

# Editorial

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## Vale Emeritus Professor Stephen Myers

In the field of naturopathy and herbal medicine, some individuals leave a lasting impact that goes beyond skill and knowledge. Emeritus Professor Stephen Myers was one such person. In this issue, we set the stage for our December edition, which will feature reflections from naturopaths and herbalists who were mentored and worked closely with Stephen.

Stephen passed away in July 2024, but his influence remains significant. As a naturopath in the 1990s, he pioneered bachelor level education in naturopathy by establishing Australia's first naturopathic degree program in a public university. He was also a qualified medical practitioner and had earned a doctorate in pharmacology. Stephen adeptly navigated the complex intersections of naturopathy and biomedicine and was known as an innovative leader who seamlessly bridged the political divide.

A passionate advocate for integrating naturopathy and herbalism into mainstream healthcare, Stephen's work

included extensive research and several key publications that have steered naturopathic practice and the medicines used, into an evidence-based medicine framework. Stephen was among the first to synthesise evidence for whole system naturopathy. He served on the NHMRC Natural Therapies Working Committee and the steering committee of the Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH). In 2023, he was honoured with the title of Emeritus Professor at Southern Cross University for his outstanding contributions to both the field and the university.

To continue Stephen's legacy, the AJHNM, with the support of Michelle Boyd, will publish insights from those he mentored. His remarkable contributions and generous spirit have profoundly shaped our professions, and we hope to honour his impact through these reflections.

This issue publishes three original research projects. The first is a case series<sup>1</sup> that describes three people with type 2 diabetes who received steam bath treatment to stabilise blood glucose levels. The steam bath treatment consisted of exposure to moist heat for 8–12 minutes,



*Lallemantia royleana* (Benth) seeds<sup>4</sup>

followed by a 2-minute cold shower. Blood glucose measurements taken before, immediately after and 20-minutes post cold shower showed similar patterns of reductions with most reductions observed at 20-minutes after the intervention. This case series supports larger and evaluative investigations of the roles of steam bath as a therapeutic intervention for people with diabetes.

The second article<sup>2</sup> is a clinical study<sup>1</sup> to examine the safety and effectiveness of *Lallemantia royleana* seed (Benth) in people with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). GERD is often associated with a range of other conditions, such as anxiety and asthma and usual treatment to reduce stomach acidity is not without adverse effects and complications, such as diminished capacity to absorb dietary nutrients. Benth or belangu, as it is traditionally known in Persian medicine, is a member of the mint family and it is medicinally used to improve gastrointestinal condition and reduce hypercholesterolaemia. In this clinical study, researchers report that symptoms of GERD at baseline were significantly reduced at four weeks and there were no serious adverse effects. This pilot trial provides rationale for further controlled clinical investigations and for experiments to explain the mechanisms of *Lallemantia royleana* seed on GERD cell lines.

The third article<sup>3</sup> outlines a protocol for a randomised control trial that will evaluate the effects of 15-minute massage with oil containing *Curcuma caesia*, against massage with oil alone, on pain in people with osteoarthritis of the knee. Published research protocols are important to ensure researchers can receive feedback about the methods of their investigation, and to ensure transparency of the subsequent published complete investigation. Published results are scrutinised to ensure that researchers adhered to the protocol and did not adjust the method to influence the trial outcomes. This is one way of accounting for transparency in research. Outcomes from this RCT will be important because effective management of pain is a serious gap in healthcare, particularly since the restriction of access to opioid medicines. Effective analgesics are desperately needed reduce pain and improve quality of life in people with chronic pain, such as those with osteoarthritis of the knee.

Finally, we have a summary of the literature in MedHerb and MedJourn and CPE questions for your completion.

Enjoy, and wishing you a happy spring season.



*Lallemantia royleana* (Benth.) Benth.

## References

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