

CONNECT

Is There A Healthspiracy?

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Why else are complementary medicine charities being targeted?

- 1 The Gerson Support Group once received thanks from Prince Charles for enabling a woman to have several more years of healthy life – after being told she had terminal cancer and would not survive any more chemotherapy.
- 2 Yet, this cancer charity has now been removed from the charity register and forced to take down its website. It is the first in what I have reason to believe will be a long line of complementary and alternative medicine charities that are being targeted.
- 3 The Gerson Support Group promoted, in the UK, the Gerson Therapy for people with cancer and other illnesses. This therapy, [as described by CancerActive](#), was created in the 1920s by Dr Max Gerson and is designed to align with the laws of nature - as shown by a quote by Dr Gerson on the [Practitioner Training](#) page of the [US] Gerson Institute's website:

"History shows that, from time to time, men are swayed too easily by new thoughts and theories and by new developments in technology and chemistry, which they use as their bases in medical practice.

This leads them too far away from nature.

Therefore, it becomes necessary from time to time to bring medical doctrine back nearer to nature."

Although the Gerson Support Group's website has been taken down, [it can still be seen](#). It explains, the Gerson Therapy was originally created as a treatment for tuberculosis. The therapy is used for treating not only cancer but also some non-malignant chronic degenerative diseases - diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, heart and circulatory problems, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, ADHD being among them.

The Gerson Therapy aims to restore health through diet and detoxification, among other strategies. This means this therapy is going to *trigger* some people – because it challenges established beliefs - such as that the food we eat is safe and nutritious and there are no nasty toxins in our food, medicine and living environment.

And it appears that it *has* triggered some people. So-called complementary and alternative medicine is like that – and complementary and alternative medicine [CAM] charities are, I'm afraid, sitting ducks, especially given that they – like other charities - have a predator – the Charity Commission.

The Gerson Therapy includes a diet composed of "*precious health-builders missing from the non-organic modern diet.*" The Gerson Support Group's website calls animal protein, most fats, salt and refined carbohydrates "*nutritionally useless foods.*"

And then, there's detoxification, about which it says:

"In our polluted world the human body is constantly bombarded by toxins of all kinds, until the overloaded immune system is no longer able to dispose of them. This, in turn, opens the door to degenerative diseases of all kinds."

Nobody would be forced to have the Gerson Therapy, which is more than can be said for certain other cancer "treatments," I'm sure of that.

The former charity also did not make any false claims – its archived website carried a disclaimer:

"...it must be emphasized that the Gerson Therapy is not a miracle cure and, like all other types of medicine, offers no guarantee of healing."

4 CONNECT asked the trustees of the former charity to give their side of the story. Unfortunately, they declined, saying that they:

"do not want to get involved with any articles about the Charity being closed down... we have been taking legal advice over the last two years and we would not want to put ourselves at risk in ANY way at this stage."

We at CONNECT were, naturally, disappointed. Not only would we have liked to confirm that the Charity Commission's statement on the government's website ["Organisation offering alternative cancer therapies to wind up after charity regulator questioned its public benefit"](#) - that the Gerson Support Group decided to close down because it was unable to provide evidence to back up its medical claims – was truthful.

We were also extremely saddened that the trustees are clearly fearful of what might happen to them if they were to speak with us about what has happened.

The Gerson Support Group is the first charity - so far - to be [deregistered](#) following the Charity Commission's review of complementary and alternative medicine [CAM] charities. The Charity Commission has warned that it is investigating other CAM charities, which now need to "*ensure that their activities deliver clear public benefit*".

On the face of it, the need to provide *evidence* is totally reasonable. But *is* it?

There is an obvious issue here - who *assesses* the evidence?

According to Richie Allen in [Natural Health Group Stripped Of Charity Status Over Cancer Claims](#) – the story had been originally published by The

Telegraph - the Charity Commission assessed the Gerson Support Group's therapy programme, as part of its investigation into the charity.

We at CONNECT have abundant evidence, from several witnesses, that the Charity Commission

"could not investigate its way to change a toilet roll - not even in their own building."

