

Media Release

15 September 2014

A Healthier Future for All

Mr Carl Gibson, Chief Executive Officer of Complementary Medicines Australia, today highlighted the importance of a cohesive and integrative approach to healthcare; an approach that allows Australians to use complementary medicines in a safe and respectful manner.

“According to the World Health Organisation, complementary medicine is an underestimated part of health care that can make a big difference to the health and well-being of individuals and to a comprehensive healthcare system. The use of complementary medicines in Australia is considerable and rapidly increasing, so it makes sense for naturopaths to work alongside pharmacists, especially those who may not be comfortable with their level of knowledge with regard to complementary medicines.”

“The National Prescribing Service has found that in the real world people prefer to be treated as a whole person. Individuals should be able to draw on a plurality of practices in order to maintain health, foster well-being and address illness. Australians should have the right to choose the approach to health care they feel is suitable for them.”

“Detractors such as fringe group Friends of Science in Medicine (FoSM) attempt to condemn complementary medicines by claiming a lack of evidence. However, many complementary medicines do have a strong basis in evidence, while the Australian Medical Association (AMA) acknowledges that some conventional treatments have a low level of evidence.¹ The fact is that all health disciplines need to continue to increase their evidence base. It is the height of hypocrisy for FoSM to denigrate complementary medicines for lack of evidence, yet block funding for complementary medicine research at every opportunity,” said Mr Gibson.

Conventional and complementary medicine can co-exist within a health environment. In China, biomedicine is often practiced alongside Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and most public general hospitals have traditional medicine departments. Ayurveda, which incorporates plant-based medicines, meditation, massage and yoga, and developed in India, is a Sanskrit word that when translated means ‘practices of longevity’; it emphasises a healthy life.²

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¹ AMA Position Statement

² Gabe, J., Monaghan, L.F. (2013) Key Concepts in Medical Sociology, 2nd Ed. Sage Publications, London.

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