

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF VETERINARY  
SURGEONS IN SOUTH AFRICA TO THE  
ROLE OF ACUPUNCTURE AND  
HOMOEOPATHY IN VETERINARY  
MEDICINE**

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Dissertation approved for final submission in partial compliance with the requirements for the Masters Diploma in Technology in the Department of Homoeopathy at the Technikon Natal.

I hereby declare that the dissertation is original and represents my own work

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Place of Submission: *Durban*

Date of Submission: *May 1997*

# DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and Kevin who showed great patience with my work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to Dr Burger, Mr Worku and Mr De Klerk for all their help.

Thank you to all the Veterinary Practitioners who took the time to answer the questionnaire, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

# ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the perceptions that the veterinarians in South Africa have to acupuncture and homoeopathy regarding the role that they have to play in veterinary medicine.

The study was conducted by sending out a questionnaire to 560 veterinary surgeons who are registered with the Veterinary Association of South Africa, and who are residing in South Africa. After a three month period after posting the questionnaires, 279 (49,8%) were returned, of which 251(44,8%) were completed fully and thus eligible for use in this study. The captured data was then analysed using the SPSS software and the statistical methods used were frequency tables, chi-square tests and log linear analysis.

The responses by the veterinarians was very positive and the sample well distributed among the provinces, the ages of the veterinarians, the types of practices that the veterinarians have and the types of animals that are treated. When asked if they use either of the therapies, 10% of the respondents stated that they use acupuncture and the majority of those have only been using it for less than 5 years. Homeopathy on the other hand was used by 26% of the respondents of which most have only been using it for less than 5 years.

The limitations that are noted to prevent the extended use of acupuncture and homeopathy are a lack of knowledge of the therapies and a lack of time. The lack of knowledge of the therapies was also stated as the main factor that limits the use of the therapies. In the case of acupuncture 75,3% of respondents stated thus and in the case of homoeopathy 70,9% of the respondents. Although a lack of knowledge is stressed, 64,5% heard of acupuncture for the first time through literature and 56,2% heard of homoeopathy through literature for the first time. Thus it could be concluded that the literature that is available is not of the standard that is required. Veterinarians stressed a need for clinical trials (82%) and proof of efficacy of therapies (66%) before they would think of the therapies as safe and beneficial for their

patients and these trials and experiments should preferably be conducted by their peers.

The future of acupuncture and homoeopathy in veterinary medicine is positive, as those that are using the therapies wish to continue doing so, bar for 1 respondent in each discipline. The involvement of those veterinarians that are presently not using acupuncture, is that 46% would be interested in a short course and 71,8% might use it in the future. Fifty six percent of those that are not presently using homoeopathy would be interested in a short course and 72,6% might use homoeopathy in the future.

In conclusion it is safe to say that acupuncture and homoeopathy have a role to play in veterinary medicine and this view is supported by 70,9% of the respondents in the case of acupuncture and 75,7% of the respondent stated that homoeopathy has a role to play. What the role of these two therapies will be in the future can only be determined by the veterinarians themselves, as they will be the ones who will determine the type of treatment that the animal requires.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acupuncture: Acupuncture is a form of therapy which can be defined as a Chinese technique of needle insertion at specific points. (West 1995).

Homoeopathy: Homoeopathy is a therapy which is based on the principle "like cures like" in other words the substance that causes certain symptoms can also be used to cure them. (Jones 1996).

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Acupuncture, a Chinese technique of needle insertion at specific points, has been used on man for a few centuries, but it has now also become a part of Western veterinary medicine for treatment, analgesia, and resuscitation (West 1995: 6). Christopher Day (1992) also stated that acupuncture is used as an analgesic, although acupuncture is not that widely used in Great Britain.

In South Africa, the interest in acupuncture has been shown in that lectures have been held on the use of acupuncture on animals (Fraser personal communication 1995).

According to Kayne (1992) homoeopathy has been used in veterinary medicine even before 1889. Macleod (1968) pointed out, that homoeopathic treatment can have a positive influence on the economy of a farm, turning what could be losses into economic gains. He illustrates this by presenting veterinary case studies.

Biddis (1979) had posed the question "How does homoeopathy fit in with the twentieth-century veterinary medicine?" This is a question that can still be asked in South Africa, as no study has been done to determine the perceptions of veterinary surgeons to the role of homoeopathy in veterinary medicine (Veterinary Association of South Africa 1995). A study of this nature has been conducted in the UK (Kayne and McGuire 1993), and the conclusion of that study was that there is an urgent need for improving the availability of homoeopathic knowledge to the veterinary profession.

There may be many and varied veterinary applications of homoeopathy (Kayne 1992) and the need for veterinary homoeopathy has been demonstrated with the formation of the

International Association for Veterinary Homoeopathy in Luxemburg in 1986 (Day 1992). Roberts (1993) has voiced her hope that more veterinary surgeons in South Africa will become interested in homoeopathy.

The benefits of this study will be that the perceptions of veterinary surgeons in South Africa to the role of acupuncture and homoeopathy will be determined and through this it will be known if there is a scope for further education in these fields. It will be known what the limitations on the use of acupuncture and homoeopathy are and what solutions to these limitations could be found. This in turn may lead to the widespread use of acupuncture and homoeopathy, complementary to conventional medicine, which will benefit veterinary medicine in that the resources for treatment of an ailing animal will be greater.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. OVERVIEW

Acupuncture and homoeopathy are two of many complementary therapies. The interest in these therapies has increased in the UK, as the benefits are becoming more known to the public (Alton and Kayne 1992). People are tending to care more for the “green” issues and “natural” treatments (Kayne and McGuire 1993) and are thus looking for treatments which may not have the effects that conventional medicine has on their body (Alton and Kayne 1992).

The complementary therapies have a different approach to disease than that which conventional medicine has and thus the application of acupuncture and homoeopathy is also different and for that reason it is important to understand the history and the ‘mechanisms of action’ of these complementary therapies.

#### 2.2. ACUPUNCTURE

##### 2.2.1. Acupuncture history

Archaeological evidence shows that acupuncture has been practised in China for at least 5000 years. In the first 2000 years the application was probably ‘unsophisticated’ and comprised of the use of stone, bone and bamboo needles. It was in this time that the sole cause of disease was attributed to the possession of evil spirits, and this explains the myths that surround the traditional explanations of how acupuncture works. The earliest texts that have survived date back to approximately 200 BC, and in these there is a mention of ‘ancient

masters' and 'earlier classics' which strengthens the archaeological findings. In these texts the fundamental principles of Chinese medicine, which are still used today, had already been formed. (Mole 1992: 105.)

Acupuncture has caused great controversy through the years and was even banned in China in the time span 1914 - 1954, as were the other forms of Chinese medicine. As acupuncture was primarily a simple-folks medicine and it was traditionally passed down from father to son, it was able to survive these years. The ban was lifted in 1954 when the Communists saw the potential benefits of acupuncture and incorporated it into the health-care system and they called it the " Medical legacy of the Motherland." (Mole 1992: 106-107.)