That job, we understand, is contracted out.

Even without that assessment of its ability - how well placed is the Charity Commission, with its high population density of lawyers - to judge medical evidence?

Also, what happens when other parties become involved in that assessment - other parties who have a conflict of interests?

As we are all finding out, science is not quite what we thought. On CONNECT recently, we have published articles about scientific fraud, in our Deep Dive articles - ["Is This Not Fraud First Class?"](#) and the magazine - ["How Does He Sleep At Night?"](#)

This fraud makes it painfully clear that so-called "evidence" is not always, as it needs to be, either objective or impartial - or even accurate.

- 5 This lack of objective, impartial - even accurate - evidence has muddied the Charity Commission's consultation [The use and promotion of complementary and alternative medicine: making decisions about charitable status](#) and the subsequent - I fear it will be this - witch-hunt of CAM charities.

The consultation received about 670 responses. One was from [The Good Thinking Society](#) - another UK charity. Now is a good time to mention that if you thought the world of charity was soft and fluffy, I have bad news - it isn't.

It is clear that the *humbly-named* "The Good Thinking Society" does not like complementary and alternative medicine charities.

It does not like complementary and alternative medicine - full stop.

Its stated goal is "to encourage curiosity and promote rational thinking."

Sounds good - but, to this charity "battling against irrationality and pseudoscience" appears to me to mean debunking anything which presents a threat to their world view. This includes many things - complementary and alternative medicine is just one of them.

This charity's [Project Director](#) is Michael Marshall - I will return to Mr Marshall later.

Among other recipients of its funds, the Good Thinking Society has donated

money to [the "fact-checker" Full Fact - and paid for a Judicial Review](#) to challenge the Society of Homeopaths' accreditation.

The Good Thinking Society has also given [£60,000 to the University of Oxford](#) – this was to fund a project to do with monitoring the clinical trial reporting performances of universities, funders, sponsors and other organisations - and pharmaceutical companies.

The Good Thinking Society is proud – not to mention excited - to announce on its website that it made a [submission to the Charity Commission's CAM charities review](#).

The submission, by Michael Marshall, began by revealing something interesting: that the Commission's consultation *had arisen, in part, due to correspondence between the Charity Commission and the Good Thinking Society in 2016*.

The charity's involvement began after it became concerned about some complaints, between 2012 and 2015, about some CAM charities that promoted homeopathy to sufferers of HIV and victims of rape in Botswana, as well as other charities which claimed to be able to reverse cancer using homeopathy.

I can't help wondering - how would the Good Thinking Society know about these complaints made to the Charity Commission?

The Good Thinking Society argued that the benefit of CAM therapies should be demonstrated in the same manner as the benefit of any other therapy – via well-conducted trials published in peer-reviewed literature.

Amazingly, they also thought it appropriate to write:

"The more implausible a therapy is, the higher the standard of evidence that is required before that therapy can be accepted as effective.

This point is sometimes misunderstood, especially by some CAM practitioners, but can be explained by way of an analogy: if someone claimed to have a pet cat, it would be reasonable to believe them, because the existence of cats is widely accepted, plenty of people have pet cats, and most people have seen prior evidence that cats exist.

If, however, that person claimed to own a pet dragon, it would be unreasonable to accept their claim without first seeing the dragon or otherwise getting more evidence, as we have no reason to believe that dragons exist."

It would be funny, if it wasn't so condescending and absurd. This is a charity – comparing CAM to dragons. Not content with this little gem, Michael Marshall continued:

"Almost by definition, treatments that are classed in the Complementary and Alternative Medicine category lack robust, reliable and scientifically accepted evidence of effectiveness. If such a treatment were proven to be effective, it

would be adopted by conventional medicine and would cease being considered as an alternative."

The Good Thinking Society has claimed to hold an important role – as a quasi-partner to the Charity Commission, in effect:

"Last year, after prompting by Good Thinking, the Charity Commission promised to hold a consultation regarding their policies on accepting the registration of charities which exist for the promotion of Complementary and Alternative Medicine."

