

Ms Fran Sheffield
The Do No Harm Initiative Inc.
26 Corona Lane
GLENNING VALLEY NSW 2261

Trim: M07/8452

Dear Ms Sheffield

Re: Homeopathic Meningococcinum for meningococcal disease

I write in response to your letter dated 26 July 2007 to the Minister for Health, the Hon Reba Meagher MP, concerning homeopathic Meningococcinum for the prevention of meningococcal disease. The Minister has asked that I respond on her behalf.

Meningococcal disease now affects about 100 NSW residents annually and causes significant morbidity and mortality. Consequently, NSW Health allocates significant resources each year towards the prevention of the disease and to the treatment of people with invasive meningococcal disease.

A safe and inexpensive prophylactic intervention that covers all serogroups of invasive meningococcal disease would be of great interest both in Australia and internationally. NSW Health has an obligation to provide and promote quality health care that is safe, appropriate and effective. Conversely, interventions that are not supported by solid evidence supporting their efficacy and safety may not only be wasteful of limited health care resources, they may also give false reassurance to those who receive them.

The health care community should judge the two Brazilian studies to which you refer based on their scientific merit. Health care providers are more likely to be strongly influenced by established interventions that are scientifically robust.

Decisions about the control and management of meningococcal disease in Australia are carefully decided following scrutiny of the current scientific literature by a subgroup of the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia. The document *Guidelines for the early clinical and public health management of meningococcal disease in Australia* published by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing summarises the appropriate prevention and management of meningococcal disease in this country. The document is available at: www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-pubs-other-mening.htm.

Ideally, the effectiveness of an intervention is best judged by the results of a randomised control studies. Unfortunately, the information available does not

provide good evidence that the product prevents meningococcal disease. We would be interested in seeing the results of studies that have evaluated the product using rigorous scientific methods.

Thank you for bringing the issue of homeopathic Meningococcinum to my attention. If you wish to obtain more information, please contact Dr Andrew Marich, Medical Epidemiologist, Communicable Diseases Branch, on (02) 9391 9234.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jeremy McAnulty
Director
Communicable Diseases Branch

29/8/07