

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	16/200
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	M Honeychurch
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Holistic Vets
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Holistic Vets Digital Marketing
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	16 March 2017
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Settled

**Advertisement:** The website advertisement for Holistic Vets – [www.holisticvets.co.nz](http://www.holisticvets.co.nz) - said “Acupuncture can be used to treat or augment treatment of a variety of conditions including: Pain: acute, chronic, age-related, hip dysplasia; Gastrointestinal disorders: IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease), megacolon, vomiting, diarrhea; Respiratory problems: asthma; Dermatological problems: allergies, ear infections, self-mutilation, lick granulomas; Musculoskeletal disorders: lameness, tendonitis, back pain, arthritis; Neurological problems: intervertebral disc disease, paralysis, paresis, seizures; Behaviour problems: fear, anxiety, aggression; Urinary problems: chronic cystitis, incontinence.

The website also listed a range of conditions that can benefit from chiropractics, such as spinal pain, trauma and seizures and a list of conditions that benefit from HBOT (hyperbaric oxygen therapy), such as brain/nerve damage, acute ischaemic conditions and inflammatory conditions such as pancreatitis.

#### **The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.**

**Complainant, M Honeychurch, said:** The website for Holistic Vets makes unsupported claims for the acupuncture, chiropractic and Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) services they offer.

These claims appear to breach the ASA's Code of Ethics. Specifically, Basic Principle 3 has been breached as these advertisements are likely to mislead or deceive the consumer into thinking that veterinary acupuncture, chiropractic and HBOT treatments are able to treat the conditions listed on the on the site.

Additionally, Rule 2 appears to have been breached as the direct claims in these adverts that veterinary acupuncture, chiropractic and HBOT can treat medical conditions are likely to mislead consumers. The adverts make misleading claims about the treatments, and they appear likely to exploit the average consumer's lack of knowledge in the field of veterinary alternative medicine. A quick search of the currently available literature shows a lack of compelling scientific evidence for the use of veterinary acupuncture, veterinary chiropractic or veterinary HBOT.

Of course, as is so often the case with alternative medicine practitioners, there are other therapies being advertised by Holistic Vets that also appear to make unsupported claims about the advertiser's ability to treat animals with alternative therapies. However, the acupuncture, chiropractic and HBOT adverts seem to be the most egregious examples on the site. I hope that the advertiser is able to check over all the claims made on their website, and to remove all unsupported claims from the site.

**The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 2.**

**The Chair** noted the Advertiser had altered the website so that any alternative treatment options on offer are not claiming there will be a positive outcome of any sort.

Given 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**