Modern acupuncture needles tend to be made from stainless steel with a handle of copper or aluminium. Needle insertion is not the only method of stimulating the acupuncture points, the other methods that are available are the application of manual pressure (acupressure), the application of heat (moxibustion) and the application of Infra-red laser. (Chaitow 1983: 20, 26-27.)

Mole (1992: 113) states the hope that the future of Chinese medicine, which includes acupuncture, will be one of progressive growth and that more people in the West accept the benefits of this form of therapy.

### 2.2.2. How Acupuncture works

According to Chaitow (1983: 12-15) there have been numerous attempts to determine how acupuncture works, but although the research does answer a few questions, there does not seem to be a concrete theory which can fully explain by which mechanism acupuncture works.

Research done by the Peking Acupuncture Anaesthesia Co-ordinating Group in the 1970's showed that acupuncture analgesia and anaesthesia are a result of activity within the cerebral cortex and various sub-cortical levels of the central nervous system ( with possible

participation of other factors) (Chaitow 1983: 14).

Chaitow (1983: 15) also writes about animal experiments where it was found that with the use of acupuncture there was a release of a certain chemical substance or substances found in the cerebrospinal fluid which had analgesic effects. Thus the mechanism of action may be hormonal.

Mole (1992: 112) sums up the conclusions of the research done by stating that the experiments done on animals and people have shown that three main areas are involved: neurological, hormonal and bio-electrical.

The World Health Organisation concluded in 1979 after a thorough investigation, that " The sheer weight of evidence demands that acupuncture must be taken seriously as a clinical procedure of considerable value" (Mole 1992: 112). That it should be taken seriously and that acupuncture is not related to any hypnotic effect or to psychological suggestibility on the part of the patient ( i.e. placebo effect) is indicated in that the controlled experiments done on animals does show analgesic effects (Chaitow 1983: 15).

"It seems that we must await the scientific discoveries of the twenty-first century before enough is known about the efficacy and the mechanisms of acupuncture for it to find a place in the body of accepted scientific knowledge" (Mole 1992: 112).

### 2.2.3. Veterinary case

The case in which acupuncture was used, homeopathy and antibiotics were also used to save a harbour seal pup. Ledermann (1996), who rehabilitates wildlife in the USA. wrote that the seal, when found, was in a critical condition, unconscious, convulsing, extremely emaciated and had a shallow, laboured, open-mouthed respiration. Instead of weighing 50 - 60 pounds, the pup only weighed 25 pounds. To treat the infections and the anaemia, homoeopathy and conventional medicine were used. Sixteen days after having been found, the seal had a



prolapsed rectum, this was treated by purse string sutures which were sewn into his rectum and homoeopathic medication was given. The prolapse returned after a few days and then the seal was given acupuncture on the top of his skull to help draw up the prolapse. Eight days later the rectum looked good and the sutures were removed. After 2 months the seal was back to normal and it was released into the Pacific Ocean.

## 2.3. HOMOEOPATHY

### 2.3.1. Homoeopathic history

Samuel Hahnemann who was an 18th Century Physician developed homeopathy into a methodical system of therapy (Jones 1996). Hahnemann, who translated medical texts into German, started to become more and more disillusioned with the medicine of his time. Through these works he came into contact with the Cinchona bark which was one of the few effective treatments of malaria. He disagreed with the findings in the texts and thus started a test of the Cinchona bark by taking the drug himself. Hahnemann believed that if he took the drug for long enough, he would start showing the symptoms of malaria, he was correct. Through this discovery, he formulated the main principle of homeopathy, namely that 'like cures like'. Translated that means that the substance that can cause the disease in a healthy individual will cure the disease. He tested this hypothesis extensively and in 20 years he tested 67 substances on himself, family, friends and medical student volunteers, the results of the physical and emotional changes were compiled into the *Materia Medica*. (Day 1992.)

### 2.3.2. How Homoeopathy works

Day (1992) states that homeopathy not only works on the principle of like cures like, but also on the principle of potentisation. Hahnemann, through his studies, found that the more dilute the remedy was, the more effective it became. The process of dilution and succussion which evolved from that, was called potentisation. Thus with using very small or immeasurable

doses of a substance, the toxic effects of substances were lost and this then makes it possible for the most poisonous substances to be used to elicit a cure. (Day 1992: 1-4.)

Although Hunter (1984: 16) says that the exact way in which homoeopathy works is still unknown, he mentions that homoeopathy seems to work on the principle that the remedy releases some 'energy' which act and stimulates the body to heal itself.

### 2.3.3. Why is Homoeopathy used?

Jones (1996) says that the main reason that her help is needed is because conventional medicine has no more to offer, and what it does offer often produces undesirable side effects. This is further reinforced by Elliott (1996), who states that homoeopathy is the only system that offers a chance to cure chronic disease, the chronic disease are therefore the field where homoeopathy has the most to offer. The other reasons that are stated as to why homoeopathy should be used or is used is well laid out by Day (1992): firstly there are no side-effects nor suppression of symptoms which may lead to vicious reappearance, as the body is stimulated to heal itself. There is also no dependence on a diagnosis and there is an allowance for patient individuality. Another plus is that the treatment leaves no food residues and this is very profitable in farm animals.

### 2.3.4. Veterinary cases

In the British Homeopathic Journals and the British Homeopathic Association one can find various articles concerning case studies of the veterinary application of Homeopathy. The scope of these cases varies from family pets to farm animals and it has even been extended towards the treatment of wild animals.

With wild animals, the case of the wild seal pup and Ledermann (1996) was discussed under the veterinary acupuncture case. In the article the practitioner mentions that he might have used too many remedies at once, as he was not as homoeopathically knowledgeable nor

competent as he would like to be and thus could not do without antibiotics, but also because by not using the 'shot - gun' approach he might endanger the animals life.(Ledermann 1996.)

In the case of farm animals, Macleod (1968), who by then had been treating animals homoeopathically in the UK for 24 years, talks about some of his more interesting cases. These cases include the treatment of calves who have Bacillus coli infection, which accounts for 25 - 30% of the calf losses each year. With the use of homoeopathy, not one calf died that year from Bacillus coli, although some of them were so weak that the farmer had thought them not worth treating.

Rakow (1984), presents the case study of a two - year - old Dachshund who was suffering from cystitis. With the information gained from the owner, the urine analysis and the examination of the animal, Rakow (1984) decided to use the homoeopathic remedy Cantharis. After 5 days the animal was back to it's normal self and the urine analysis was almost back to normal.

From the above cases it can be seen that homoeopathy is effective in the case of acute conditions in the animals. As Jones (1996) says, the large proportion of animals that receive homoeopathic treatment have chronic ailments such as arthritis or skin disease. This all confirms what Rakow (1984) said, namely that homoeopathy helps us to deal with many everyday problems, both chronic and acute.

#### 2.4. THE USE OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND THEIR RESULTS

In the various journals available there are numerous questionnaires which determine the perceptions of a certain group of people towards a certain topic. Of those there were a few which concern homoeopathy but none were found concerning acupuncture.

Alton and Kayne (1992) did a pilot study of the attitudes and awareness of homoeopathy shown by patients in three Manchester (UK) pharmacies. Their study showed that a high

percentage of people in the sample had some knowledge of homoeopathic medicine and of those 49% stated that they would use homoeopathy on their pets.

