

Supplementary Table 1 Prescription of six most common Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical drug groups

| Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical group | Day 0 | | | | | Cumulative: Day 0-28 | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------|
| | Anthroposophy group | | Conventional group | | P-value | Anthroposophy group | | Conventional group | | P-value |
| | N | % | N | % | | N | % | N | % | |
| J01 Antibacterials for systemic use | 2 | 0.5% | 15 | 17,4% | < 0.001 | 22 | 5.0% | 22 | 25.6% | < 0.001 |
| N02 Analgesics | 8 | 1.8% | 22 | 25.6% | < 0.001 | 14 | 3.2% | 22 | 25.6% | < 0.001 |
| R01 Nasal preparations | 82 | 18.5% | 19 | 22.1% | 0.454 | 89 | 20.1% | 21 | 24.4% | 0.384 |
| R05 Cough and cold preparations | 99 | 22.3% | 3 | 3.5% | < 0.001 | 109 | 24.6% | 5 | 5.8% | < 0.001 |
| M01 Anti-inflammatory and antirheumatic products | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 3.5% | 0.004 | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 3.5% | 0.004 |
| R06 Antihistamines for systemic use | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 8.1% | < 0.001 | 0 | 0.0% | 8 | 9.3% | < 0.001 |

Percentage of patients receiving a prescription. Anthroposophy (A-) Group n = 443; Conventional (C-) Group n = 86.

Supplementary Table 2 Treatment outcome on Days 7, 14 and 28

| Treatment outcome | Day 7 | | | | Day 14 | | | | Day 28 | | | |
|---|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| | Anthroposophy group | | Conventional group | | Anthroposophy group | | Conventional group | | Anthroposophy group | | Conventional group | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Complete recovery | 155 | 35.0% | 26 | 30.2% | 322 | 72.7% | 50 | 58.1% | 388 | 87.6% | 67 | 77.9% |
| Major improvement | 218 | 49.2% | 28 | 32.6% | 95 | 21.4% | 24 | 27.9% | 38 | 8.6% | 13 | 15.1% |
| Slight to moderate improvement | 34 | 7.7% | 20 | 23.3% | 19 | 4.3% | 9 | 10.5% | 11 | 2.5% | 5 | 5.8% |
| No change | 7 | 1.6% | 4 | 4.7% | 4 | 0.9% | 1 | 1.2% | 5 | 1.1% | 1 | 1.2% |
| Deterioration | 2 | 0.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0.2% | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0.2% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Missing | 27 | 6.1% | 8 | 9.3% | 2 | 0.5% | 2 | 2.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 443 | 100.0% | 86 | 100.0% | 443 | 100.0% | 86 | 100.0% | 443 | 100.0% | 86 | 100.0% |
| Response (complete recovery or major improvement) | 373 | 77.1% | 54 | 66.1% | 417 | 89.7% | 74 | 84.4% | 426 | 95.4% | 80 | 95.0% |

Last observation carried forward.

Supplementary Table 3 Subgroup analysis of main outcomes according to chief complaint and age

| Subgroups | Number of patients | | Percentage of patients | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|--|------|----------------------|------|--|------|----------------------|------|----------------|------|---------------|------|
| | | | Day 1 | | Day 3 | | Day 7 | | Day 7 | | Day 14 | | Day 14 | | Days 0-28 | | Days 0-28 | |
| | | | First im- provement | | First im- provement | | Major im- provement + Complete recovery | | Complete recovery | | Major im- provement + Complete recovery | | Complete recovery | | No antibiotics | | No analgesics | |
| | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- | A- | C- |
| Sore throat | 98 | 14 | 39.8 | 28.6 | 85.7 | 64.3 | 91.8 | 72.9 | 51.0 | 42.9 | 96.9 | 90.0 | 85.7 | 64.3 | 98.0 | 78.6 | 98.0 | 78.6 |
| Ear pain | 130 | 37 | 58.5 | 27.0 | 84.6 | 78.4 | 90.8 | 70.3 | 48.5 | 45.9 | 96.2 | 91.9 | 77.7 | 73.0 | 93.1 | 67.6 | 93.1 | 67.6 |
| Cough | 215 | 35 | 24.7 | 8.6 | 76.3 | 54.3 | 76.7 | 57.1 | 19.5 | 8.6 | 91.6 | 80.0 | 63.7 | 40.0 | 94.9 | 80.0 | 94.9 | 80.0 |
| Age 1-23 months | 89 | 17 | 29.2 | 5.9 | 77.5 | 64.7 | 83.1 | 58.8 | 24.7 | 17.6 | 94.4 | 76.5 | 73.0 | 52.9 | 92.1 | 82.4 | 92.1 | 82.4 |
| Age 2-5 years | 196 | 37 | 46.9 | 37.8 | 84.7 | 75.7 | 87.2 | 67.6 | 44.9 | 37.8 | 95.4 | 86.5 | 76.5 | 62.2 | 94.9 | 78.4 | 94.9 | 78.4 |
| Age 6-17 years | 158 | 32 | 31.6 | 6.3 | 77.8 | 56.3 | 81.0 | 59.4 | 28.5 | 28.1 | 92.4 | 90.6 | 67.7 | 56.3 | 96.8 | 65.6 | 96.8 | 65.6 |
| All patients | 443 | 86 | 37.9 | 19.8 | 80.8 | 66.3 | 84.2 | 62.3 | 35.0 | 30.2 | 94.1 | 86.0 | 72.7 | 58.1 | 95.5 | 74.4 | 95.0 | 74.4 |

