



Press Release: Response to the Department of Health's proposals for statutory regulation of acupuncture and herbal medicine 01.06.2004

The British Acupuncture Council (BACc) has considered carefully the Department of Health's (DOH) initial proposals for statutory regulation of acupuncture and herbal medicine and has now made its formal response

The BACc agrees that acupuncture should be subject to statutory regulation across the UK. However, it recommends that acupuncture should be regulated by a General Acupuncture Council (GAC) rather than the DOH's proposed shared Complementary and Alternative Medicine Council (CAM Council). The BACc believes patients' needs would not be best served by a single regulatory body representing diverse professions with very different educational and professional structures.

The BACc believes that there should be two primary titles; 'Acupuncturist' and 'Herbal Medicine Practitioner.' Any Western medical professionals, such as doctors, nurses or physiotherapists wanting to claim either title should meet appropriate and similarly high educational standards set by the regulatory body for acupuncture.

To ensure the highest professional standards, the BACc agrees with the DoH that automatic entry to the new Register should only be granted following graduation from an approved training programme.

Mike O' Farrell, BACc Chief Executive, comments: "The BACc recommends that acupuncture should be regulated by a General Acupuncture Council. However, if this is not feasible a secondary option would be for a combined Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Council consisting of separate committees with the ability to set educational standards and Continuing Professional Development strategies appropriate to the two different professions.

"The British Acupuncture Council welcomes statutory regulation as a means of ensuring the best treatment for patients from highly skilled practitioners. It also would strongly recommend that patients' and consumer organisations have a central place in the governing council."

Primary responsibilities of the regulatory governing body (applicable to both options -General Acupuncture Council or Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Council) will include:

- o Maintaining a Register of members
- o Determining standards of education and training
- o Advising on and administering procedures relating to conduct and performance



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