



Integrative Medicine Data Collection Network (IMDCN)

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Objectives

Only a few attempts have been made to date to collect data of homeopathic treatment results under the conditions of everyday practice.

The purpose of the Integrative Medicine Data Collection Network (IMDCN) is to evaluate the effectiveness, safety and cost-benefit of homeopathy compared to conventional medicine. It should also provide a scientific rationale for the design of further randomized controlled trials in homeopathy.

Method

IMDCN is a multinational, multi-centre, practice-based, prospective, long-term observational study on the effectiveness of homeopathy compared to conventional medicine. The study will be performed in eight countries by a network of investigators offering homeopathy and/or conventional medicine in their outpatient care setting. An estimated total of 1000 patients per year will be recruited, follow-up will be up to 5 years.

At the initial patient contact and each follow-up patient contact the investigator will enter the data using ClinWeb, a remote data entry system provided on the internet. The remote data entry system will check each entry of the investigator concerning completeness and consistency.

Each follow-up will be documented by the investigator. In addition, each patient will be contacted for

follow-up information by an independent telephone interviewer. In acute illnesses a follow-up interview will occur on day 14, in chronic illnesses at 3, 6 and 12 months.

The main outcome criterion will be the response-rate, defined as complete recovery or major improvement. Secondary criteria are outcomes according to several quality of life-scores, patient satisfaction with treatment and economic effects of treatment. The investigation is performed according to GCP guidelines.

Results

Preliminary results will be shown.

Conclusions

Randomized controlled trials (RCT) are still regarded as the gold standard to prove the effectiveness of a clinical method. Because of their necessary restrictions RCTs do not reflect the reality of everyday practice and they can also cause ethical problems. Regarding the number of remedies in different potencies used in homeopathy, proving the effectiveness of this therapeutic method would require an almost infinite number of RCTs. Therefore, prospective standardized data collection systems are necessary to demonstrate the effects of homeopathy under the conditions of everyday practice.

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