

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/212
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	KZY Real Massage
ADVERTISEMENT	KZY Real Massage, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	3 August 2017
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The KZY Real Massage Facebook advertisement describes the health benefits of massage on a variety of ailments.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: An article on KZY Real Massage's Facebook page advertises their Reflexology massage service by making therapeutic claims. These claims cover Cancer, Arthritis, Hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, Migraine and tension headaches, Anxiety and depression, Multiple sclerosis, Sinusitis, Circulation, Toxins, AIDS, kidney stones, constipation, backaches, restless leg syndrome, diabetic neuropathy, menopause and PMS:

These claims, that massaging of someone's foot can "reduce cancer treatment symptoms", "reduce the pain associated with arthritis", "reduce hypertension", "have a positive effect in type 2 diabetics", "reduce tension and migraine headaches", "decrease depression and anxiety", "decrease fatigue in women with multiple sclerosis", "improve chronic sinusitis", "improve blood circulation", "reduce urinary tract issues", "improve bladder function", "eliminate toxins", "treat symptoms of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, kidney stones, constipation, backaches and restless leg syndrome" and "improve memory, manage diabetic neuropathy and ease symptoms of menopause and premenstrual syndrome", are all unproven - with no evidence offered to back them up beyond a few poorly cited studies. Although these studies are not linked to, the descriptions of them (e.g. "34 participants", "Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine") suggest that they are not a robust body of evidence, but rather cherry picked, biased papers.

Because of the seriousness of the claims being made, and the lack of evidence offered, I believe these claims are in breach of Principle 1 of the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code. It is socially irresponsible to make these kinds of claims without good evidence to back them up.

Rule 1(c) is breached, as the claims made portray the unrealistic outcome that symptoms of serious conditions such as cancer and AIDS can be relieved with a foot massage.

Principle 2 is breached, as the claims appear to not be truthful. Rule 2(a) has been breached, as these claims have not been substantiated beyond the few individual articles that are mentioned. It seems doubtful that these articles are sufficient evidence to back up the claims that have been made.

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

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's Facebook page contained irresponsible and unsubstantiated claims about the benefits of Reflexology massage, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had removed the Facebook page.

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