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## Annual influenza vaccine: Review of current attitudes, effectiveness and natural evidence based alternatives in the likelihood of influenza pandemic

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Influenza Pandemic remains a global threat (WHO), yet from a pharmaceutical perspective, we remain woefully ill-equipped. Health Care Workers (HCW) themselves are statistically the most influenza vaccine hesitant group in the population. With calls being made to make influenza vaccine programmes compulsory, evidence needs to be taken seriously and a critical assessment made. Carina will discuss what is the growing consensus of the ineffectiveness of the influenza vaccine and the reasons. According to Professor of Virology at Warwick University, Andrew Easton, “A judgement should be made about replacing this [influenza] vaccine in the current climate of limited NHS budget. A re-think is also needed as other therapeutic aids are showing promise.” Carina will discuss alternative evidence based herbal medicine and supplements that specifically match the pharmacological action of drugs to reduce influenza incidence and mortality, and boost natural immunity to provide long standing protection . Topics include increasing interferon and how this works not only as a prophylactic and treatment for influenza but, by addressing Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC) dysfunction, simultaneously has the capacity to reduce the incidence of autoimmune disease (caused by molecular mimicry). Other topics include viral replication inhibition using natural neuraminidase and polymerase inhibitors and compounds in herbal medicine that specifically reduce the inflammatory cascade known as the cytokine storm, associated with high mortality in influenza pandemics.

### Biography

Carina Harkin is the world's first triple degree graduate in Complementary and Alternative (CAM) therapies having completed 3 x level 8, 4 year full-time degrees, in naturopathy, acupuncture and homeopathy. Carina is a published author of 2 scientific trials in natural medicine a world first trial using acupuncture in an Accident and Emergency, *A Prospective, Randomised Control Trial of Acupuncture for Select Common Conditions within the Emergency Department*, Journal of Chinese Medicine, Number 85, pp 45-52., October 2007 and *Effect of Homeopathic Calcium on Bone Density*, Homoeopathic Links, Vol. 21: 1-6 6. Spring 2008. Carina is currently completing a Masters in Public Health with UCC Ireland. Carina runs a successful online Naturopathic advisory service and supplies herbs globally through Carahealth. Carina holds a teaching qualification, has years lecturing experience and 20 years clinical experience. Carina specialises in antiaging medicine and life extension. Carina has worked in Public Health twice and her goal is to advise the WHO on the use of traditional medicine to keep populations healthy.

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