Cumulative percentage of Anthroposophy group (A-) and Conventional group (C-) with first improvement on Days 1 and 3, with major improvement and complete recovery on Days 7 and 14, respectively, and with no antibiotic and no analgesic prescription, respectively, in subgroups according to chief complaint and age.

Supplementary Table 4 Sensitivity analysis [a]: Odds ratios for main outcomes after exclusion of patients from the USA

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | | Adjusted | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | | Lower margin | Upper margin |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 6.55 | 3.41 | 12.59 | 6.34 | 3.15 | 12.77 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 9.99 | 4.86 | 20.53 | 11.27 | 5.09 | 24.94 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.41 | 1.37 | 4.25 | 2.45 | 1.32 | 4.55 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.14 | 1.28 | 3.55 | 1.91 | 1.10 | 3.29 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.31 | 1.98 | 5.52 | 3.60 | 2.06 | 6.31 |
| Response on Day 14 | 2.81 | 1.34 | 5.89 | 2.98 | 1.35 | 6.55 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.28 | 0.77 | 2.11 | 1.24 | 0.71 | 2.18 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 2.04 | 1.26 | 3.29 | 2.20 | 1.30 | 3.73 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 4.30 | 2.64 | 7.00 | 3.98 | 2.39 | 6.60 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 16.68 | 7.09 | 39.23 | 17.94 | 7.24 | 44.48 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months, baseline symptom score, concomitant disease present at baseline. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Sample restriction to patients from Austria, Germany, The Netherlands, and the UK, n = 507. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 5 Sensitivity analyses [b-d]: Odds ratios for main outcomes after substitution of one independent variable for another

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | Adjusted | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Sensitivity analysis [b] | | Sensitivity analysis [c] | | Sensitivity analysis [d] | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | Lower margin | Upper margin | Lower margin | Upper margin | Lower margin | Upper margin | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 6.58 | 3.45 | 12.56 | 6.35 | 3.17 | 12.75 | 6.39 | 3.20 | 12.73 | 8.94 | 4.06 | 19.69 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 10.53 | 5.13 | 21.63 | 12.30 | 5.57 | 27.15 | 12.21 | 5.53 | 26.95 | 16.16 | 6.60 | 39.56 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.48 | 1.41 | 4.36 | 2.59 | 1.40 | 4.77 | 2.56 | 1.39 | 4.71 | 2.68 | 1.46 | 4.92 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.14 | 1.29 | 3.55 | 1.94 | 1.13 | 3.32 | 1.91 | 1.12 | 3.28 | 1.85 | 1.07 | 3.20 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.16 | 1.90 | 5.24 | 3.14 | 1.81 | 5.45 | 3.23 | 1.87 | 5.57 | 3.48 | 1.99 | 6.10 |
| Response on Day 14 | 2.60 | 1.26 | 5.32 | 2.42 | 1.13 | 5.21 | 2.55 | 1.19 | 5.45 | 2.78 | 1.26 | 6.14 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.24 | 0.75 | 2.05 | 1.19 | 0.68 | 2.06 | 1.17 | 0.67 | 2.04 | 1.18 | 0.68 | 2.07 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.92 | 1.19 | 3.09 | 1.87 | 1.11 | 3.14 | 1.96 | 1.17 | 3.29 | 2.06 | 1.23 | 3.45 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 3.46 | 2.15 | 5.56 | 4.10 | 2.48 | 6.79 | 4.16 | 2.51 | 6.90 | 4.27 | 2.57 | 7.10 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 17.57 | 7.47 | 41.31 | 16.72 | 6.77 | 41.28 | 19.90 | 7.97 | 49.69 | 22.36 | 8.67 | 57.69 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months (SA [b] + SA [d]), number of previous episodes of chief complaint (SA [c]), baseline symptom score (SA [c-d]), baseline severity of chief complaint (SA [b]), concomitant disease present at baseline (SA [b-c]), concomitant respiratory disorder present at baseline (SA [d]). Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. All patients, n = 529. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 6 Sensitivity analysis [e]: Odds ratios for main outcomes, adjustment also for previous treatment by the study physician

