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Homeopathy in the age of antibiotic resistance: Is it a viable treatment for upper respiratory tract infections and their complications?

Upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) is a common illness, especially in children. It comprises a variety of symptoms including sore throat, cough and coryza, fever and ear pain and accounts for a substantial proportion of consultations with family doctors. According to NICE guideline on self-limiting respiratory tract infections, around 60% of antibiotics prescribed in primary care are for respiratory tract infection. In the light of a mounting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) crisis the UN, WHO, the EU Commission and NICE UK all emphasize the need for alternative approaches to antibiotic use. Homeopathy differs from standard treatment in many ways, but the objectives of reducing symptom severity, including pain and distress and accelerating recovery are the same as in conventional medicine. A growing body of evidenced-based research suggests that homeopathy can be used to prevent and treat upper respiratory tract infections and acute complications such as acute otitis media (ear infections). For this presentation, I consider whether the evidence for homeopathy is sufficiently robust for homeopathy to be seriously considered as an alternative to antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) and their complications and secondly, how might this homeopathic intervention take place, for example through widespread use of homeopathic compounds.

Biography

Alison Fixsen is a part time Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Westminster (UoW) and an experienced Healthcare Practitioner. She holds a Doctorate degree in Professional Studies (personal and professional education). Her academic background includes Medical and Social Sciences. She is Researcher and Education Consultant for the Society of Homeopaths, and author of many journal and conference papers including on Antibiotic Resistance.

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