

## LETTERS

### Natural health products, complementary and alternative medicine, and Health Canada

An editorial published in *CMAJ* makes an important recommendation to separate the sale of natural health products, and complementary and alternative medicines.<sup>1</sup> There are at least two issues regarding their sale: efficacy/indication and adverse effects.

Health Canada should consider requiring a label on all homeopathic medicines, similar to the label required for those sold in Europe, that states: “A homeopathic medicinal product without approved therapeutic indications.”<sup>2,3</sup> This should be enforced until the efficacy of the specific homeopathic medicine is established, based on scientific evidence.

Ephedrine/ephedra is a complementary and alternative medicine that was banned for sale by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2004 because of cardiac and neurologic complications and death. However, Health Canada continues to allow

its sale with fewer restrictions than those proposed by the US FDA in 1997.<sup>4</sup>

Health Canada should move quickly to follow the recommendation made by Dr. Stanbrook in his editorial and others who are concerned for the health of Canadians.

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#### References

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**Competing interests:** None declared.