

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.



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Parallel session 3.D

Practice, practitioners and the relevance of Traditional Medicine in health system resilience

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 across individuals, society and the planet.

This parallel session will focus on strengthening the foundations of Traditional Medicine integration through education, evidence-based practices and regulatory approaches that support resilient health systems. Discussions will explore models for regulating Traditional Medicine practitioners to ensure minimum standards of education and practice, promote accountability and ethical conduct, and support broader health system goals. The session will also highlight the role of education and continuous professional development in embedding evidence-based practice and fostering safe, effective and culturally responsive care. In addition, participants will examine the development and application of clinical practice guidelines that align Traditional Medicine with patient safety priorities and health system standards. A key focus will be on how evidence-based Traditional Medicine can enhance system resilience by ensuring continuity of care in routine settings while strengthening preparedness and response in times of crisis.

Rationale

The Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 underscores the importance of establishing appropriate regulatory mechanisms for Traditional Medicine practices and practitioners (1). Given the diversity of Traditional Medicine modalities, regulatory frameworks must be adapted to local contexts while setting clear standards for education, certification and entry to practice (2,3). Such measures are essential to ensure that practitioners are competent, accountable, and able to deliver safe and effective care as well as to advance broader health system goals (4–7). Alongside regulation, the development of clinical guidelines and care pathways – including provisions for timely cross-referrals – can strengthen quality and safety across the continuum of care (3,4,6). In the context of health system resilience, these efforts also enable Traditional Medicine to play a vital role in supporting emergency preparedness and maintaining continuity of care. By reinforcing accountability, consistency and trust, effective regulation and evidence-based practice can position Traditional Medicine as a meaningful contributor to stronger, safer and more resilient health systems (2).

Objectives

- Strengthen competency, accountability and ethical conduct of Traditional Medicine practitioners through regulatory approaches to ensure patient safety.
- Ensure safe and effective practice by examining regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms for Traditional Medicine practices, including clinical standards, codes of conduct and continuous professional development, to reduce risks and foster safe, effective and evidence-informed care.
- Build health system resilience through integration by identifying pathways for integrating evidence-based Traditional Medicine into primary health care and broader health systems, enhancing responsiveness, cultural relevance and system resilience during public health challenges and crises.

Guiding questions

1. **Strengthen practitioner regulation:** What regulatory approaches can countries adopt to ensure that the required standards of Traditional Medicine education and practice are met? What has been the effect of regulation on the availability, quality and distribution of Traditional Medicine practitioners? Considering the diversity in Traditional Medicine and the increasing international mobility of both patients and practitioners, to what extent is harmonization of regulatory standards for Traditional Medicine across borders feasible and desirable?
2. **Ensure safe and effective practice:** How can regulatory frameworks be adapted to the diversity of Traditional Medicine practices while maintaining patient safety? What are effective models for developing and implementing clinical guidelines and referral pathways that include Traditional Medicine?
3. **Build health system resilience through integration:** What models show promise for integrating Traditional Medicine into primary health care and essential service packages? In what ways can regulation enable Traditional Medicine practitioners to contribute to emergency preparedness, response and recovery? How can integration of Traditional Medicine enhance accountability, trust and cultural relevance in building resilient health systems?

Session format

The proposed session format begins with a welcome and framing from the moderator, which will be followed by a series of keynote presentations, including perspectives on strengthening practitioner regulation, examination of regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms for Traditional Medicine practices, and insights on building health system resilience through the integration of Traditional Medicine practitioners into primary health care and wider health systems. 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 strengthen Traditional Medicine education and practice standards and to embed evidence-based Traditional Medicine in health systems, ensuring the availability, quality and continuity of care across both routine and crisis contexts.

References

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