Kayne (1992) conducted a short study in the UK to determine homoeopathic veterinary prescribing. In this study he found that of those using homoeopathy, nearly all the veterinarians wanted to increase their homoeopathic prescribing and he concluded that the field of veterinary homoeopathy would widen in the future.

In 1993 a study to determine the attitude to homoeopathy in a sample of veterinarians in the UK was conducted by Kayne and McGuire. In this study it was found that veterinary surgeons were favourable to the use of homoeopathic remedies. the conclusion to the study stated that there is an urgent need for improving the availability of knowledge and increasing the scientific evidence available.

## 2.5. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

As can be seen acupuncture and homoeopathy cause great controversy as it can not be explained fully how they work, but what is known is that they do! In the UK research has been done by Kayne and his associates into the perceptions of numerous professions (including veterinarians) and the public as to the role of these therapies. What we do not know is, what do the South African veterinarians think about acupuncture and homoeopathy, do they, as do the British veterinarians, think that there is a role for these therapies in veterinary medicine (Kayne and McGuire 1993) ?

# CHAPTER 3

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 3.1. STUDY DESIGN

The study is executed in the following manner:

- a) The questionnaires were posted to the 560 veterinary surgeons and a self addressed envelope ( postage paid ) was included, in order to promote a better response.
- b) The returned questionnaires were collected and stored safely until all the questionnaires were returned ( 3 months).
- c) The data was captured and analysed using the statistical packages available at the Technikon Natal. In this study the SPSS/PC+ package was used.

### 3.2. THE SUBJECTS

#### 3.2.1. Selection criteria

The veterinary surgeon must be a residential member of the South African Veterinary Association, as to the list dated 02/08/1995. (See appendix C)

### 3.2.2. Sample size

The total number of residential members as at 02/08/1995 was 1120. A sample size of 560 was used and this sample size was calculated as follows. (As done by the statistician Mr de Klerk).

"It was assumed that the largest cross tabulated table will be of size 2 by 5, i.e. 2 rows and 5 columns. Based on a 'rule of thumb' of an amount of 5 sampling units per cell, this *prima facie* requires an amount of

$$[ 2 \times 5 ] \times 5 = 10 \times 5 = 50$$

This is if all the frequencies conform to the above mentioned assumption, which is not usually the case when sampled data returns to the researcher. This implies that after all the data has been collected, there must be 5 sampling units per cell. It is needless to say that this is very difficult to envisage when planning stages of any research project.

Also, we have to allow for non-response of practitioners. In practice, we usually allow for a response rate of roughly 15%. This implies that 50 is only 15% of what we should actually send out. The figure therefore is now,

$$100/15 \times 50 = 333$$

This does still not imply that we will satisfy our initial assumption. This process might seem to be very non-scientific, but it must be remembered that we are now in practice and not in a text book. The difference of 227 is a contingency allowance. (560 - 333 = 227)."

### 3.2.3. Method of sampling

The sampling method used is that of probability procedures, specifically, the simple random sampling method (Steyn *et al.* 1994).

All the residential veterinary practitioners in South Africa were given a number ranging from 1 to 1120, the 560 used in the study were selected by using the random numbers. The random

numbers were generated with the statistical software, 'The student edition of MINITAB for Windows' (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company).

### 3.3. MEASUREMENTS

The measurement used in this study was a questionnaire which was sent to the 560 randomly selected veterinary practitioners. (Appendix A and B)

The questionnaire was constructed by the collection of questions from a number of questionnaires that were conducted in the UK.

These questionnaires were as follows:

- a) Questionnaire used by Kayne and McGuire (1993), to determine the attitudes of a sample of veterinarians to homoeopathy.
- b) A post graduate experiment, which determined the general practitioners view of homoeopathy (Reilly and Taylor 1993).
- c) A pilot study done by Kayne (1992) on veterinarians.

### 3.4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data was captured and analysed by the use of the statistical package SPSS, and with consultation with the statistician at the Technikon Natal.

The data was analysed by using frequency tables, Chi-square test and the Log Linear Analysis.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

### 4.1. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIBILITY

The criteria that must be fulfilled in order that the information can be utilised in this study is as follows:

- a) The veterinarian is working in South Africa
- b) The questionnaire is completed in full

### 4.2. QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

Of the 560 questionnaires sent out to the veterinary surgeons, 271 were returned. This is a return rate of 48,39%, which is higher than what was first expected. Twenty of the 271 questionnaires returned were excluded, as they did not fulfil the criteria for admissibility.

### 4.3. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE GROUP

The 251 completed questionnaires were answered by 200 males and 51 females. Their ages range from the age group 24-35 to the age group 66 and older; their mean age was 40 years.

The sample group represented all of the 9 provinces in South Africa, but for simplicity the provincial representation was grouped into the old system of 4 'provinces', namely:

- a) Cape: Eastern Province and former Transkei, Northern Cape and Western Province
- b) Natal: Kwazulu-Natal



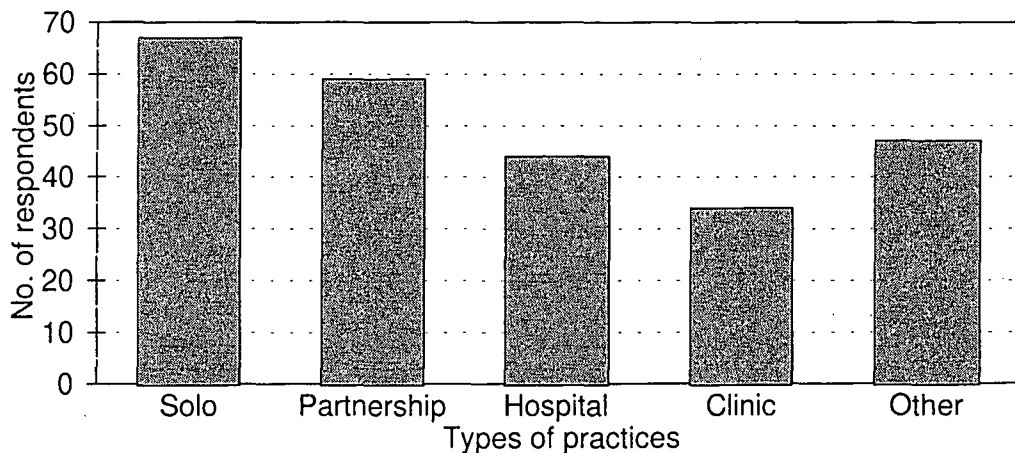
c) Free State

d) Transvaal: Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern Province and North-West

Most of the responses came from the Transvaal (123) while the Free State (18) showed the least response. From the Cape 68 questionnaires were returned and from Natal 42.

Seventy of the 251 veterinary surgeons have an additional degree/ diploma with their BVSc, and the years since qualification ranges from the group 00-5 to More than 35 years; the mean years qualified was 16 years.

**Graph 4.1.**  
Practice types of the respondents



All practice types were represented and this can be seen in the graph 4.1., the group labelled 'others', consists of veterinarians that are either in research, industry or they have a mixed practice eg. Solo clinic.

