain if the allegations constitute a case for the accused Member to answer.
- The Preliminary Investigation Officer shall write to the Member informing him/her of the nature of the complaint against him/her, and invite him/her to send his/her comments in writing within 28 days of the notice, which will be taken into consideration in reaching a decision.
- The Preliminary Investigation Officer may:
  - i. make any enquiries considered necessary to help establish the facts.
  - ii. recommend that the parties attend an informal meeting to resolve the issues between themselves
  - iii. decide that there is no case to answer and inform both parties of the decision
  - iv. refer the case to the Professional Conduct Committee for further consideration.

### *Professional Conduct Committee Investigation*

#### Professional Conduct Committee

- On a complaint being referred under 8.4.3.(iv) the Professional conduct Committee shall appoint 3 persons from that committee other than the Preliminary Investigation Officer to deal with the complaint in accordance with paragraph 8.6. thereof.
- If a complaint is referred to the Professional Conduct Committee for further investigation the Preliminary Investigation Officer shall provide all available details of the preliminary investigation to the Committee

### *Action of the Professional Conduct Committee*

- The Professional Conduct Committee shall convene a formal hearing and inform the accused Member of the date in writing, giving not less than twenty-eight days notice of the date of the hearing, and provide any further details of the complaint not previously supplied to the Member

### *Powers of the Professional Conduct Committee*

- Subject to the seriousness of the complaint the Professional Conduct Committee may provisionally suspend the Member from the register until the outcome of the investigation is known.
- The Chairperson shall determine how the hearing shall be conducted and decide that it be held in private if he thinks fit.
- A Member shall have the right to represent himself/herself and call a reasonable number of witnesses, or, where the complaint is or could be involved in criminal proceedings, make representation through a legal advisor. Names and addresses of all witnesses and copies of any documentary evidence to be produced at the hearing must be submitted to the professional conduct committee at least ten working days before the hearing.
- The Professional Conduct Committee reserves the right to employ a legal representative if the complaint could result in criminal proceedings.
- The Professional Conduct Committee may call witnesses and ask for further evidence before reaching a decision.
- On consideration of the evidence the committee may:-
  - adjourn for further deliberation
  - dismiss the complaint and exonerate the Member
  - issue a warning or admonishment to the Member.
  - suspend membership for a stated limited period of time with or without stated conditions.

- expel the Member from the RSH UK and remove his/her name from the register. (ii & iii may be subject to any conditions the Committee thinks fit).
- The Member shall be informed of the decision of the Professional Conduct Committee in writing within twenty-eight days of the hearing
- A Member shall have the right of appeal to the RSH UK Society within 28 days of notification of the decision of the Professional Conduct Committee, and the Society will then deal with the matter in accordance with para. 9.(c) of the Association's Rules, Aims, and Objects.
- At least 2-3 days training workshop of "Basic Life Support" as one of the required qualifications if not done during the course of study.

## APPENDIX 1

### *Notifiable Diseases as act October 1, 1988*

Under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984

Cholera, Plague, Relapsing Fever, Smallpox, Typhus

Under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988

Acute encephalitis, Acute poliomyelitis, Anthrax, Diphtheria, Dysentery (amoebic or bacillary), Leprosy, Leptospirosis, Malaria, Measles, Meningitis, Meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis), Mumps, Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Paratyphoid fever, Rabies, Rubella, Scarlet fever, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, Typhoid fever, Viral haemorrhagic fever, Viral hepatitis, Whooping Cough, Yellow fever

### *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)*

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Aids) is not a statutorily notifiable disease. Instead, doctors are urged to participate in a voluntary confidential reporting scheme. AIDS cases should be reported on a special AIDS clinical report form in a strict medical confidence to the Director, PHLS Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, 61 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5EQ. Advice about the reporting of cases may be obtained from CDSC (01-200 6868), or locally from physicians in genito-urinary medicine and infectious diseases physicians.

Name:

Signature:

Date: