

Figure 1: Timeline of changes to NHMRC (Optum) Homeopathy Review research protocol & process used for drafting evidence statements ('ES framework') *For details of protocol changes see main text.

Stage of NHMRC Homeopathy Review	'Sample size' cut-off used?	'Quality rating' cut-off used?	Purpose of evidence statements (ES)	Protocol changed?*	Protocol change reported?
Apr-Aug 2012 1st contractor (ICAHE/ UniSA) <i>Review terminated</i>	No	No	Describe the evidence (positive findings reported)	Yes <i>Iterative process (driven by HWC/ NHMRC)</i>	No <i>Existence of review not disclosed</i>
Dec 2012 Protocol "finalised" 2nd contractor (Optum)	No	No	<i>'Inform community of the evidence, not make conclusions'</i>	N/A	N/A
Jan-Mar 2013 Optum evidence assessment completed, using pre-approved ES framework.	No	No		No	N/A
18 Mar 2013 HWC face-to-face meeting	No	No	<i>'To be read by the public, not health professionals'</i>	Yes <i>ES framework</i>	No
8 Apr 2013 HWC Sub-group teleconference	No	No	Purpose of ES <i>not</i> to draw conclusions is re-emphasised	Yes <i>ES framework</i>	No
29 Apr 2013 HWC Sub-group teleconference	No <i>Concept first flagged</i>	No	Need for 'conclusive statements' proposed	Yes <i>ES framework, GRADE 1st suggested, null hypothesis</i>	No
6 May 2013 HWC Sub-group teleconference	No	No	'Conclusive' statements added	Yes <i>ES framework, 'adapted GRADE'</i>	No
16 May 2013 HWC Sub-group teleconference	No	No		No	N/A
24 May 2013 HWC Sub-group teleconference	Yes <i>Trial N = 200 min to be 'adequately powered'</i>	No		Yes <i>ES framework - sample size threshold</i>	No
11-12 Jul 2013 HWC face-to-face meeting (post 1st ACC peer review)	Yes <i>Trial N = 150 min to be 'reliable'</i>	No		Yes <i>ES framework - sample size threshold</i>	No
Late Jul/Aug 2013 HWC/ONHMRC - internal communication	Yes	Yes <i>Trial 5/5 Jadad (or equivalent) to be 'reliable'</i>		Yes <i>ES framework - quality rating threshold</i>	No
2 Sep 2013 HWC face-to-face meeting (post 2nd ACC peer review)	Yes	Yes	Advise community, not health professionals	Yes <i>Purpose of ES</i>	No
11 Oct 2013 - Optum review completed HWC teleconference	Yes	Yes		N/A	N/A
Late 2014 - early 2015 Out of session deliberation	Yes	Yes	Advise community and health professionals	Yes <i>Purpose of ES</i>	No
11 March 2015 Final report released	<i>Finding: 'no reliable evidence' for homeopathy in any health condition.</i>				