As can be expected when asked what types of animals that are treated by the veterinarians, 114 of the 251 respondents treat small animals, 17 treat large animals and 99 treat large and small animals. The other practices are more specialised, in that they are equine practices or they solely treat one type of animal for example pigs, ostriches, or crocodiles.

#### 4.4. THE USAGE OF ACUPUNCTURE

Ten percent (24) of the veterinarians that responded use acupuncture in their practices.

##### 4.4.1. Years of application

Of these 10% the majority (17) have only been using acupuncture for 00-05 years whereas 1 veterinary surgeon has been using acupuncture for more than 20 years. 4 have been using acupuncture for 6-10 years and 2 for 16-20 years.

##### 4.4.2. Frequency of use

One veterinarian stated that he uses acupuncture on all animals and one veterinarian treats the majority of animals with acupuncture. The majority (17) of respondents use acupuncture on only a few animals and 5 veterinarians stated that they use acupuncture on hardly any animals.

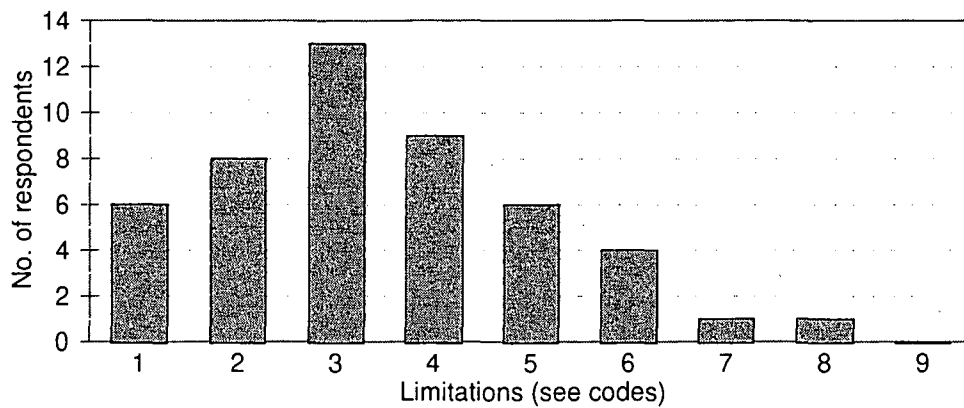
##### 4.4.3. Continued use of acupuncture

Of the 24 veterinary surgeons that use acupuncture, 23 stated that they would like to continue with acupuncture in their practices.

##### 4.4.4. Limitations of use

The limitations of the extended use of acupuncture in the practice is mainly a lack of knowledge as stated by 54,17% of the veterinarians that use acupuncture. The other limitations are shown in the graph 4.2.

**Graph 4.2.**  
Limitations of use of acupuncture



- 1= Lack of confidence in method
- 2= Lack of confidence in application
- 3= Lack of knowledge
- 4= Lack of time
- 5= Lack of opportunity
- 6= Lack of opportunity due to owners resistance
- 7= Partner's attitude
- 8= Feel that it is of no value
- 9= Could be dangerous to the patient

#### 4.4.5. Dependency of use

The Pearson Chi-square statistic was utilised to determine if the usage of acupuncture was dependant on certain factors, and as can be seen in Table 4.1. the two factors on which the use of acupuncture is dependant are the province in which the practice is based and if the practitioner uses homoeopathy.

Table 4.1. Factors of Dependency of the use of acupuncture

FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEPENDANT FACTOR ?
Age of veterinarian	2,866	No
Educational qualification	0,657	No
Years qualified	2,051	No
Province in which based	4,603	Yes
Type of practice	0,676	No
Animals treated	0,00004	No
Use homoeopathy	24,959	Yes

#### 4.5. THE USAGE OF HOMOEOPATHY

Homoeopathy is used by 65 (26%) of the respondents.

##### 4.5.1. Years of application

None of the veterinarians have been using homoeopathy for more than 20 years. The majority (49) have been using homoeopathy for 00-05 years, 12 for 6-10 years, one practitioner for 11-15 years and 3 have been using homoeopathy for 16-20 years.

##### 4.5.2. Frequency of use

The frequency of use of homoeopathy by the 65 practitioners is largely on only a few animals and only one of the practitioners uses homoeopathy on all the animals. ( Table 4.2.)

*Table 4.2. Frequency of use of homoeopathy*

FREQUENCY OF USE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
All Animals	1	1,54
Majority of Animals	4	6,15
Fair amount of Animals	5	7,69
Few Animals	43	66,15
Hardly any Animals	12	18,46

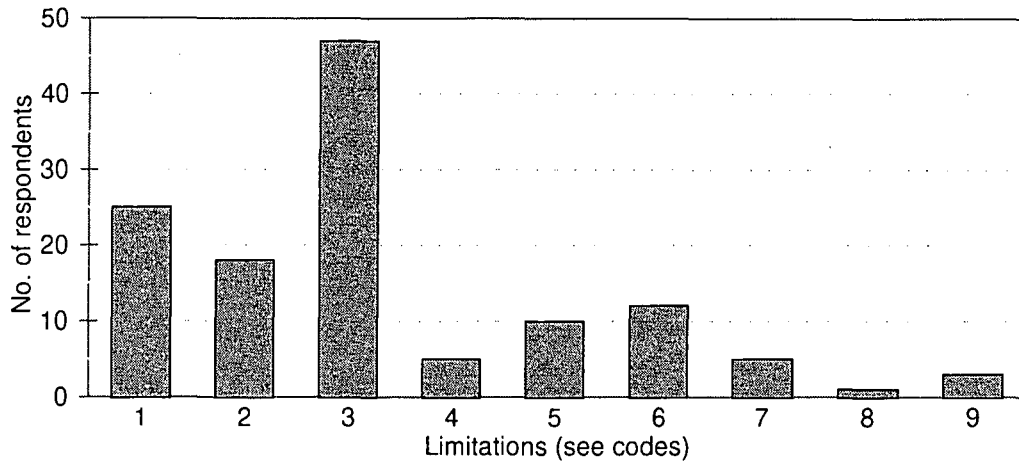
#### 4.5.3. Continued use of homoeopathy

As with acupuncture one of the respondents that uses homoeopathy in their practice does not wish to continue its use, whereas the other 64 would like to continue.

#### 4.5.4. Limitations of use

The main limitation of the extended use of homoeopathy is the same as in acupuncture, namely a lack of knowledge. The other limitations can be seen in the graph 4.3.

**Graph 4.3.**  
Limitations of use of homoeopathy



- 1= Lack of confidence in method
- 2= Lack of confidence in application
- 3= Lack of knowledge
- 4= Lack of time
- 5= Lack of opportunity
- 6= Lack of opportunity due to owners resistance
- 7= Partner's attitude
- 8= Feel that it is of no value
- 9= Could be dangerous to the patient

#### 4.5.5. Dependency of use

The Pearson Chi-square statistic was also utilised to determine if the usage of homoeopathy was dependant on certain factors, and as can be seen in Table 4.3. the two factors on which the use of homoeopathy is dependant are the type of practice that the veterinarian has and if the veterinarian uses acupuncture.

