

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/109
ADVERTISER	Harmonia
ADVERTISEMENT	Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	7 April 2020
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The Harmonia website (www.harmonia.co.nz) advertised health services which included Ear Candling, Reflexology and Reiki Healing.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complaint: Harmonia's website makes various claims for a number of their health services that likely goes against the scientific evidence.

These claims are likely to breach the Advertising Standards Code, Principle 2, Rule 2 (b) and the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code Principle 2, Rule 2(a).

On their Ear Candling Therapy page (<https://harmonia.co.nz/therapies/ear-candling/>):
"A gentle way to remove excess ear wax and regulate ear pressure

Ear Candling Therapy is indicated for the:
Removal of excessive or compacted wax in the ear
Relief of irritation in ears and sinuses
Pressure regulation in cases of sinusitis / rhinitis / glue ear / colds / flu / headaches / migraine
Relaxing and calming effect in cases of stress"

On their Reflexology page (<https://harmonia.co.nz/therapies/holistic-reflexology/>):
"Choose Holistic Reflexology for help with
Release of pain and tension; ... eliminating toxins; ...very helpful for anxiety, worry, stress; ... helps with headaches and digestive issues; poor or interrupted sleep patterns; improves circulation and general health and wellbeing"

On their Reiki page (<https://harmonia.co.nz/therapies/energy-healing/>):
"Choose Reiki and Intuitive Energy Healing to help you with
Relieving stress, worry and anxiety; ... recovering from injury, surgery, illness; ... healing trauma ..."

**The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(b);
Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(a);**

ADVERTISING STANDARDS CODE

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

Rule 2(b) Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust or exploit their lack of knowledge. This includes by implication, inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, unrealistic claim, omission, false representation or otherwise. Obvious hyperbole identifiable as such is not considered to be misleading.

THERAPEUTIC AND HEALTH ADVERTISING CODE

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements shall be truthful, balanced and not misleading. Advertisements shall not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust, exploit their lack of knowledge or without justifiable reason, play on fear. This includes by implication, omission, ambiguity, exaggerated or unrealistic claim or hyperbole.

Rule 2 (a) Truthful presentation: Advertisements shall be accurate. Statements and claims shall be valid and shall be able to be substantiated. Substantiation should exist prior to a claim being made. For medicines and medical devices, therapeutic claims must be consistent with the approved indication(s) (for medicines) or the listed intended purpose (for medical devices).

The Chair noted the complainant's concerns that the website was promoting unsubstantiated health services.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website and had amended the therapeutic claims about Ear Candling, Reflexology and Reki Healing that were the subject of the complaint.

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**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.