Technical brief

Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

World Health Organization

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 4.C

From policy to practice – responsible AI and digital innovation in Traditional Medicine

Plenary 4 and associated parallel sessions will focus on how data, technology and ancestral knowledge can work in balance to establish the standards, ethical frameworks and mechanisms needed for tracking progress, ensuring accountability and operationalizing the future of Traditional Medicine.

This parallel session explores how responsible, inclusive and ethical digital transformation can restore balance between technology and tradition, enhancing the quality, safety and accessibility of Traditional Medicine. Participants will examine how artificial intelligence (AI) can harmonize scientific and traditional knowledge, promote equitable access and foster people-centred innovation. The discussion will bridge policy and practice, advancing safe, evidence-based and sustainable AI-driven Traditional Medicine aligned with WHO's global strategy for universal health coverage and innovation.

Rationale

AI is transforming Traditional Medicine by enhancing research quality, diagnostics, personalized care and governance systems *(1,2)*. The Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 calls for leveraging digital technologies to strengthen Traditional Medicine data systems, improve access and ensure culturally relevant, evidence-based integration into health systems *(3)*. AI-enabled applications are already supporting drug discovery, pharmacovigilance and data standardization within Traditional Medicine industries *(4)*, while global initiatives such as the Global Initiative on AI for Health (GIAI4H) promote coordinated governance and ethical frameworks across sectors *(5)*. Despite progress, major gaps persist. Research remains limited by heterogeneous data standards and insufficient meta-research to assess methodological quality *(6)*. Equitable access to AI tools and culturally adapted implementation strategies are under-explored, particularly in low- and middle-income settings *(7)*. Ethical and legal frameworks must evolve to address consent, bias mitigation and community knowledge protection *(8,9)*. There is also limited synthesis of multi-stakeholder experiences translating AI policy into scalable practice within diverse health systems *(10)*. This session brings together global experts to examine these challenges and pathways for responsible innovation. By connecting policy, ethics and implementation, it will identify actionable strategies for integrating AI into Traditional Medicine in ways that are safe, inclusive and aligned with the WHO vision of restoring balance for people and planet *(3)*.

Objectives

- Highlight practical applications of AI in Traditional Medicine, including diagnostics, personalized care, knowledge management, evidence generation and other areas.
- Showcase real-world experiences and innovations from countries and institutions that illustrate the integration of AI into health systems and Traditional Medicine practices.
- Examine the ethical, governance and regulatory safeguards needed to ensure culturally sensitive, equitable and accountable AI adoption.

- Explore systemic enablers such as data governance, partnerships and capacity-building that can accelerate the responsible adoption of AI in Traditional Medicine.
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue between policymakers, practitioners, researchers and technologists to identify actionable pathways from policy to practice.

Guiding questions

1. What are the most promising AI applications in Traditional Medicine, such as diagnostics, predictive modelling or drug discovery, that can improve patient outcomes while preserving its holistic and people-centred ethos?
2. Which global or national models demonstrate effective and contextually appropriate integration of AI in Traditional Medicine within broader digital health systems?
3. What safeguards are essential to ensure AI in Traditional Medicine is ethical, transparent and respectful of community knowledge while preventing bias and inequity?
4. What are the main challenges and opportunities in developing interoperable, secure and inclusive data systems that link Traditional Medicine with biomedical and public health research?
5. How can governments, academia, industry and communities collaborate to build capacity and drive innovation so that AI in Traditional Medicine advances universal health coverage and equity?

Session format

The proposed session format begins with a five-minute framing, followed by presentations highlighting global policy and implementation perspectives on responsible AI in Traditional Medicine. A panel will then explore innovation opportunities, ethical safeguards, data ecosystems and partnerships for sustainable digital transformation. The final part of the session will feature an interactive audience Q&A engaging both in-person and online participants, with rapporteurs capturing insights to ensure an inclusive, globally representative and action-oriented discussion. Panel members will be asked to conclude with one or two actionable recommendations for establishing a robust, phased workplan for AI in Traditional Medicine and investing in digital and AI capacity for Traditional Medicine systems.

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