

RESOLUTION 3 — 2013
Regular Winter Session

Submitted by
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association

HOMEOPATHY HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS AN INEFFECTIVE PRACTICE AND ITS USE IS DISCOURAGED

RESOLVED, that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) affirms that—

1. Safety and efficacy of veterinary therapies should be determined by scientific investigation.
2. When sound and widely accepted scientific evidence demonstrates a given practice as ineffective or that it poses risks greater than its possible benefits, such ineffective or unsafe philosophies and therapies should be discarded.
3. In keeping with AVMA policy on Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine, AVMA discourages the use of therapies identified as unsafe or ineffective, and encourages the use of the therapies based upon sound, accepted principles of science and veterinary medicine.
4. Homeopathy has been conclusively demonstrated to be ineffective.

Statement about the Resolution

The AVMA believes that the safety and efficacy of veterinary medical therapies should be established by scientific investigation. In the absence of clear scientific evidence of safety and efficacy, veterinarians must use caution in employing unproven therapies and must be guided by the dictum *primum non nocere* (first do no harm). When there is sound scientific evidence, and a clear majority of scientists agree, that a given practice is ineffective or poses risks greater than its demonstrated benefits, such ineffective or unsafe philosophies and practices should be discarded.

Although veterinarians may legally employ any therapy that complies with the applicable laws and regulations governing the practice of veterinary medicine, the AVMA believes that veterinarians have an ethical duty to society, and to patients and their owners, to base medical judgments and recommendations on the best available scientific evidence.

Rationale

Scientific validation of medical therapies encompasses a number of levels of evidence, including:

1. A plausible theoretical foundation or mechanism consistent with accepted scientific knowledge, including well-established principles of physics, chemistry, physiology, and other scientific disciplines foundational to veterinary medicine.
2. Supportive *in vitro* and animal model experiments demonstrating a biologic effect, dose/response relationship, or other evidence of actions that could potentially provide a therapeutic benefit.
3. Clinical trial evidence, in the target species or in others, showing a consistent and clinically meaningful benefit and acceptable risks.

The relative weight of these factors should be determined by the established hierarchy of evidence, with high-level and high-quality evidence outweighing that derived from lower-level and lower-quality research.

It is not necessary for the scientific evidence to be absolutely uniform in order to establish that a practice is ineffective or unsafe. Safeguarding the welfare of veterinary patients and clients requires that veterinarians make reasonable judgments based on the available evidence and proportion the confidence in these judgments to the strength of this evidence. If there is strong scientific evidence that a practice is ineffective or unsafe, the existence of some lower-quality contrary evidence or a minority dissenting opinion does not preclude identifying the given practice as unsafe or without benefit. Like all judgments in science, such conclusions are predicated on the existing evidence and subject to reevaluation or reversal as new evidence is developed.

Specific Practice: Homeopathy

Specific veterinary therapies may be identified by the AVMA as unsafe or ineffective based on a thorough evaluation of the available scientific evidence and a general agreement among scientists that the balance of the evidence demonstrates the practice to be ineffective or unsafe. The AVMA discourages the use of such therapies.

With respect to the practices known as Homeopathy, there is strong, widely accepted scientific evidence that the theoretical foundations of homeopathy are inconsistent with established principles of chemistry, physics, biology and physiology. Further, extensive clinical trial evidence has shown the practice of homeopathy has been ineffective in treating or preventing any disease. While homeopathic remedies are not inherently unsafe, the use of ineffective therapy to the exclusion of established treatment may endanger patients.

[Addendum 1](#): White paper: “The Case Against Homeopathy”

[Addendum 2](#): AVMA Guidelines for Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine

Financial Impact: None

	RECOMMEND APPROVAL	RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL	RECOMMEND REFERRAL TO ...*	NO RECOMMENDATION
<i>Executive Board</i>		X		
<i>House Advisory Committee</i>			X—EB for referral to CoVS	
<i>Reference Committee #6</i>			X—EB	#####
Reference Committee recommends the resolution be referred to the Executive Board for consideration by the Council on Veterinary Service.				

	APPROVED	DISAPPROVED	REFERRED TO ...*
HOD ACTION			X—EB for consideration by CoVS

During its April 2013 meeting, the Executive Board approved a recommendation to refer Resolution #3-2013 to the Council on Veterinary Service and the Council on Research. The following documents reflect the subsequent input from the Council on Veterinary Service and the Council on Research.

- [Memorandum from the Council on Veterinary Service](#)
- [Memorandum from the Council on Research](#)

Also during its April 2013 meeting, the Executive Board referred to the HOD via Resolution #10-2013, and with a recommendation for approval, the policy on [Guidelines for Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Veterinary Medicine](#). At its July 2013 meeting, the HOD subsequently amended and approved [Resolution #10-2013](#).

2014

Executive Board Recommendation—Disapproval
 House Advisory Committee Recommendation—Disapproval
 Reference Committee 6 Recommendation—Disapproval
 House of Delegates Action—Disapproval