

ASKEPTICS

George Dimitriadis ¹

The following communications refer to the admitted antics of members of the *Centre for Inquiry [CFI] Vancouver*, as seen in an episode of CBC Marketplace *Homeopathy: Cure or Con?*, which aired 14 January 2011:

Center for Inquiry Vancouver
Ethan Clow
Spokesperson

Dear Sir,

Could you please provide the specific details, objectives, design, materials, controls, of the CFI experiment stated as having "...demonstrated the flaws of homeopathy ..."

I am a practicing homœopathic consultant, a medical sciences graduate from the University of NSW (in Sydney), and very familiar with the requirements of 'scientificity'. Given my nearly 30 years of experience in this field, and my own demand for scientific rigor and evidence-based conclusions, I find it incredible to hear that CFI representatives could so quickly determine a position on this matter which is diametrically opposed to my own position set after such experience. The only conclusion I can imagine is that CFI representatives held a pre-position, a bias, with respect to this topic, and then set about to convince others of their pre-formed view.

This is NOT science.

I therefore wish to examine your experiment, in detail, so that I can point out the flaws which I have no doubt will be obvious to any completely objective, non-prepositioned, review.

I look forward to receiving your reply, along with the details requested.

George Dimitriadis
Director, Hahnemann Institute Sydney, Australia

The reply from Ethan Clow, dated 19th January 2011, was as follows:

Dear Sir,

Thank you for ably pointing out how poor the science behind our demonstration was. As you so rightly note, it is not a true scientific experiment. There is no blinding, there were no controls, it was a small sample size, and the effects were not measured adequately. Also, as you note, the people conducting the experiment had a conclusion that was formed before the experiment - seeking to prove a point rather than test a claim.

Considering that this is the standard of "evidence" that is used by homeopathy supporters to show that it works, I am glad to see that you are willing to join us in pointing out how poor the quality of science supporting such claims is. Please provide us with just a couple of examples of the surely hundreds of well-designed, blinded and controlled rigorous scientific studies that you use to support your practice.

Ethan Clow
Executive Director, Centre for Inquiry Vancouver
eclow@cficanada.ca

This unapologetic admission evidences such unlearned arrogance that even when their failings were identified, they dismissed themselves by suggesting it is OK for them to act in a manner they claim should not be done in matters of learning, trying to obfuscate their *pseudoscientific misconduct* by adding more words of no substance. This provided sufficient reason for a proper answer (sent 20 January 2019) to this group of *pretendend thinkers*:

¹ © Hahnemann Institute Sydney
www.hahnemanninstitute.com
inquiries@hahnemanninstitute.sydney

Mr. Ethan Clow
Executive Director, Centre for Inquiry Vancouver

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your reply and for acknowledging your misrepresentation with such antics (for I cannot call them otherwise) designed by your group and proposed as evidencing the implausibility (as you have already determined it without proper study) of Homœopathy.

Firstly, I believe any objective observer would agree it is inappropriate to offer such ‘proofs’ of your (pre-) position when you admit they are as unscientific as the claims you seek to ridicule. On the one hand, those homœopaths may be guilty, at worst, of misrepresentation borne of ignorance, yet on the other hand CFI sought to misrepresent, purposefully, their antics as proofs of their position, misrepresented as itself scientific. Our audience shall be the judge of which is the greater misconduct.

Secondly, you will understand that my purpose is not to teach or convince you of anything. To be clear, you possess no standing, display no knowledge, and warrant no attention in the field of Homœopathy, and through your own admittedly unscientific antics, deserve the reproof of scientists and true skeptics.

Irrespective, *facts are facts* independent of what you believe. Should we seek now to examine “science”, which term, although from the Latin (*Scientia*) for knowledge, actually stands for something different. For who cannot understand, even on a cursory consideration, that knowledge is developed and possessed in many pursuits which are yet not sciences (farming, boxing, surfing, writing, tree-felling, etc.). Science, in fact, represents not knowledge, but a *methodological approach* to discovery, which method demands, in the modern scientific (post-Baconian) era, four conditions be met, namely: induction, deduction, prediction, testing. *Science demands nothing of comprehension* (albeit that is a bonus when possible) and you should be aware of the thousands of accepted observations which are simply inexplicable – might I remind you that the force of attraction between two bodies of mass (*Gravity*) is itself inexplicable, yet this poses no problem in its general acceptance (the graviton has not been found, even though billions have been spent in looking over many years) and the observation may be used and applied, reproduced, even though not comprehended. That you cannot comprehend Homœopathy makes it no less an observable phenomenon.

But let me also remind you of something your organisation, as a self-proclaimed learned scientific body, surely already know, and that is that the basic requisites of “science” are often dismissed or ignored by scientists. Or are you not aware that Newton’s *First Law of Motion* is itself untestable, and therefore fails this basic requirement; and did you not already realise that whilst science demands *reproducibility*, modern *quantum mechanics* teaches that the observer has a profound influence on the observation itself, which can therefore never be precisely replicated. How many times must a person die for that death to be considered a fact? How many people must observe it? How many did it take to conceive and propose relativity theory? It is not the quantity, but the quality of an observation which is vital to any hint at truth – for how many people held the earth was flat? Of these things you, as ‘skeptics’ (and I use this term politely, as it is not borne of evidence presented to me so far) should be intimately familiar.