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | | Adjusted | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | | Lower margin | Upper margin |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 7.92 | 3.90 | 16.08 | 8.83 | 4.03 | 19.38 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 12,89 | 5,77 | 28,80 | 15,60 | 6,39 | 38,10 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.87 | 1.57 | 5.23 | 3.32 | 1.72 | 6.40 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.86 | 1.66 | 4.90 | 2.66 | 1.48 | 4.77 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.35 | 1.95 | 5.77 | 3.41 | 1.88 | 6.18 |
| Response on Day 14 | 2.65 | 1.22 | 5.75 | 2.42 | 1.07 | 5.48 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.16 | 0.69 | 1.95 | 1.12 | 0.62 | 2.00 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.50 | 0.90 | 2.50 | 1.46 | 0.83 | 2.55 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 4.27 | 2.56 | 7.14 | 4.09 | 2.38 | 7.00 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 12.26 | 5.07 | 29.66 | 14.72 | 5.65 | 38.40 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months, baseline symptom score, concomitant disease present at baseline, previous treatment by the study physician. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Patients with data available for previous treatment by the study physician, n = 437. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 7 Sensitivity analysis [f]: Odds ratios for main outcomes, adjustment also for body mass index

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | | Adjusted | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | | Lower margin | Upper margin |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 6.24 | 2.72 | 14.30 | 6.04 | 2.35 | 15.52 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 9.59 | 3.54 | 25.96 | 15.78 | 4.82 | 51.69 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.80 | 1.43 | 5.49 | 3.28 | 1.55 | 6.94 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.83 | 1.53 | 5.23 | 2.54 | 1.30 | 4.98 |
| Response on Day 7 | 2.85 | 1.50 | 5.45 | 3.08 | 1.50 | 6.32 |
| Response on Day 14 | 2.24 | 0.89 | 5.67 | 1.88 | 0.69 | 5.12 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.17 | 0.64 | 2.15 | 1.13 | 0.58 | 2.23 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.62 | 0.90 | 2.89 | 1.47 | 0.77 | 2.81 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 5.06 | 2.80 | 9.15 | 5.13 | 2.72 | 9.66 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 11.23 | 3.97 | 31.78 | 12.81 | 3.88 | 42.25 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months, baseline symptom score, concomitant disease present at baseline, body mass index. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Patients with data available for body mass index, n = 357. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 8 Sensitivity analysis [g]: Odds ratios for main outcomes, adjustment also for household size

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | | Adjusted | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | | Lower margin | Upper margin |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 6.75 | 3.36 | 13.54 | 6.88 | 3.20 | 14.79 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 13.29 | 5.94 | 29.72 | 16.20 | 6.49 | 40.45 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.70 | 1.48 | 4.94 | 3.11 | 1.61 | 6.04 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.79 | 1.62 | 4.82 | 2.47 | 1.37 | 4.46 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.36 | 1.94 | 5.82 | 3.35 | 1.83 | 6.15 |
| Response on Day 14 | 3.02 | 1.37 | 6.64 | 2.91 | 1.25 | 6.76 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.18 | 0.69 | 2.00 | 1.21 | 0.67 | 2.18 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.53 | 0.91 | 2.57 | 1.60 | 0.90 | 2.83 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 4.36 | 2.59 | 7.34 | 4.42 | 2.54 | 7.68 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 12.61 | 5.21 | 30.53 | 15.03 | 5.72 | 39.53 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months, baseline symptom score, concomitant disease present at baseline, household size. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Patients with data available for household size, n = 432. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 9 Sensitivity analysis [h]: Odds ratios for main outcomes, adjustment also for household income

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | | Adjusted | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | | Odds ratio | 95% confidence interval | |
| | | Lower margin | Upper margin | | Lower margin | Upper margin |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 8.24 | 3.31 | 20.50 | 8.18 | 2.92 | 22.90 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 14.86 | 5.44 | 40.60 | 15.36 | 4.93 | 47.86 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 3.35 | 1.42 | 7.94 | 4.96 | 1.90 | 12.94 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.88 | 1.36 | 6.08 | 2.63 | 1.17 | 5.89 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.45 | 1.62 | 7.38 | 4.83 | 1.97 | 11.85 |
| Response on Day 14 | 2.29 | 0.77 | 6.82 | 2.95 | 0.89 | 9.75 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.07 | 0.52 | 2.21 | 0.95 | 0.42 | 2.14 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.29 | 0.62 | 2.68 | 1.36 | 0.62 | 3.00 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 4.23 | 2.08 | 8.62 | 3.99 | 1.88 | 8.47 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 11.67 | 4.18 | 32.58 | 12.18 | 3.94 | 37.63 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals; odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis with adjustment for adjusting for gender, age, chief complaint, duration of complaint, complaint episode within last 12 months, baseline symptom score, concomitant disease present at baseline, household income. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Patients with data available for household income, n = 253. *At all available follow-ups.

