

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/436
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	Triple R Massage
ADVERTISEMENT	Triple R Massage, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	7 December 2017
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement changed/removed

Advertisement: The Triple R Massage Facebook Post advertisement described how Bowen Therapy can put the body back in equilibrium.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: A Facebook advert for Triple R Massage's Bowen Therapy service, in the Whitby (NZ) Community group, says:

"Try Bowen Therapy; a gentle, holistic massage technique that will put the body back in equilibrium.

Eases muscle tension and stress, treats injuries, alleviates teeth grinding, assists with digestive problems, migraines and headaches, as well as many other issues caused by an unbalanced body."

These claims, that a Bowen Massage can help (or assist) with conditions such as muscle tension, stress, injuries, teeth grinding, digestive problems, migraines and headaches, are therapeutic in nature. As such, they fall under the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code.

The advert appears to breach Principle 2 of the code, as these claims are likely to mislead some of the group's 8,407 members into thinking that Bowen Therapy is able to treat the listed medical conditions. Rule 2(a) has been breached, as no substantiation has been given on the post, or the company's website (<http://zednik.co.nz/bowen.html>), for the claims that have been made.

Principle 1 has been breached, as it is socially irresponsible to make these claims - with the risk that people may rely on using Bowen Therapy for the listed health conditions rather than seeking proper medical care.

A search online finds no good quality evidence that Bowen therapy can help with the listed conditions. The Wikipedia page for Bowen says "There is no clear evidence that the technique is a useful medical intervention", a 2011 Systematic Review (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22087611>) states "scientific evidence is not well documented. Further research is needed to systematically test this modality, before widespread recommendations can be given" and an NHMRC review from 2015 said "There is currently insufficient evidence from systematic reviews within this field to reach any conclusion regarding the effectiveness, safety, quality or cost-effectiveness of Bowen therapy."

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

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

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the Facebook posting, 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 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 – advertisement changed/removed**