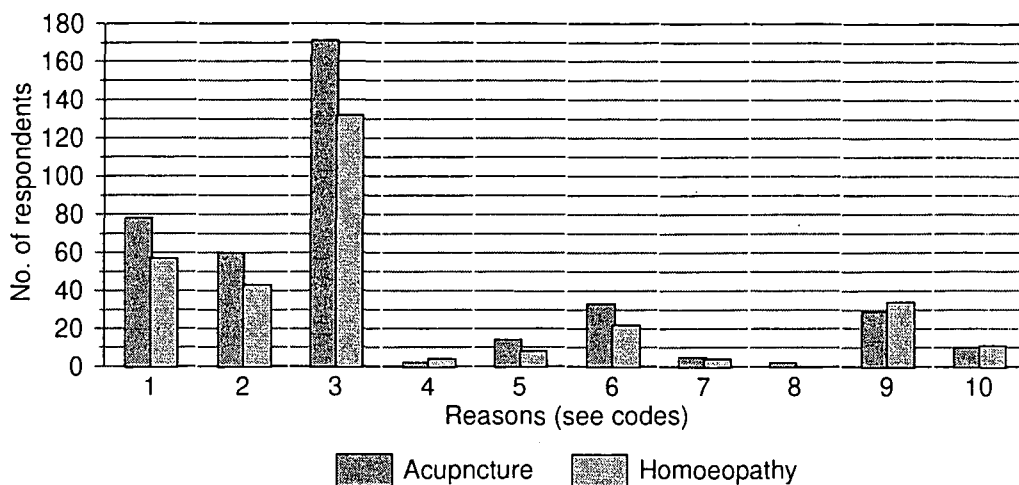
Table 4.3. Factors of Dependency of the use of homoeopathy

FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEPENDANT FACTOR ?
Age of veterinarian	1,744	No
Educational qualification	0,592	No
Years qualified	0,780	No
Province in which based	0,871	No
Type of practice	7,314	Yes
Animals treated	0,621	No
Use acupuncture	24,959	Yes

#### 4.6. REASONS FOR NOT USING ACUPUNCTURE OR HOMOEOPATHY

The reasons that the veterinary surgeons gave for not using acupuncture and/or homoeopathy in their practices are summed up in the graph 4.4. ( The veterinarians were asked to mark those that applied to them.)

**Graph 4.4.**  
Reasons for not using therapies



- 1= Lack of confidence in method
- 2= Lack of confidence in application
- 3= Lack of knowledge
- 4= Never heard of it
- 5= Lack of time
- 6= Lack of opportunity
- 7= Lack of opportunity due to owners resistance
- 8= Partner's attitude
- 9= Feel that it is of no value
- 10= Could be dangerous to the patient

#### 4.7. FACTORS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The factors that may encourage the use of acupuncture in the future are as stated in the Table 4.4., and those that may encourage the use of homoeopathy in the table 4.5.

*Table 4.4. Factors of encouragement for acupuncture*

FACTORS OF ENCOURAGEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
More Knowledge	173	68,9
Proof of Efficacy	164	65,1
Client demand	86	34,3
Clarity on Legalities	33	13,1
Nothing	19	7,6
Others	8	3,2



Table 4.5. Factors of encouragement for homoeopathy

FACTORS OF ENCOURAGEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
More Knowledge	166	66,1
Proof of Efficacy	172	68,3
Client demand	89	35,5
Clarity on Legalities	33	13,1
Nothing	16	6,3
Others	9	3,6

#### 4.8. VALIDATION NEEDED

The validation or evidence that the veterinarians found important before they would accept acupuncture or homoeopathy as beneficial to their patients is mainly clinical trials. It is interesting to note that the respondents need the same validations for acupuncture as for homoeopathy, and this is very marked in that the tally in each section is nearly the same for both therapies. (See Table 4.6.)

*Table 4.6. Validation needed before acceptance of use of acupuncture and homoeopathy.*

VALIDATION NEEDED	ACUPUNCTURE FREQUENCY	ACUPUNCTURE PERCENTAGE	HOMOEOPATHY FREQUENCY	HOMOEOPATHY PERCENTAGE
Theoretical scientific basis	130	51.8	139	55.4
Clinical trials	205	81.7	207	82.5
Colleague's experiences	101	40.2	102	40.6
Colleague's recommendation	63	25.1	65	25.9
Other	19	7.6	16	6.4

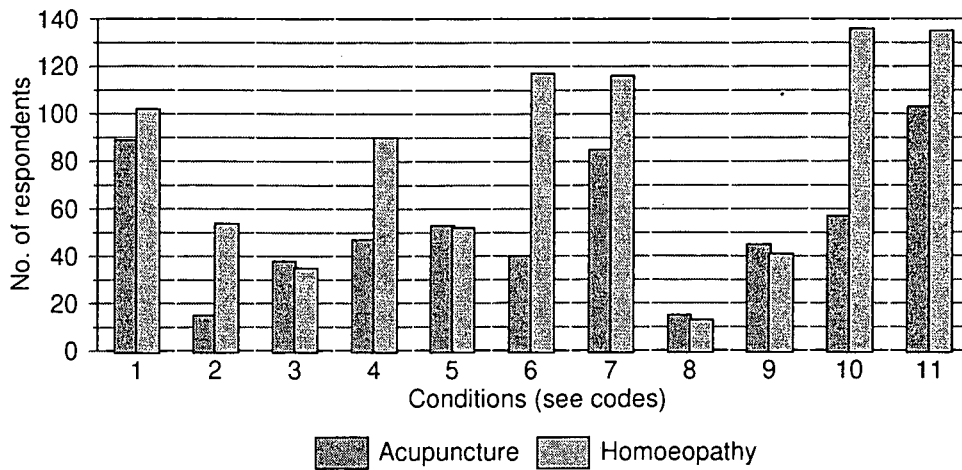
#### 4.9. CONDITIONS IN WHICH THERAPIES MAY BE EFFECTIVE

The section concerning the conditions in which acupuncture and homoeopathy were thought to be most effective, was not completed by some practitioners, as they felt that they did not know enough about the therapies to validate their answers and because of this their questionnaires did still fit the criteria.

Those veterinarians that did know something about the therapies marked those that they thought were conditions that would be effectively treated by acupuncture or homoeopathy. As can be seen from the graph 4.5. arthritis is the condition which most marked as the condition which would be effectively treated by acupuncture, while for homoeopathy the condition is allergies.

As can also be seen by the graph, more of the practitioners answered the question about homoeopathy than those that answered the acupuncture section. ( Graph 4.5.)

**Graph 4.5.**  
Conditions effectively treated



- 1= Supportive therapy
- 2= Preventative therapy
- 3= Primary therapy
- 4= Recuperation from illness
- 5= Recuperation from surgery
- 6= Skin conditions
- 7= Chronic conditions
- 8= Fracture repair
- 9= Post trauma
- 10= Allergies
- 11= Arthritis

#### 4.10. SPREAD OF KNOWLEDGE

The first encounter that the veterinary surgeons had with acupuncture and with homoeopathy is largely through literature read. (Table 4.7 and 4.8). In the 'Others' section, the veterinarians that answered thus, stated that their first contact was either through family involved in these fields, or that they attended lectures or seminars on these subjects.

