

POSITION STATEMENT

NICM Health Research Institute's research focus

Western Sydney University's researchers at NICM Health Research Institute (NICM HRI) conduct research to explore the scientific basis of integrative and complementary medicine interventions. Our research concentrates on health priority areas of national and global importance, including cardiovascular and metabolic health, neurodegenerative diseases and mental health, women's health, cancer management and recovery, and immunity and inflammation research.

NICM HRI's research advances our knowledge and understanding of natural and traditional medicine and promotes evidence-based integrative healthcare.

The Institute was established to provide leadership and support for strategically directed research into complementary medicine and, where appropriate, the translation of evidence into clinical practice and relevant policy to benefit the health of all Australians. In line with the World Health Organization's Traditional Medicine strategy (2014-2023), NICM HRI aims to generate robust research to evaluate the quality, safety, and effectiveness of traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine.

Complementary and traditional medicine has been practiced for centuries, but historical use does not necessarily equate to efficacy or safety. Complementary and traditional medicine must be evaluated using the same rigorous scientific standards applied to other forms of medicine. Scientific research is necessary to determine the potential benefits and limitations associated with these practices, just like any other medicine or therapy to protect the health and safety of the public. By providing independent, evidence-based information, scientific research can help inform consumers, healthcare practitioners, and governments as to the clinical value and safety of specific interventions.

The research focus of NICM HRI is in herbal and nutritional medicine including traditional plant-based medicines (Chinese, Ayurveda, and bush medicine in Australia), medicinal cannabis, acupuncture, mind-body practices including tai chi, yoga and meditation, and lifestyle medicine (such as diet, exercise, and others). NICM HRI does not undertake research in other complementary and alternative medical clinical practices.

From the bench to the bedside, our research capabilities are extensive and include:

- Preclinical laboratory research on the chemical composition, synergistic interaction and bioactivity, mechanisms of action and novel delivery of natural and traditional medicines.
- Clinical research to evaluate the efficacy and safety of integrative medicine through clinical trials and observational studies.
- Translational research focusing on informing best practice in integrative medicine healthcare and education, translated into relevant policy

NICM HRI is committed to delivering high-quality, world-class research and maintains the highest standards of integrity through research governance and legislative requirements.