

General Council and Register of Naturopaths

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Minimum Levels of Naturopathic Competence.

1. In order to apply naturopathic therapeutic techniques safely and competently a practitioner must have sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathology, nutrition, naturopathic principles and basic medical therapeutics. A practitioner must have acquired sufficient depth of knowledge of the principles of medicine and the pathological processes of underlying disease and be aware of the physiological basis of, and current concepts regarding, naturopathic treatment.
2. A practitioner must be capable of taking and interpreting a pertinent case history which should include information about the patient's present complaint including predisposing, precipitating and maintaining factors as well as information about the patient's medical, physiological, social and family history.
3. A practitioner must be able to conduct and interpret an appropriate clinical examination which will include:
 - a. an examination and evaluation of the biomechanics of the patient and a reasoned assessment of the fundamental biomechanical interrelationships within the body's structure.
 - b. the use and interpretation of appropriate and currently acceptable clinical testing procedures and auxiliary investigations, including a clinical examination of the nervous system.
4. A practitioner must be trained to make an appropriate differential diagnosis based upon current knowledge. This should include awareness that pain associated with certain visceral diseases can mimic pains originating from within the musculo-skeletal system. It is essential therefore that a practitioner should be able to distinguish between pain of a biomechanical nature and that of visceral origin as well as determine whether a pain is derived from the site where it is experienced or referred from another part.
5. A practitioner must be trained to record systematically all relevant information and findings and be able to communicate these, and their relevance, to the patient's general practitioner and/or other health care practitioner.
6. A practitioner must also be aware of the absolute and relative contra-indications to naturopathic treatment. The practitioner must also be aware of his/her limits of competence and be able to recognise when the patient is suffering from a condition where naturopathic treatment may be inappropriate and which accordingly requires referral to a registered medical practitioner.
7. On completion of an initial examination, the practitioner should be in a position to determine whether naturopathic treatment is appropriate, and if so formulate an appropriate treatment plan and prognosis. The practitioner should be able to communicate his or her findings, diagnosis, prognosis (and possible prophylaxis) to the patient in such a way that the patient's own expectations are taken into consideration.
8. Naturopathic treatment embraces a wide range of therapeutic techniques. Practitioners should be familiar with at least the core techniques of naturopathic techniques and know how to apply and

modify them appropriately to the patient's particular condition. The following therapies are considered to be of primary importance in the naturopathic treatment of disease: nutrition and dietetics, fasting, structural adjustment, hydrotherapy, encouragement of a healthy life-style and health education. In naturopathic philosophy it is just as important, if not more so, to explain to the patient why disease occurs and what the patient can do for him or herself to maintain the new, improved level of health given to them by naturopathic treatment. In this way the patient is given responsibility for his or her health.

9. Practitioners should be aware of the hazards of inappropriate and "over" treatment, and be capable of evaluating, assessing and reassessing the patient's changing condition and any other ongoing therapeutic procedure that the patient may be receiving.

To sum up, the practice of naturopathy requires a depth of medical and biomechanical knowledge with a repertoire and refinement of technical skills that short undergraduate courses alone cannot adequately hope to provide. In order to absorb the professional skills and ethical values essential for safe and competent practice all student naturopaths require a continuity of clinical experience combined with substantive interaction with professional lecturers, clinicians and peers in an environment which allows for a synthesis of theoretical learning and practical experience.