*Table 4.7. First contact with acupuncture*

SOURCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
This Questionnaire	4	1,6
Friends	18	7,1
Animal Owners	8	3,2
Personal Contact	9	3,6
Colleagues	87	34,7
Literature	162	64,5
Other	32	12,7

*Table 4.8. First contact with homoeopathy*

SOURCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
This Questionnaire	6	2,4
Friends	26	10,4
Animal Owners	32	12,7
Personal Contact	51	20,3
Colleagues	71	28,3
Literature	141	56,2
Other	21	8,4

#### 4.11. FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

The future involvement of the veterinarians with acupuncture and homoeopathy can be divided into three groups:

4.11.1. An interest in short courses in the therapies

4.11.2. Whether the therapies be used in the future

4.11.3. Whether the veterinarians think that acupuncture and homoeopathy have a role to play in veterinary medicine

#### 4.11.1. An interest in short courses in the therapies

When asked if they would be interested in a short course in acupuncture the majority answered that they might be interested (Table 4.9). The actual figures are 46% that are interested in a short course and 32% that are not interested.

*Table 4.9. Interest in short course in acupuncture*

LEVEL OF INTEREST	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Definitely interested	55	21,9
Interested	61	24,3
Might be interested	79	31,5
Not interested	24	9,6
Definitely not interested	32	12,7

In the case of homoeopathy, the majority (29%) stated that they would definitely be interested in partaking in a short course (Table 4.10.). When comparing those that would be interested with those that would not be interested, one finds that 56% of the veterinarians would be interested and 20% would not be interested.

*Table 4.10. Interest in short course in homoeopathy*

LEVEL OF INTEREST	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Definitely interested	75	29,9
Interested	65	25,9
Might be interested	61	24,3
Not interested	24	9,6
Definitely not interested	26	10,4

#### 4.11.2. Will the therapies be used in the future

It has already been stated that 95.8% of those that are using acupuncture wish to continue its use and that 98.5% of those that use homoeopathy want to continue its use.

The practitioners that do not use acupuncture in their practice responded to the question 'do you envisage using acupuncture in the future' as tabulated in table 4.11., where it can be seen that the majority answered that they might use acupuncture in the future.

*Table 4.11. Level of certainty to the question posed to those that do not use acupuncture, if they might do so in the future.*

LEVEL OF CERTAINTY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Definitely will use	2	0,88
Will use	12	5,29
Might use	149	65,64
Will not use	34	14,98
Definitely will not use	30	13,22

The practitioners that do not use homoeopathy, answered the question, 'if they envisage using homoeopathy in the future' as can be seen in table 4.12.

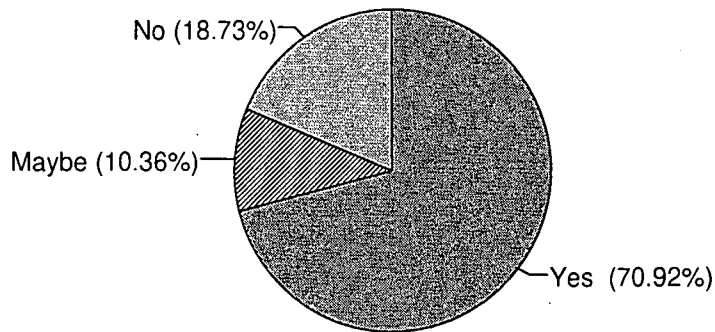
*Table 4.12. Level of certainty to the question posed if those that do not use homoeopathy might do so in the future.*

LEVEL OF CERTAINTY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Definitely will use	5	2,69
Will use	15	8,06
Might use	115	61,83
Will not use	21	11,29
Definitely will not use	30	16,13

4.11.3. Do the veterinarians think that acupuncture and homoeopathy have a role to play in veterinary medicine

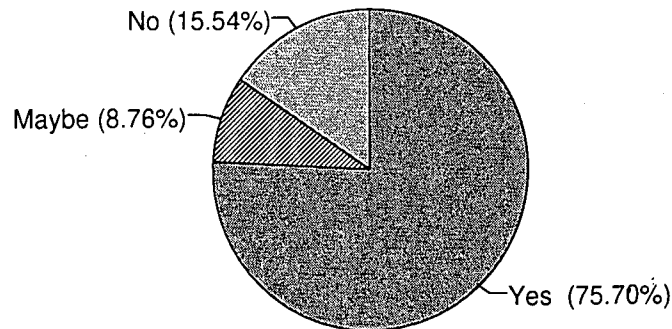
To the question if acupuncture has a role to play in veterinary medicine 10% were undecided, but an overwhelming majority 71% stated that it does have a role to play. (Graph 4.6.)

**Graph 4.6.**  
Does acupuncture have a role to play



Nine percent of the veterinarians were undecided if homoeopathy has a role to play in veterinary medicine, and as in acupuncture, the vast majority 76% stated that homoeopathy has a role to play in veterinary medicine. (Graph 4.7.)

**Graph 4.7.**  
Does Homoeopathy have a role to play



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The response rate of the veterinarians is higher than what was anticipated (3.1.2) and this in itself shows that this is an issue that holds some concern for the veterinarians, may they be for or against the therapies. The results were therefore based on the responses of 22,41% of the total population . This together with the fact that the sample group distribution was varied (4.3), it can therefore be assumed that if a similar study were done on the whole population, similar results would be obtained.

It can be seen from the results that the veterinarians are favourable to the use of acupuncture and homoeopathy in veterinary medicine. Although only 10% of the respondents use acupuncture, 70,92% believe that acupuncture has a role to play in veterinary medicine. Compared to this, homoeopathy is used by more veterinary surgeons (26%), and a greater majority (75,70%) believe that homoeopathy has a role to play in veterinary medicine. This is a greater margin of acceptability than the one that was found in the study done by Kayne and McGuire (1993) in the UK. In that study 59% believed that homoeopathy has a role to play in veterinary medicine. In both acupuncture and homoeopathy the majority of respondents that use either of these therapies have only been doing so for the last 5 years. This may be due to the fact that there have only recently been lectures available to the practitioners on these therapies. Although the therapies are used by a fair percentage of the respondents, it would be good to see that the use of acupuncture and homoeopathy was used on more animals, than only being used on a few animals as is the happening in the majority of cases ( 4.4.2 and Table 4.2).

It is interesting to note that when the Chi square analysis was done (4.4.5), to determine if the use of acupuncture depended upon another factor, the result was that acupuncture is



dependant on the location of the practice, namely if the practice is based in the Transvaal or in the Cape, the practitioner is more likely to use acupuncture. This could be explained with the fact that most of the respondents practice in these areas (76,1%), and that in the Transvaal there is a Professor at the veterinary teaching institution that uses acupuncture. Homoeopathy on the other hand is dependant upon the types of animals that are treated (4.5.5). In other words, if the veterinarian is in a specialised field that practitioner would not be likely to use homoeopathy.