How many examples may be recruited here to point out that science, as it stands today, accepts mostly what seems *reasonable*, and sets about to prove the postulate correct, to verify, in complete contra-distinction to the accepted post-Baconian modern scientific induction model. Such is modern science, in practice, that it itself fails many basic parameters of scientificity. Therefrom we can see the impropriety of ‘scientists’ seeking to discredit and ridicule something of which they are ignorant and unstudied, based on hearsay and first impressions – precisely what your group has demonstrated. You have done discredit to science, with which I have a strong commitment, and betrayed your bias.

In the end, it must be clearly comprehended that science is not about *truth*, but about *useful predictability*, and the most important requirement, in direct opposition to the schools of sophistry and pure logic, is to put things to the test, without pre-determination. And you have the audacity in your reply to dictate conditions of ‘blinding’ and ‘rigour’, which same conditions your CFI readily dismissed in their recent staged antics now admittedly unscientific and worthless.

Now, for the sake of those who would read these words in answer to your own comments, I add the following brief commentary on Homœopathy:

Firstly, much of what is represented as Homœopathy is largely completely unrelated, except by way of a claim to title, with Homœopathy proper. From this, we cannot expect favour from those unlearned in the field (as CFI), who rightly question the often absurd statements of ‘homœopaths’ (and I use this term loosely) – there is overwhelming evidence that as much harm issues from their own ignorance and pre-positioning as from those outside our profession seeking to attack in ignorance.

Yet, you are supposedly, *skeptics*, which term, from the Greek (skepsis), means *thought*. From this we must expect you to think, to ponder, to consider, and this requires you undertake a reasonable and objective evaluation of the field you seek to investigate and evaluate. It is not difficult to accept that we can have confidence in astronomy (the pursuit), but not necessarily astronomers (the pursuers); physics not physicists; engineering not engineers, medicine not doctors, etc. The same is true of Homœopathy, as it is of skepticism and self-proclaimed skeptics (I do not believe there is anywhere offered an undergraduate degree in skepticism (e.g. B.Skept.?).

What I expect is that you do *not* believe. I expect only you *consider*, weigh the *evidence*, and seek to *falsify*. The way of science, since the inductive model of Bacon, is *falsifiability* testing. I expect you know this, even though you evidence ignorance from the antics your group designed and employed the other day.

Now, it is reasonable and well known to any researcher, that the first requirement of any undertaking is to collect evidence from what has been written beforehand – to study the information to date – thoroughly. It is known the best way to do this is historically, not with reference to the most vociferous and prolific expressions available freely on the internet for anyone of a cursory mind disposed to ready conclusion to misunderstand and even accept as true, especially when it suits their pre-formed opinion (as with your CFI), but with reference to germinal or formative literature, abundantly available. I would expect a thorough seeking and study of the *original source material*, pushing aside the acquired pre-conceptions in favour of objectivity. I would expect you to understand the materials and methods of these original experiments, and seek to falsify by replication of the precise experiment – not merely dispel by spurious argument and logic (let me remind you gravity is not *logical*, it is merely *factual*). This is not an easy task for anyone who has undertaken it, for it is far easier to learn than to *unlearn*.

This is precisely what CFI have not done, else you would have found many similar antics as yours, and the answers from thousands of well educated physicians, physicists, educated men of various scientific disciplines, etc., and from that, you would have, perhaps, if objectivity was allowed to present itself against the tide of bias, comprehend the history, development, and definition of what constitutes Homœopathy proper. I should provide the following quotation, from Samuel Hahnemann, founder of this system of medicine (1827 – perhaps you will find the specific reference for yourself, or your entire group of learned skeptics?):

“If a drop of such highly attenuated medicine,” so they talk, “can still act, then the water of the lake of Geneva, into which a drop of some strong medicine has fallen, must display as much curative power in each of its separate drops, indeed much more, seeing that in the homœopathic attenuations a much greater proportion of attenuating fluid is used.”

Does this sound familiar? And yet you are simply unread and unaware of such things, otherwise you would surely have drawn upon them, and many other similar ones, in support of your own position. With comprehension, you could yourself design a proper test or experiment, one which would satisfy every scientific requirement, and then see the outcome, which must surely be acceptable to all on-lookers trained in objectivity.

In short, you confound Homœopathy with ultra-dilute or infinitesimal doses, even though the title itself has no connection with dose. Had your Greek been even rudimentary, then perhaps you would have realised your basic misunderstanding, instead of trusting in the hearsay of other sources, themselves equally unlearned in this area.

What is clear, however, from this play-acting of CFI representatives, is that their bias outweighs their objectivity, and their foolishness is more evident than their skepticism, and from this, I take the liberty of pronouncing them *askeptics*.

If you can bear all this annoyance, rightly deserved from your admitted ascientific irresponsibility in action and misrepresentation, and if you would admit publically your actions as such (before I make these correspondences available), and if, subsequently, you desire to investigate the matter properly, without ridicule, without expectation of a determination along a pre-formed path, then, perhaps, I would be inclined to offer my assistance in such endeavour, so that you may at least understand the matter before you seek to offer any opinion or pronouncement as to its scientificity (or lack of).

Sincerely and with certainty,

George Dimitriadis
Director Hahnemann Institute Sydney
