

The **second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine**, held in New Delhi, India, on 17–19 December 2025, has the theme of “Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being”. The Summit aligns with the [Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034](#), which recognizes Traditional Medicine as a living science that contributes to universal health coverage, health equity and sustainability. The Summit serves as a global platform to accelerate implementation of the new strategy, foster partnerships, and translate pledges and commitments into concrete action.



For more information, contact: tmcentre@who.int

Parallel session 3.A

Global frameworks and country implementation

Plenary 3 and associated parallel sessions will address the evidence-based integration of Traditional Medicine into health systems through the vision of the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034. Sessions will examine how alignment with global frameworks, patient safety and informed health choices, regulatory coherence and workforce capacity can promote balance for individuals, society and the planet.

This parallel session aims to deepen understanding of the diverse pathways for integrating Traditional Medicine into national health systems, as set out in a new WHO conceptual framework (1). By examining four distinct models – people-led, practitioner-led, coordinated and blended – the session will provide a comparative lens to explore how decentralized and centralized approaches can strengthen health service delivery, governance, financing and workforce development. Through case examples and cross-country insights, participants will gain practical perspectives on how integration models can advance universal health coverage, respond to people’s health-seeking behaviours, and contribute to resilient, inclusive and sustainable health systems that embody the conference theme of restoring balance for people and the planet.

Rationale

This session is grounded in the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034, which calls for the safe, effective and evidence-based integration of Traditional Medicine into health systems (2). To support effective integration, the strategy highlights the importance of evidence-based practices, continuous quality assurance and regulatory mechanisms. It also emphasizes the importance of safeguarding biodiversity by promoting sustainable Traditional Medicine practices and points to primary health care as an important entry point for integration of Traditional Medicine. The strategy is in accordance with other WHO and regional strategies on integration, primary health care and Traditional Medicine (3–5). Despite recognition of the value of traditional knowledge, many health systems continue to face challenges in translating these commitments into practice, including regulatory barriers, limited evidence production and integration, and resource availability (6–8). By examining four models of integration – people-led, practitioner-led, coordinated and blended – the session will showcase the diverse ways countries and communities are advancing integration in line with their contexts and capacities. Moreover, the dialogue will deepen understanding of how integration can strengthen health systems by restoring balance across people, society and the environment while also addressing safety, equity and cultural respect – principles central to both Traditional Medicine and planetary health (2,9). In doing so, the discussion will chart pathways towards resilient, inclusive and sustainable health systems that reflect both scientific rigour and traditional knowledge.

Objectives

- **People-led integration (decentralized pluralistic models):** Explore how individuals and communities are shaping the integration of Traditional Medicine through self-care choices and demand for services.
- **Practitioner-led integration (decentralized unification models):** Examine how Traditional Medicine practitioners drive integration through practice innovation, cross-referrals and collaboration with biomedical professionals.
- **Coordinated integration (centralized pluralistic models):** Analyse government-led strategies, frameworks and policies that coordinate the integration of Traditional Medicine into health systems.

- **Blended integration (centralized unification models):** Examine models where Traditional Medicine and biomedicine are structurally merged within health systems and institutions.

Guiding questions

1. **Models of integration:** What are the strengths and challenges of people-led, practitioner-led, coordinated and blended models? How can countries decide which integration pathway best fits their context?
2. **Primary health care and universal health coverage:** How can integration of Traditional Medicine strengthen primary health care and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage?
3. **Governance and regulation:** What regulatory frameworks are most critical to ensure safety, quality and accountability in Traditional Medicine?
4. **Equity, culture and sustainability:** How can integration of Traditional Medicine safeguard Indigenous knowledge while promoting equity and inclusivity?

Session format

The proposed session format begins with a welcome and framing from the moderator, followed by a series of keynote presentations. One presentation will focus on the concept of integrated health services, highlighting the importance of coordination across medical disciplines to prioritize individual well-being and achieve optimal health outcomes. A second will examine people-led integration and how individuals and communities are shaping adoption of Traditional Medicine through self-care practices and demand for services. A third will cover practitioner-led integration, highlighting how Traditional Medicine professionals advance integration through practice innovation, cross-referral and collaboration with biomedical colleagues. Further talks will examine coordinated, system-driven integration through government-led strategies, frameworks and policies, as well as blended integration models in which Traditional Medicine and biomedicine are structurally merged within health systems and institutions. After each presentation, the speaker will remain on stage, gradually forming a full panel. The moderator will facilitate commentary across the speakers and will open the floor to the in-person and online audience for questions. Panellists will conclude the session by proposing one or two actionable commitments to advance the integration of Traditional Medicine into national health systems, with a focus on strengthening governance, financing and workforce development in ways that promote equity and inclusiveness.

References

1. World Health Organization. Integration of traditional, complementary and integrative medicine into health systems: conceptual framework. Geneva: WHO; 2025 (<https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/0c74b1b8-f0bb-4553-8bec-1bdeb2739c87/content>).
2. Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025 (Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA) toolkit for universal health coverage).
3. World Health Organization. WHO global strategy on people-centred and integrated health services. Geneva: WHO; 2015 (https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2017-07/who-global-strategy-on-pcihs-main-document_final.pdf).
4. World Health Organization. Traditional and complementary medicine in primary health care. Geneva: WHO; 2018 (<https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/7dad2282-8288-4f6d-8a7d-e4056bbe08e2/content>).
5. Regional framework for harnessing traditional and complementary medicine for achieving health and well-being in the Western Pacific. Manila: World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Western Pacific; 2022.
6. Patwardhan B, Wieland LS, Aginam O, Chuthaputti A, Ghelman R, Ghods R et al. Evidence-based traditional medicine for transforming global health and well-being. *J Ayurveda Integr Med.* 2023;14:100790. doi:10.1016/j.jaim.2023.100790.
7. Park YL, Canaway R. Integrating traditional and complementary medicine with national healthcare systems for universal health coverage in Asia and the Western Pacific. *Health Systems & Reform.* 2019;5:24–31. doi:10.1080/23288604.2018.1539058.
8. Wang M, Liu Z, Sun Y, Zhang Y, Ghaffar A, Ren M. Integration of traditional and complementary medicine into primary health-care systems: a systematic review. *Bull World Health Organ.* 2025;103:675–684C. doi:10.2471/BLT.25.293465.
9. Redvers N, Celidwen Y, Schultz C, Horn O, Githaiga C, Vera M et al. The determinants of planetary health: an Indigenous consensus perspective. *Lancet Planetary Health.* 2022;6:e156–e163. doi:10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00354-5.