The practitioners that are not using acupuncture or homoeopathy at present stated that the main reasons for this was a lack of knowledge and a lack of confidence in the methods (Graph 4.4). These were the same constraints that prevent the extended use of homoeopathy (Graph 4.3), but the extended use of acupuncture is also limited by the lack of time (Graph 4.2).

This lack of knowledge may not be of the nature of informing the veterinarians about the therapies, but in that the knowledge available, in the literature, is not of the kind that the practitioner can utilise in his practice. This can be deduced from the fact that the majority of practitioners heard about the therapies for the first time in the reading of literature (4.10).

The need for knowledge is further emphasised in that in both therapies, as 'more knowledge' was stated as the factor that would encourage the use of the therapies by the practitioners (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). The proof of efficacy is another factor which is often stated as a factor of encouragement. Client demand was not highly rated in either therapies but this may prove to be a greater stimuli in the future. The veterinarians on the whole wanted clinical trials and scientific proof as validation before they would use the therapies (Table 4.6). Some went even that far in that they stated that they would like the clinical trails to be done through the Onderstepoort University. This seems reasonable, as a therapy is more acceptable if it has been tried and tested by your own peers. In veterinary medicine there is one advantage in that the usual criticism of placebo effect or response is inappropriate.

When asked in what conditions they thought the therapies to be most effective, it was obvious yet again that there is a need for more knowledge on these subjects, as 8,76% of the respondents stated that they did not know enough to be able to answer the question. Of those that answered, the majority stated that they thought acupuncture to be most effective in arthritis, supportive therapy and in chronic conditions. Homoeopathy is thought to be most effective in allergies, arthritis, skin and chronic conditions and also as a supportive therapy. In the study done in the UK (Kayne and McGuire 1993), they also found that the practitioners were looking at homoeopathy as a supportive therapy. This would seem to be entirely practical, as almost all homoeopathic prescribing is carried out on the basis of matching with human drug pictures, or using the practitioners experience.

The future involvement of the respondents is very positive, as 46% of the practitioners would be interested in a short course in acupuncture (Table 4.9), and 56% would be interested in a short course in homoeopathy (Table 4.10). Not only is the interest in the gain of knowledge, but 71,81% of the veterinarians that are not presently using acupuncture might or would use acupuncture in the future. Of those that are not presently using homoeopathy, 72,58% might or would use homoeopathy in the future. From this it can be seen that although the therapies are not playing a great role in veterinary medicine at the moment, the potential for the growth of these two therapies is there. What makes the perceptions most positive is that those who are using acupuncture or homoeopathy at the present, 95,8% would like to continue using acupuncture and 98,5% would like to carry on using homoeopathy.

The overwhelming majority of veterinarians stated that acupuncture (70,92%) and homoeopathy (75,7%) do have a role to play in veterinary medicine. The role that the therapies will play in modern veterinary medicine is not determined, but this decision would lie in the hands of the individual practitioner.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1. CONCLUSION

Although acupuncture and homoeopathy are two controversial therapies, this study showed that there is an interest in them and that the potential for growth is there.

The interest in acupuncture and homoeopathy should be utilised and for that to occur, the limitations that were stated by the veterinarians should be noted and something done about them. The lack of knowledge of the therapies was stated as the greatest limitation and therefore there is an urgent need for the improvement of the availability of knowledge and of the amount of the available literature.

Another factor which was stressed in this study is that there is a need for an increase in the scientific evidence of the efficacy of the two therapies, which in turn would encourage the widespread use of these disciplines in the future.

It can therefore be concluded from this study that acupuncture and homoeopathy have a role to play in Veterinary medicine and that with addressing the limitation factors, the role that these therapies have in the future will be greater than what it is in the present.

## 6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

After having completed this study the following recommendations can be made:

- \* The study should be repeated in a few years time, to determine if the potential for growth has been realised.
- \* The availability of knowledge of these therapies should be improved, in that the literature that is there should be more widely available to the veterinarians and that there should be courses available to the veterinarians on the use and application of the two disciplines.
- \* There should be an increase in the research of the efficacy of acupuncture and homoeopathy, to provide scientific proof that the therapies are beneficial to the animal. These clinical trials would be accepted far more if they were done through the veterinary teaching centre at Onderstepoort so that at there would be someone who was knowledgeable in animal clinical trials and that the person were assisted by someone knowledgeable in either acupuncture or homoeopathy depending upon the discipline needed.

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Accompanying Letter to the Veterinarians

APPENDIX B: Sample Questionnaire

APPENDIX C: Letter from the Veterinary Association

APPENDIX A: Accompanying Letter to the Veterinarians



TECHNIKON  
NATAL



P.O. Box 953  
Durban. 4000

**Berea Campus:**  
Telephone (031) 204-2111  
Facsimile (031) 223-405

**City Campus:**  
Telephone (031) 301-7823/9  
301-7848/9  
Facsimile (031) 301-8782

**Pietermaritzburg Campus:**  
P.O. Box 11078, Dorpspruit, 3206  
Telephone (0331) 42-5426/7, 42-5447  
Facsimile (0331) 42-9804

Dear Doctor

I am presently a final year student doing my Master's Degree in Technology: Homoeopathy at Technikon Natal. The academic programme extends over five years followed by one year internship. Students receive a thorough grounding in basic and clinical sciences with special emphasis on diagnostic skills.

Research is part of the academic requirements . As you are probably aware, homoeopathy and acupuncture are used by some veterinarians in overseas countries. Such is probably the case too in South Africa. I am currently conducting a survey amongst veterinary surgeons to determine their perceptions, with regard to the role of acupuncture and homoeopathy in veterinary medicine in South Africa.

By participating in this questionnaire, which, to my knowledge, is the first study to explore the perceptions of veterinary surgeons to acupuncture and homoeopathy in South Africa, you will be part of the process of widening the scope of resources, with which to treat the ailing animal. The benefits of this questionnaire could contribute to the search of cost-effective treatments and the search of the best treatment for the sick animal (may that treatment be classical or complementary therapy).

Thank you for the courtesy of your assistance.

LORETTE WORTMANN  
SENIOR INTERN

MRS H TILL  
HEAD: DEPARTMENT OF HOMOEOPATHY

APPENDIX B: Sample Questionnaire

VETERINARY PRACTITIONER'S PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This questionnaire consists of 6 pages, please go through all the pages.
2. Please indicate, where applicable, your selection with an X.
3. Please read every question carefully before you answer it.
4. Please ensure that you answer all the relevant questions and do not accidentally skip any.
5. Your answers to the questions in this questionnaire will be regarded as strictly confidential, and your name will not be linked in any way to this questionnaire.

Thank you for taking part in my study.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your sex ?

Male	Female
------	--------

2. What is your age (in years) ?

24-35
36-45
46-55
56-65
66 and older

3. What are your educational qualifications ?

---

---

---

4. For how long have you been qualified as a Veterinary practitioner (in years) ?

00-05
05-15
16-25
26-35
More than 35

5. In which province is the practice based ?

---

6. What type of practice do you have ?

Solo
Partnership
Hospital
Clinic
Other

If other please specify

---

7. Which animals do you usually treat ?

Mixed
Small animals
Large Animals
Equine

8.1. Do you use acupuncture in your practice ?

Yes	No
-----	----

8.2. Do you use homoeopathy in your practice ?

Yes	No
-----	----

If your answer to question 8.1 is **yes**, then please answer questions 9.1. / 10. / 11.1. / 12. / 13.1. / 16. and onwards.