I see two possibilities here.

Either Michael Marshall and his "Good Thinking Society" are correct, which means, the Charity Commission has done what a charity staffed by people with influence – which Marshall has - told it to do -

or, the Charity Commission did NOT do what the Good Thinking Society told it to do, which means, Michael Marshall and his charity is being grandiose or deluded - or perhaps both.

6 I said that Michael Marshall has influence, as well as a strong desire to eradicate non-pharmaceutical medical treatments from our world.

Marshall quite often writes for The Guardian - one article by him, in 2017, was called [Should complementary and alternative medicine charities lose their charitable status?](#) He didn't ask, in his article title, if the evidence standard for CAMs should be raised – he asked if charities should be *removed*.

This is my point – Michael Marshall does not believe that CAM works. Any CAM. If it is CAM, it does not work – because it is non-pharmaceutical and also because it cannot work – a circular argument.

Marshall did, in this article, exactly what he accuses people who have a different view from him, of doing – such as people he calls conspiracy theorists. He wrote about certain instances in which CAM was used wrongly, failed, or caused harm. Then he concluded that CAM *never* works.

And Michael Marshall is not working alone. Les Rose, a retired clinical research scientist, posts anti-CAM blogs at [Majikthyse](#). One of Rose's 2019 posts was [Gerson Therapy and toxins](#) in which he wrote about an email conversation he had with the Gerson Support Group – but mainly with the Gerson Institute in the USA.

Rose argued that, because the answers he received from the Gerson Institute were unsatisfactory – as he hoped they would be – that proved that Gerson Therapy did not work -and that the Gerson Support Group should be deregistered.

Later, like Michael Marshall, Rose claimed he had an important role – another quasi-partner to the Charity Commission, in effect – in his comments on another blogger's site - [The Gerson Therapy - possibly the worst cancer](#)

[quackery of them all](#). This writer, Edzard Ernst, begins with Prince Charles' endorsement of the Gerson Support Group – but, like the other enemies of CAM, cannot accept the criticism of the “developed” world that Gerson and other CAM therapies, by definition, introduce – we are surrounded by toxins and a lot of our food is not nutritious. Ernst also cannot see how the Gerson therapy could work – it thus does not work – this is a key strand in his reasoning.

To me, there is a nastiness about Michael Marshall and Les Rose, especially the former, despite how innocent he looks in the image below. Not only that but an arrogance – a strong sense of entitlement.

Les Rose is a trustee at another UK charity, [HealthSense](#), formerly called HealthWatch. This charity's President and co-founder is Nick Ross, the veteran broadcaster of British breakfast TV, Watchdog and Crimewatch.

Nick Ross also appears arrogant in how he presents himself on the charity's website on the People page, under the heading of “[Declaration of interests](#).”

“I do not believe there is anything that would affect my approach to HW; rather my commitment to the aims of HW is likely to colour my approach to the other tasks. But I suppose I should concede I have multiple interests that might be considered by others to affect the impartiality of my role in HealthSense.”

Those multiple interests that might be considered by others to affect the impartiality of his role include:

Voluntary commitments to boards and advisory committees of several health-related and bioethics charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Occasional paid work for, or involving, the Department of Health, NHS and health-related companies including the biotech and pharmaceutical sectors.

I have to say – how does this paid work NOT affect the impartiality of his role?

How is his statement that other people might interpret it this way, not *incredibly arrogant – not to mention secretive*?

Does he think the rules are for other people?

Perhaps he does.

Perhaps because they are.

Perhaps HealthSense is special.

HealthSense reported, in [its newsletter](#) in summer 2021, that the Charity Commission had said it would remove the Gerson Support Group from the register. This was several months before it did so in March 2022 – so how did HealthSense know?

This statement is however in conflict with the [blog post by the Charity Commission](#) that the Gerson Support Group decided to remove itself from the register:

"The trustees themselves acknowledged that the evidence around Gerson nutritional therapy may not be sufficient to meet the public benefit requirement."

