

COMPLAINT NUMBER	16/360
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	Medico Herbs
ADVERTISEMENT	Medico Herbs Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	30 November 2016
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The website advertisement for Medico Herbs Cancer Bush (*Sutherlandia Frutescens*) tea bags states that Cancer Bush tea can assist the body in fighting diseases. The following statement is included in the advertisement: “It is also used to treat fever, poor appetite, indigestion, gastritis, peptic ulcers, dysentery, cancer, diabetes, colds and flu, coughs, asthma, chronic bronchitis, kidney and liver disease, rheumatism, heart failure, urinary tract infections, stress and anxiety.”

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: “There are a staggering number of therapeutic claims on the Medico Herbs website advertisement for their Cancer Bush tea bags.

A great plant that supports and strengthens the functioning of the immune system. It has antiseptic & anti-inflammatory properties and assists the body in fighting disease-causing pathogens.

This herb is used as an old Cape remedy for stomach problems & internal cancer. It is used for colds, flu, chickenpox, diabetes, varicose veins, piles, inflammation, liver problems, backache and rheumatism. It is also used/or the treatment of fever, poor appetite, indigestion, gastritis, peptic ulcers, dysentery, cancer, diabetes, colds and flu, coughs, asthma, chronic bronchitis, kidney and liver disease, rheumatism, heart failure, urinary tract infections, stress and anxiety.

Strong support with recent anecdotes where this herb appears to be of great benefit in treating pancreatic and other cancers. It improves the quality of life of patients with terminal metastatic breast cancer and for the pain and inflammation associated with rheumatoid arthritis.

The amino acid GABA occurs in high quantities, which indicates its positive uses for serious medical conditions.

L-canavanine has anticancer and antiviral activity and it is useful against the influenza virus and retroviruses. Canavanine is an inhibitor of nitric synthase, and it may be beneficial for certain forms of heart failure. Pinitol is a known anti-diabetic agent that may also have an application in treating wasting in cancer and AIDS.”

These claims are unproven, putting them in breach of Principle 2 of the ASA’s Therapeutic Products code. Claiming to be able to treat cancer and AIDs with tea bags is about as socially irresponsible as I could imagine an advert for tea bags could possibly get, putting this product firmly in breach of Principle 3.

The advert also breaches Part B1 Requirement 3, because of the total lack of substantiation for the wide range of claims that are made. It also breaches Requirement 4, as these claims are likely to mislead at least some unwitting consumers into believing that this tea is able to treat their serious medical condition.”

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic Products Advertising Code - B1 Requirement 3, B1 Requirement 4, Principle 2, Principle 3.

The Advertiser, Medico Herbs, said they were happy to amend the advertisement to comply with the Therapeutic Products Advertising Code.

The Chair noted the concerns from the Complainant that the advertisement made therapeutic claims that could not be substantiated.

The Chair reviewed the response from the Advertiser and noted that the Advertiser had since removed the Cancer Bush tea bags product from their website.

Noting the self-regulatory action of the Advertiser, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair’s Ruling: Complaint **Settled**