

Stuttgart Integrative Health & Medicine Declaration

The Stuttgart Declaration was originally endorsed by the participants of the International Congress for Integrative Health & Medicine, June 9-11, 2016 in Stuttgart, Germany: www.icihm.org

The Stuttgart Declaration is a call for action on governments, the WHO and professional organizations.

Background

Medicine today faces immense challenges: chronic and lifestyle-related diseases are overwhelming health systems; antimicrobial resistance has become a threat to human health; child and maternal mortality remain disproportionately high in low income countries; climate change and pollution is affecting human health; universal access to health services is still not assured in many countries; health care costs are rising without a corresponding improvement in health and wellbeing.

The focus on disease treatment has diminished the focus on individuals as whole persons, and distracts from the intimate connection between the health of individuals, the health of our communities and the health of our environment.

Demand for traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) is high in all countries because people experience the limitations of the biomedical model to respond to all their health needs. People look for an approach to healing that focuses on the person as a whole, supports self-healing and health creation, and is participative.

Integrative Health and Medicine

Integrative health and medicine has emerged as a movement that focuses on the whole person, considering the individual in its physical, psychological, spiritual, social and environmental context, and is inclusive of all professions and practices that use this approach.

Integrative health and medicine stands for an evidence-informed integration of conventional biomedicine with traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM). All appropriate therapeutic approaches and healthcare disciplines are used to achieve optimal health and healing, while recognizing and respecting the unique contribution from many medical systems.

Integrative health and medicine affirms the importance of the practitioner-patient relationship, the empowerment and participation of patients, and emphasizes interprofessional collaboration, networks and teams.

The Stuttgart Congress illustrated the support that integrative health and medicine offers to addressing global health challenges such as antimicrobial resistance and non-communicable diseases; to expanding universal health coverage; and to addressing social, economic and environmental determinants of health at the individual and community level.

Successful integrative care models exist today across the health care spectrum, including in cardiology, oncology, pain management, mental health, pediatrics and others, waiting to be scaled up.

There is growing and in many cases good evidence on efficacy, including quality of life, safety and cost-effectiveness of traditional and complementary medicine, integrative health and medicine and the integrative care model, but more investment in research is needed.

The Integrative Health & Medicine model is fully aligned with the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023, providing models of a meaningful integration into healthcare systems. Some countries are making significant progress in integrating T&CM into their healthcare system but many countries are lagging behind despite several resolutions by the World Health Assembly - the supreme decision-making body of the WHO - urging them to do so.

A Call for Action

Based on our commitment to reach the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and a shared vision to improve human health and wellbeing for all, we aim to build a concerted, global movement to advance the integrative health & medicine approach, based on mutual respect, exchange, collaboration and cooperation.

We commit ourselves and call on others to take action to address pressing global health needs such as antimicrobial resistance and the rising burden of non-communicable disease by further developing, evaluating, sharing and implementing integrative prevention and care models.

We commit ourselves and call on others to collaborate and cooperate in conducting relevant research to increase scientific evidence.

We unite behind the goal to demonstrate the affordability of integrative health care and ensure access for all.

We call on governments:

- * To recognize integrative health and medicine as a whole society approach that will help to reach the Sustainable Development Goals;
- * To include integrative T&CM into national health service delivery and self-care, as agreed in the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023 and several World Health Assembly resolutions;
- * To collaborate with integrative health and medicine research centers, practitioners and civil society in establishing integrative health and medicine policies;
- * To create and fund ambitious public research programs to increase evidence of T&CM treatments and integrative care models;
- * To establish and support systems for qualification, accreditation or licensing of integrative medicine practitioners;
- * To ensure inclusion of integrative health concepts in the education programs of all health professionals
- * To adopt medicine regulation pathways tailored to the specific nature of traditional and complementary medicines.

We call on the World Health Organization:

- * To prioritize the implementation of the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023;
- * To adopt, whenever relevant, an integrative health and medicine approach across WHO departments and strategies to reach the Sustainable Development Goals;
- * To facilitate regional collaboration of countries and to closely collaborate with T&CM research centers, practitioners and civil society to advance the implementation of the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy.

We call on professional organizations:

- * To actively support the implementation of WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy, including through certification of T&CM practitioners and practices.