If your answer to question 8.1 is **no**, then please answer questions 14 and onwards.

If your answer to question 8.2 is **yes**, then please answer questions 9.2. / 10. / 11.2. / 12. / 13.2. / 16 and onwards.

If your answer to question 8.2 is **no**, then please answer questions 14 and onwards.

9.1. For how long have you been using acupuncture in your practice (in years) ?

00-05
06-10
11-15
16-20
More than 20

9.2. For how long have you been using homoeopathy in your practice (in years) ?

00-05
06-10
11-15
16-20
More than 20

10. Please indicate how often you would use the following in relation to the type of animals that you stated in question 7.

The figures 1 to 5 denote the following meaning

- 1 = On all the animals
- 2 = On the majority of animals
- 3 = On a fair amount of animals
- 4 = On few animals
- 5 = On hardly any animals

Acupuncture

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Homoepathy

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11.1. Do you wish to continue using acupuncture ?

Yes	No
-----	----

11.2. Do you wish to continue using homoeopathy ?

Yes	No
-----	----

12. What are the limitations of the use of acupuncture or homoeopathy in your practice ?

If you use acupuncture please answer under the heading A.

If you use homoeopathy please answer under the heading H.

If you use both, then please answer under the headings A and H.

(Please mark all those that apply)

	A	H
Lack of confidence in the method	1 ....	1 ....
Lack of confidence in application	2 ....	2 ....
Lack of knowledge	3 ....	3 ....
Lack of time	4 ....	4 ....
Lack of opportunity	5 ....	5 ....
Lack of opportunity due to owners resistance	6 ....	6 ....
Partner's attitude	7 ....	7 ....
Feel that it is of no value	8 ....	8 ....
Could be dangerous to the patient	9 ....	9 ....

13.1. Which species do you find is most receptive to acupuncture? \_\_\_\_\_

13.2. Which species do you find is most receptive to homoeopathic treatment? \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered no to either questions 8.1. or 8.2. , then please answer question 14 and onwards.

14. What is/are your reason/s that you do not use acupuncture/ homoeopathy in your practice?

If you do not use acupuncture please answer under the heading A.

If you do not use homoeopathy please answer under the heading H.

If you do not use either, then please answer under the headings A and H.

(Please mark all those that apply)

	A	H
Lack of confidence in the method	1 ....	1 ....
Lack of confidence in application	2 ....	2 ....
Lack of Knowledge of	3 ....	3 ....
Never heard of it	4 ....	4 ....
Lack of time	5 ....	5 ....
Lack of opportunity	6 ....	6 ....
Lack of opportunity due to owners resistance	7 ....	7 ....
Partner's attitude	8 ....	8 ....
Feel that it is of no value	9 ....	9 ....
Could be dangerous to the patient	10 ...	10 ....

15. Please indicate if you envisage using the following in the future, using an X to show your

selection. The figures 1 to 5 denote the following meaning

1 = I will definitely use it in the future

2 = I will use it in the future

3 = I might use it in the future

4 = I will not use it in the future

5 = I will definitely not use it in the future

Acupuncture

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Homoeopathy

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

**The following questions should please be answered by everyone.**

16. What factors might encourage you to use acupuncture or homoeopathy in the future ?

(Please mark all those that apply)	Acupuncture	Homoeopathy
More knowledge of the method	1 ....	1 ....
Proof of efficacy	2 ....	2 ....
Client demand	3 ....	3 ....
Clarity on legal aspects	4 ....	4 ....
Nothing would encourage	5 ....	5 ....
Other (please specify)	6 ....	6 ....

---

17. What kind of validation or evidence would you consider important before you would accept acupuncture or homoeopathy as beneficial for your patient ?

(Please mark all those that apply)	Acupuncture	Homoeopathy
Theoretical scientific basis	1 ....	1 ....
Clinical trials	2 ....	2 ....
Colleague's experiences	3 ....	3 ....
Colleague's recommendation	4 ....	4 ....
Other (please specify)	5 ....	5 ....

---

18. In which conditions would you think acupuncture or homoeopathy to be most effective ?

(Please mark those that apply)	Acupuncture	Homoeopathy
Supportive therapy	1 ....	1 ....
Preventative therapy	2 ....	2 ....
Primary therapy	3 ....	3 ....
Recuperation from illness	4 ....	4 ....
Recuperation from surgery	5 ....	5 ....
Skin conditions	6 ....	6 ....
Chronic conditions	7 ....	7 ....
Fracture repair	8 ....	8 ....
Post trauma	9 ....	9 ....
Allergies	10 ...	10 ....
Arthritis	11 ...	11 ....



19. Where did you hear about acupuncture or homoeopathy for the first time ?

	Acupuncture	Homoeopathy
This questionnaire	1 ....	1 ....
Friends	2 ....	2 ....
Animal owners	3 ....	3 ....
Personal contact with homoeopathy	4 ....	4 ....
Colleagues	5 ....	5 ....
Literature	6 ....	6 ....
Other	7 ....	7 ....

If other please state \_\_\_\_\_

20. Please indicate if you would be interested to partake in a short course, on the use of acupuncture or homoeopathy in animals, if it were available, using an X to show your selection. The figures 1 to 5 denote the following meaning

- 1 = I would definitely be interested
- 2 = I would be interested
- 3 = I might be interested
- 4 = I would not be interested
- 5 = I definitely would not be interested

Acupuncture

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Homoeopathy

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

21.1. Do you believe that acupuncture has a role to play in Veterinary medicine ?

Yes	No
-----	----

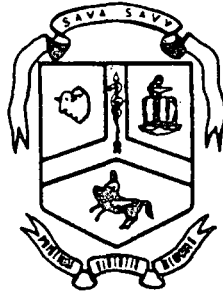
21.2. Do you believe that homoeopathy has a role to play in Veterinary medicine ?

Yes	No
-----	----

APPENDIX C: Letter from the Veterinary Association

**Suid-Afrikaanse Veterinêre Vereniging  
South African Veterinary Association**

REG. 01/02020/20



Posbus/P.O. Box 25033  
MONUMENT PARK Pretoria 0105  
Tel. (012) 346-1150/1  
Faks. Nr. (012) 346-2929

Gemboklaan 47/  
47 Gembok Avenue  
MONUMENT PARK 0181  
Fax. No. (012) 346-2929

2 August 1995

**HOMOEOPATHIC DEPARTMENT  
TECHNIKON NATAL  
PO BOX 953  
DURBAN  
4000**



Dear Mrs Wortmann

We hereby enclose a list of members of our Association, which is supplied to you free of charge on condition that it is used only for the purpose you have given and that you supply us with a copy of your dissertation.

We do not know of previous surveys on this topic but you may approach Prof J Odendaal at Department Ethology, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Private Bag X04, ONDERSTEPSPOORT, 0110 for more information.

Yours faithfully

**PROF GF BATH**  
PRESIDENT

encl.

cc Prof Odendaal (and copy of her letter)