



Enforcement Notice:

Advertising of CEASE Therapy

Who we are

We are the [Committee of Advertising Practice](#) (CAP). We write the advertising rules, which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK's independent advertising regulator. You can read about the UK advertising regulatory system [on the ASA website](#).

Why are we contacting you?

We want to bring to your attention important information about the advertising of CEASE therapy which might affect you and which might mean that you need to make changes to your marketing materials.

In 2015, the ASA [investigated](#) a complaint about the website of a practitioner who offered CEASE therapy. The ASA considered that the website, through its use of testimonials and description of the history of CEASE therapy, implied that the therapy, and homeopathy generally, could be used to treat autism. Since the practitioner did not provide robust evidence to support that, the ASA found that page of the website in breach of the CAP Code.

We ask that you please now carefully review your marketing materials to ensure that you make no direct or implied efficacy claims for CEASE therapy, bearing in mind the guidance below.

More generally, we would remind you of the ASA's position on [homeopathy](#) and invite you to also check that any claims you make for it are compliant. Guidance specific to homeopathy can be found [here](#).

If we see continued problems in this area after **13 June 2018**, we will take targeted enforcement action to ensure compliance. This may include – where advertisers are unwilling to comply – referral to our [legal backstop](#).

Scope

We are concerned only with ensuring that marketing claims for CEASE therapy comply with the Code; we are not seeking to regulate practitioners' practices or consultations. Please remember that the Code applies to [many forms of advertising](#), including your own websites and leaflets, and in other non-paid-for space under your control such as social networking sites like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Guidance

#1: Describing the history of CEASE therapy may constitute a breach

In the ASA's ruling referred to above, the website stated "CEASE Therapy was developed by Dutch physician Tinus Smits M.D. who was looking for a way to help autistic children. Dr Smits helped over 300 children prior to his death in 2010..... CEASE Therapy involves the gentle removal of toxins from the body using a form of Homeopathy known as Isotherapy. Orthomolecular support is offered in the form of nutritional supplements to nourish the body and restore intestinal function. Classical homeopathic remedies are also prescribed to support the individual".

The ASA considered that the information about Tinus Smits implied a benefit for homeopathy and CEASE therapy for autism, and that the intention of CEASE therapy was to treat autism.

Advice:

Although advertisers may provide information about the history of a therapy, care should be taken not to make unsupported claims for the treatment when describing its background. It is very likely that referring to the therapy by its full name will also be problematic given the implied efficacy claim within it (see below).

CAP Compliance team – 31 May 2018

sectorcompliance@cap.org.uk

#2: Check for implied efficacy claims

Whilst direct efficacy claims for the treatment of Autism with CEASE therapy are clearly problematic, practitioners should similarly take care to avoid making indirect or implied efficacy claims for CEASE therapy as a treatment for Autism if no supporting evidence exists.

Advice:

As noted in point 1 above, the ASA would be likely to regard a reference to the therapy's full name, 'Complete Elimination of Autism Spectrum Expression', as an implied efficacy claim. Further, any text which links CEASE therapy to autism and / or other spectrum-related conditions could amount to an implied efficacy claim. As shown in the ASA's ruling, this can include visible text within URLs (as actual website page names, and as URLs within that website linking to external websites).

#3: Be careful when using [testimonials](#)

The website also stated "The following testimonial is from a parent of a child currently receiving CEASE Therapy", which described improvements seen in a child diagnosed with autism. Beneath, text stated "This testimonial represents only the personal opinions of people who have come to me for homeopathy and does not represent evidence".

Advice:

If a testimonial includes direct or indirect efficacy claims, then this will be subject to the same rules as any other claim. In other words, where efficacy has not been established, a testimonial should not be used to imply that it has. Patient testimonials alone are unlikely to substantiate objective claims about the efficacy of a product or therapy. Moreover, the use of a disclaimer is unlikely to be sufficient to counteract any misleading impression.

#4: Avoid making 'detoxification' claims

In the ASA's ruling, the website stated "CEASE Therapy involves the gentle removal of toxins from the body using a form of Homeopathy known as Isotherapy". Aside from the implied efficacy claims for homeopathy and CEASE therapy as a treatment for Autism here, the ASA also considered the detoxification claims to be problematic.

Advice:

CAP and the ASA understand that the body's liver and kidneys automatically detoxify and excrete many toxic materials, including metabolic wastes, and has not seen evidence to support the theory that toxins can be removed from the body by other means, so care should be taken to avoid claiming or implying otherwise.

Appendix: Code rules

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Relevant [CAP Code](#) rules:

3.1

Marketing communications must not materially mislead or be likely to do so.

3.7

Before distributing or submitting a marketing communication for publication, marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove claims that consumers are likely to regard as objective and that are capable of objective substantiation. The ASA may regard claims as misleading in the absence of adequate substantiation.

12.1

Objective claims must be backed by evidence, if relevant consisting of trials conducted on people. Substantiation will be assessed on the basis of the available scientific knowledge.

12.6

Marketers should not falsely claim that a product is able to cure illness, dysfunction or malformations.