Also, HealthSense said in the same newsletter that the Charity Commission had "at last" decided to remove the Gerson Support Group from the register of charities - *21 months after Les Rose's complaint. It's almost as if they EXPECTED the Commission to do their bidding.*

Furthermore, they said that a Private Eye report published on 26 May 2021 - "Quack Team" - featured Les Rose's "investigations into the Charity Commission's inaction over the questionable and possibly dangerous practices of some registered health charities."

Worryingly, HealthSense said they had filed detailed complaints to the Charity Commission about 15 other CAM charities. They didn't identify which charities.

Returning to Michael Marshall - he is also the [Editor-in-Chief of The Skeptic](#), a website that features articles by him and several other people, all of whom appear to genuinely believe that they are being objective in their views. Bless 'em.

On their [Write For Us](#) page, they claim that The Skeptic is apolitical and ask that people "write with humility and avoid pomposity... or superiority." They even claim not to mock people who promote "pseudoscience."

I think someone should tell Marshall, he and the other writers do not walk their talk. Their articles are an attempt to debunk practices and beliefs which Marshall and his mates call "pseudoscience" - non-establishment, in other words - and they have a particular hatred of homeopathy. Articles stoop to a lot of name-calling - the usual cliched insults, including "far-right" and "conspiracy theory."

7 Even more interesting is that the Deputy Editor of the Skeptic is [Alice Howarth](#), who works in pharmacology and therapeutics.

Not only is Alice studying the pharmacokinetics of nanomedicines - which *might* possibly explain her zero-tolerance for non-pharmaceutical treatments - but she just *happens* to be a [researcher at Liverpool University](#) - where Dr Andrew Hill works. Not only that - Alice even *happens* to be in the same department as Prof Andrew Owen, who has been implicated in Dr Andrew Hill's research fraud - the subject of our Deep Dive article "[Is This Not Fraud First Class?](#)" and our magazine article "[How Does He Sleep At Night?](#)"

What a small world this is - or as [Amazing Polly](#) would say - BOOM!

8 So, what does the future look like for CAM charities? I don't like to think too much about that question - not while people like Michael Marshall and Les Rose have their attention on them.

To be fair, it's not just Marshall and Rose. It's an established – or *establishment* - mindset that is the problem, rather than individuals.

One obvious challenge is that people involved in CAM therapies have a tendency to think for themselves – not follow the herd, as shown by “Naturopath” magazine, “the naturopathy professionals and healthcare magazine,”

Articles in the summer 2021 edition included: “Can We Trust Science? – Censorship or Corruption” by [Charlotte Palmer](#), an investigative health and environmental journalist, about peer review in science, which begins:

“... it becomes apparent that the peer review system is arguably better at one thing above all others: Censorship.”

The same edition of “Naturopath” magazine also features an article called “Influence of Media on Health” by the editor, Madelaine Winzer, a former athlete.

This article asks interesting questions about how usual it is for people to form their own views as opposed to merely adopting the views of influencers.

Therapists and others involved in CAM will often be more aware than most people of the closed and circular nature of the “evidence-based” club and where they fit into it – often, on the outside, as shown by the autumn 2019 edition of International Therapist - the offline magazine of the Federation of Holistic Therapists.

The editor, Karen Young, wrote about the problem the FHT has with promoting therapies and supporting those promotions with evidence [the emboldening is mine]:

*“Looking at the content of hundreds of articles, conversations, surveys and awards entries, my colleagues and I know very well the huge difference you are making to the health and wellbeing of people in your local community. The challenge we [and you] [the members of the FHT – the therapists] have is **trying to promote this effectively, without falling on the wrong side of various regulations, authorities and CAM sceptics**.”*

Karen continued:

*“At the FHT, we fully understand the importance of evidence-based practice, and **no therapist worth their salt would make claims to treat or cure a medical condition**. Ultimately, the problem lies with research: whether there's a lack of it, a lack of “**the right sort**” or, arguably, **certain authorities overlooking what is already available**...”*

Being “on the wrong side” naturally creates the potential for conflict between CAM charities and the Charity Commission, which is not independent from the establishment, the government or the influence of people [and charities] with an agenda – as what appears to have happened with the Gerson Support Group makes clear.