Supplementary Table 10 Sensitivity analyses [i-k]: Odds ratios for main outcomes, adjustment also for caregiver's confidence in physician's professional skill and consultation length

| Outcome | Unadjusted | | Adjusted for variables | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------------|--------|------|---------------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------------|--------|------|-------|
| | | | 1-7: Main analysis | | | 1-8: Sensitivity analysis [i] | | | 1-7,9: Sensitivity analysis [j] | | | 1-9: Sensitivity analysis [k] | | | |
| | OR | 95% CI | OR | 95% CI | | OR | 95% CI | | OR | 95% CI | | OR | 95% CI | | |
| | LM | UM | | LM | UM | | LM | UM | | LM | UM | | LM | UM | |
| No antibiotics Days 0-28 | 7.15 | 3.58 | 14.25 | 7.34 | 3.46 | 15.59 | 7.93 | 3.55 | 17.74 | 9.83 | 3.97 | 24.37 | 10.26 | 4.02 | 26.15 |
| No analgesics Days 0-28 | 13.16 | 5.89 | 29.41 | 16.24 | 6.60 | 39.97 | 18.35 | 6.94 | 48.50 | 23.08 | 7.71 | 69.11 | 25.18 | 8.03 | 78.94 |
| First improvement ≤ 24 hours | 2.71 | 1.48 | 4.95 | 3.13 | 1.62 | 6.05 | 2.55 | 1.29 | 5.07 | 2.71 | 1.35 | 5.47 | 2.74 | 1.35 | 5.53 |
| First improvement ≤ 3 days | 2.76 | 1.60 | 4.75 | 2.57 | 1.44 | 4.58 | 2.02 | 1.10 | 3.72 | 2.78 | 1.47 | 5.25 | 2.83 | 1.49 | 5.38 |
| Response on Day 7 | 3.50 | 2.03 | 6.04 | 3.48 | 1.91 | 6.32 | 2.82 | 1.52 | 5.25 | 4.04 | 2.08 | 7.85 | 4.11 | 2.11 | 8.01 |
| Response on Day 14 | 3.04 | 1.38 | 6.68 | 2.74 | 1.20 | 6.30 | 2.03 | 0.84 | 4.87 | 2.06 | 0.83 | 5.07 | 2.18 | 0.88 | 5.44 |
| Recovery on day 7 | 1.26 | 0.74 | 2.15 | 1.18 | 0.66 | 2.11 | 1.04 | 0.57 | 1.92 | 1.06 | 0.56 | 1.99 | 1.07 | 0.57 | 2.02 |
| Recovery on day 14 | 1.63 | 0.97 | 2.73 | 1.58 | 0.90 | 2.77 | 1.40 | 0.78 | 2.52 | 1.38 | 0.75 | 2.53 | 1.38 | 0.75 | 2.54 |
| Very satisfied with treatment* | 4.10 | 2.45 | 6.87 | 3.94 | 2.30 | 6.75 | 2.54 | 1.40 | 4.61 | 3.06 | 1.72 | 5.44 | 2.26 | 1.19 | 4.26 |
| Choosing this therapy again* | 12.68 | 5.24 | 30.70 | 15.11 | 5.77 | 39.57 | 11.35 | 4.22 | 30.57 | 10.72 | 3.79 | 30.30 | 8.58 | 2.99 | 24.65 |

Main outcomes: unadjusted odds ratios (OR, Anthroposophy group vs. Conventional group) with 95% confidence intervals (CI), and odds ratios after multiple logistic regression analysis, adjusting for 1) gender, 2) age, 3) chief complaint, 4) duration of complaint, 5) complaint episode within last 12 months, 6) baseline symptom score, 7) concomitant disease present at baseline, 8) caregiver's confidence in physician's professional skill, 9) consultation length. Odds ratio > 1 indicates better outcome in Anthroposophy group. Patients with available data for all variables mentioned, n = 438. *At all available follow-ups. LM: Lower margin. UM: Upper margin.

Supplementary Figure 1 Patient recruitment and follow-up telephone interviews.

All evaluable patients had at least one interview.

