Is evidence-based medicine a sham?

It would be reasonable to expect that in support of the concept of evidence-based medicine, that all relevant evidence had been assessed, but it seems that the information relating to blood rheology has not been included.

In addition, the idea that all relevant evidence has been assessed has been called into question by Greenberg\(^1\) who wrote, “How citation distortions create unfounded authority: analysis of a citation network.” In introducing the concept of “citation bias” he noted, “Unfounded authority was established by citation bias against papers that refuted or weakened the belief .... the marked expansion of the belief system by papers presenting no data addressing it; and forms of invention such as the conversion of hypothesis into fact through citation alone.”

As the network included 242 papers, this means that neither peer review nor editorial oversight recognised the citation bias.

An important aspect was the citation bias against papers that refuted or weakened the belief, as there are good reasons to believe that this could explain why papers dealing with the topic of haemorheology have been ignored in the development of the current concepts of the causes of the major health problems such as cardiovascular disorders, cerebrovascular disorders, diabetes and hypertension.

The extent of the relevant but disregarded literature can be assessed by the results of PubMed searches for “cardiovascular disorders and blood viscosity” 4323 titles; “cerebrovascular disorders and blood viscosity”, 782 titles; “diabetes and blood viscosity”, 768 titles; “hypertension and blood viscosity”, 848 titles. Given the very large amount of information concerning these disorders which has not been used in evidence-based medicine, what is the logic behind the term?

This apparent rejection of the research results by many devoted investigators demeans their activities. The reluctance of major journals to publish information about blood rheology, has been shown by an email from the deputy-editor of the British Medical Journal (BMJ), which stated, “We won't be posting any more rapid responses from you that mention blood viscosity or rheology.”

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Reference: