

SLiM.Sciences 2020 International Conference
**SINGAPORE LIFESTYLE
INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
& SCIENCES**

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Nutritional, Environmental, Lifestyle, Functional and Integrative Medicine, what evidence are these based on?

JAMA published an article¹ on functional medicine in its Open Access journal in October 2019 with the title, "Association of the Functional Medicine Model of Care With Patient-Reported Health-Related Quality-of-Life Outcomes".

What is functional medicine? Terms like functional medicine and integrative medicine has been heard more frequently but for many in the healthcare community the terms are vague representation of some form of alternative medicine.

Why would JAMA publish such a study and what is the scientific basis of the functional medicine approach?

The study seeks to answer the question, "Is the functional medicine model of care associated with patient reported health-related quality of life?"

A positive outcome was reported and the authors found that "this study suggest that **functional medicine may have the ability to improve global health in patients.**" They concluded that the "functional medicine model of care demonstrated beneficial and sustainable associations with patient-reported HRQoL. Prospective studies are warranted to confirm these findings."

The SLiM.Sciences 2020 conference is an attempt to address this question. Is there sufficient science-based evidence for nutrition, functional, lifestyle and integrative medicine? Bringing together in Singapore leading researchers and clinicians on subjects to the uninitiated appears disparate, it seeks to provide some clarity and an overview of the practice of integrative medicine and its scientific basis. Representatives of organisations that have been at the forefront of integrative medicine will be presenting in this 3-day conference

including a Nobel Laureate in Medicine. Integrative medicine is an established discipline and academic centres have been studying, teaching and supporting the practice albeit still limited to a minority of practitioners.

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health

The consortium consists of over 70 respected academic medical centres and health systems one of which is where the JAMA functional medicine study was done, the **Cleveland Clinic Centre for Functional Medicine**. It defines integrative medicine and health as a reaffirmation of "the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient, focuses on the whole person, is informed by evidence, and makes use of all appropriate therapeutic and lifestyle approaches, healthcare professionals and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing."

Members of this organisation include familiar names like:

- Cleveland Clinic Mayo Clinic, Memorial Sloan Kettering, Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine,
- Duke, Harvard, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, Yale University Medical Schools

NATO and the US Army adopts integrative medicine

The Scientific and Technology Organization division of NATO commissioned the Health and Human Factors (HFM-195) Task Force on Integrative Medicine Interventions for Military Personnel in 2010. Chaired by Col. Richard Petris of the US Army in 2013, Col. Petris is instrumental in getting Integrative

Medicine adopted in the US Army centres throughout the US since 2004².

Institute for Functional Medicine and the Australasian College of Nutrition and Environmental Medicine

In the JAMA article, functional medicine is defined as a model of care that provides an operating system that works to reverse illness, promote health, and optimize function by addressing underlying causes, symptoms, and functional imbalances in interconnected biological networks.

An evidence-based framework for the first line therapy of nutrition and lifestyle modifications is offered as a certification course by both ACNEM and IFM. **They have provided training to clinicians in this field for the past several decades.** ACNEM an Australian accredited RACGP CME provider will be presenting an overview of their certification course at the SLiM.Sciences 2020 conference.

Lifestyle factors and nutritional strategies in cancer is the conference theme. Cancer is known to be closely associated with environmental and lifestyle choices as reported recently in the latest NHANES (III) study³ and in many other papers.

Lifestyle Medicine is a more recent attempt to provide practitioners with a framework to advice patients on making lifestyle and nutritional choices. First initiated at Harvard it has grown into an international movement with board certification. Similar in its objectives to IFM and ACNEM, **the International Board of Lifestyle Medicine adds to the many voices promoting the evidence-based practice of nutritional medicine seriously and systematically.**