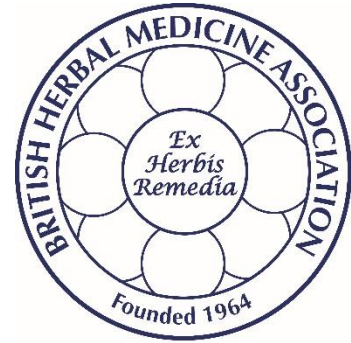


PRESS STATEMENT

BHMA brands Government Refusal to Regulate UK Herbal Practitioners as ‘Ideological Madness’



The BHMA endorses the views held by the European Herbal and Traditional Practitioners Association (EHTPA) and detailed in their recent [press release](#) that Government inaction on statutory regulation of herbal practitioners is a significant risk to public health.

[The Walker Report](#) recommendations earlier this year, authored independently by Professor Walker, whilst including detailed minutes of the Government Working Group meetings, unsurprisingly failed to include the damning [Safety Report by the Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee \(HMAC\)](#). This report, commissioned by Professor Walker, has now, commendably, been placed in the public domain by the EHTPA, and makes depressing and stark reading in terms of the ongoing safety to public health.

If the expected Government endorsement of Professor Walker’s recommendations goes ahead later this month, it is difficult to see how this can be anything other than an ongoing significant risk to public health, given the facts laid out in the HMAC Safety Report.

Dr Dick Middleton, Chairman of the BHMA says: *“The BHMA is particularly concerned at the quality of supply of herbal materials dispensed by unregulated herbal practitioners. The HMAC Safety Report is littered with examples of poor, unsafe and unregulated practice which has risked, and continues to risk, the health of patients.*

“The Government’s policy on reducing bureaucratic regulation is clear, and where appropriate, is commendable. However, on this occasion, the BHMA believes that continuing lack of regulation of herbal practitioners will continue to damage public health to a significant extent. Furthermore, this risk will only increase as growing patient numbers, disenfranchised with an over-burdened National Health Service, turn to alternative treatments that lack substantial governance or regulation.”

- ends -

Notes to Editors

About the Walker Report: “Regulation of Herbal Medicines & Practitioners”

Published on 26th March 2015, Professor David Walker’s Report on the Regulation of Herbal Medicines and Practitioners was commissioned in 2014 by Dr Dan Poulter, the Under- Secretary of State for Health. The purpose of the Working Group was to examine options on how herbal practitioners could be regulated, in order to protect the health and safety of the public, in the light of current European legislation. Rather than supporting statutory regulation, the report, which was written independently of the Working Group by Professor Walker, recommends voluntary regulation through the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) which will not provide sufficient governance of herbal practitioners to protect public health. [Click here](#) to view the full Walker Report.

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