Not only is there abundant evidence of a *vendetta* against charities that offer or promote so-called complementary and alternative medicine.

There is also abundant evidence of a *vendetta* against complementary and alternative medicine itself.

That very term – “complementary and alternative medicine” says so much. It says that CAM treatments are not the real thing – their role is to *complement* real medicine, which is pharmaceutical medicine – and by definition, they are alternatives to the real thing. Words matter.

I'd imagine that a lot of people who are involved in complementary and

alternative medicine have a disturbing tendency to think for themselves and hold views that challenge certain orthodoxies. Disturbing, that is, to people whose lives, careers and bank balances are founded on those same orthodoxies.

Could there be a connection between these “unorthodox” points of view and the obvious campaign to target CAM charities?

After all, complementary and alternative medicine is proof - if we needed any - that Big Pharma's saying – *if it's not out of a bottle it won't do you any good* – is not true.

And a lot of people won't – and don't - like that.

The world has sadly lost a valuable support group for people with cancer and the wolves are circling, poised to attack other charities that also help people to recover their health.

There needs to be a re-balancing of how we all look at health, with a critical look in particular at the role the pharmaceutical industry plays in our society.

There is a need to return to source.

There needs to be a return to basic principles and - above all –

A new approach to transparency across the entire medical industry!

CONNECT'S Maxim and Oath

Connect is only interested in finding and sharing the TRUTH.
In search of that TRUTH, we only pose questions – we have no answers.

By: Helen King

Source: Tetbury CONNECT: [Magazine](#)

- 3 [LINK:](#) CancerActive: Gerson Support Group
- 3 [LINK:](#) Gerson Institute: Practitioner Training
- 3 [LINK:](#) Wayback Machine: Gerson Support Group website [archived]
- 4 [LINK:](#) GOV.UK: Organisation offering alternative cancer therapies to wind up after charity regulator questioned its public benefit
- 4 [LINK:](#) Charity Commission: charity register - Gerson Support Group – [removed]
- 4 [LINK:](#) Richie Allen: Natural Health Group Stripped Of Charity Status Over Cancer Claims
- 4 [LINK:](#) CONNECT: Deep Dive Articles: Is This Not Fraud First Class?
- 4 [LINK:](#) CONNECT: Magazine: How Does He Sleep At Night?
- 5 [LINK:](#) GOV.UK: Charity Commission Outcome Report - The use and promotion of complementary and alternative medicine: making decisions about charitable status
- 5 [LINK:](#) The Good Thinking Society
- 5 [LINK:](#) Good Thinking Society: People
- 5 [LINK:](#) Good Thinking Society: Annual Report 2020/21
- 5 [LINK:](#) Good Thinking Society: Annual Report 2019/20
- 5 [LINK:](#) Good Thinking Society: Our Submission to the Charity Commission's CAM charities review
- 6 [LINK:](#) The Guardian: Michael Marshall - Should complementary and alternative medicine charities lose their charitable status?
- 6 [LINK:](#) Majikthyse
- 6 [LINK:](#) Majikthyse: Gerson Therapy and toxins
- 6 [LINK:](#) Edzard Ernst: The Gerson Therapy: possibly the worst cancer quackery of them all
- 6 [LINK:](#) HealthSense
- 6 [LINK:](#) HealthSense: People
- 6 [LINK:](#) HealthSense: Newsletter – summer 2021
- 6 [LINK:](#) Charity Commission: Blog: Regulating charities offering complementary and alternative medicine therapies
- 6 [LINK:](#) The Skeptic: Editorial Board
- 6 [LINK:](#) The Skeptic: Write For Us
- 7 [LINK:](#) University of Liverpool: Alice Howarth

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[LINK:](#) Charlotte Palmer: Food Specialist

[LINK:](#) Amazing Polly

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