

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/169
COMPLAINANT	M Taylor
ADVERTISER	BBC (Bowen & Bach Flower Clinic)
ADVERTISEMENT	BBC (Bowen & Bach Flower Clinic), Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	8 August 2017
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The Bowen and Bach Flower Clinic website, www.bowenclinic.co.nz/bowen.htm, contained therapeutic claims about the efficacy of Bowen therapy on a wide range of conditions.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Taylor, said: A website advertisement for a "Bowen Therapy" contains misleading therapeutic claims regarding its Health Services, in violation of the Therapeutic Health Advertising Code Principle 2a. Because these claims are misleading, the advertisement also fails to observe the high standard of social responsibility required of it by Principle 1. As far as I can tell, there is no evidence to substantiate the claims being made about the service offered.

The likely consumer takeout would be that this service is capable of providing the healing properties that it describes. The claims made imply that this technique has numerous beneficial properties, none of which I was able to find substantiation for. A study referenced by the advertisement was self-reporting and not close to the standard required for the claims being made.

The advertisement claims it is easy to see why Bowen is such a powerful and effective treatment for chronic injury and illness. Remarkable results are also achieved in first-aid situations, post injury or post surgery.

The language being used strongly implies a powerful, effective, and remarkable therapy, so one would assume that the evidence to support these claims has sufficient weight to warrant them. Effectively, this description covers a wide range of potential ailments, and could be seen to promote the Bowen technique to address a great many conditions.

The advertisement then lists 46 conditions, under the heading Can Bowen help me? it also states Bowen can facilitate rapid and lasting relief from many conditions including the following, in fact Tom Bowen said that any or every condition could be addressed by this technique. This gives the implication that Bowen Therapy can treat any and every condition. My concern is that this type of treatment is being used as a catch-all solution and delaying what could be important, evidence based treatment. At the very least, consumers will be spending money on purported health services which have no evidence of efficacy.

In summary, the claims made on the website do not appear to have been adequately substantiated, and should therefore be considered to violate the Therapeutic Health Advertising Code Principle 2a.

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Guideline 2(a), Principle 1, Principle 2;

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated claims about Bowen Therapy, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website, removing or amending references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the website, 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**