



INSIGHTS IN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE:

Connecting science &
clinical practice

SPEAKER PROFILES & PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

**9th Annual NIIM Symposium
12 & 13 September 2024**

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Dr Thomas Arkell

Research Fellow, PhD

Medical cannabis: recent real-world evidence and its effects on driving performance and cognitive function

This presentation will review recent real-world evidence for medical cannabis efficacy, focusing on registry studies and a case series involving over 3000 Australians. This presentation will also provide an overview of current knowledge on cannabis and its effects on driving, including recent work at Swinburne University looking for the first time at the effects of prescribed medical cannabis on driving performance and neurocognitive function.

BIO: Dr. Thomas Arkell is a Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. He holds a BA (Psychology/Philosophy) and a PhD (Medicine) from the University of Sydney. His research focuses primarily on the behavioral pharmacology of cannabis and the therapeutic potential of medical cannabis. Current projects include investigations into the effects of THC and CBD on driving performance and cognitive function, the impact of early-stage medical cannabis treatment on health-related quality of life in people with chronic pain, and the development of a novel driving simulation paradigm to assess the impact of cannabis and other drugs on driving performance. Dr Arkell chairs the International Council on Alcohol Drugs and Traffic Safety's Cannabis and Driving Working Group.



Rachel Arthur

Integrative Nutritionist & Naturopath

The New Nuance of Thyroid Nutrition

Thyroid physiology makes many HPT health concerns especially amenable to nutritional interventions. And contemporary research has brought to light a much needed, new level of detail that should see us refine our old ideas. This is an opportunity to update nutritional approaches, both with respect to the key traditional players, Iodine, Selenium & Vitamin D, and a new cast of characters. We get down to the real detail of optimal form, dose and duration for the major thyroid applications.

BIO: Rachel's favourite colour is red, as in the deep red of a blood sample collected for analysing labs to gain optimal insights into all patients. With her impressive credentials as a contributor to many authoritative texts and author of peer-reviewed articles. Her trademark? Translating complex scientific concepts into accessible language and providing practical, easy-to-implement solutions that are delivered with a splash of colour and humour. Rachel's conscientious research is what sets her apart and has earned her international recognition as a leading authority in the fields of integrative nutrition & diagnostics.



Nikki Callan

BHSc Nutrition, Adv Dip Nat

Did you know the gut microbiome can influence a women's hormonal health?

The microbiome develops alongside a woman as she moves through life stages where an ongoing dynamic crosstalk between gastrointestinal (GI) microbes and sex hormones shape immune, neurological, metabolic, and reproductive health. Further, the gut microbiome influences the health of the vaginal microbiome through this interplay known as the gut-reproductive axis.

Accumulating evidence links microbial dysbiosis to a spectrum of women-specific conditions, including PCOS, endometriosis, infertility and postmenopausal complications. Adding to the complexity of this is the influence of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), which further shape the female landscape through the gut-reproductive axis. Whilst exploring the emerging science around the microbial influences on women's health, be empowered with knowledge and research-based tools to enhance health outcomes in your patients.

Attendees will explore new science uncovering mechanisms linking the gut microbiome to PCOS pathophysiology. You'll also understand how the gut-reproductive axis may help or hinder women's health and wellbeing. Learn how to update management of EDCs exposure to support women's health. Expand clinical strategies for managing some of the most resistant and persistent health challenges facing women today.

BIO: Nikki has experience working as a Naturopath and within the complementary therapy industry both overseas and in Australia. Nikki gained clinical experience internationally working with patients afflicted by gut disorders, CIRS, chronic infections and addictions. Having a soft spot for biochemistry balanced by an interest in energetic practices that support emotional wellbeing, Nikki combines both to provide practitioners with comprehensive education.



Prof Anitra Carr

BSc(Hons)(Cant), PhD(Otago)

Beyond scurvy: the requirements and use of oral and intravenous vitamin C in chronic health conditions

BIO: Professor Anitra Carr is Director of the Nutrition in Medicine Research Group in the Department of Pathology and Biomedical Science at the University of Otago, Christchurch (UOC), New Zealand. Following a PhD at UOC, Anitra undertook an American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Linus Pauling Institute, Oregon State University, USA. Whilst there she produced a number of high impact publications on the role of vitamin C in human health and disease which have helped inform international dietary recommendations for vitamin C. Following a return to New Zealand, Anitra began carrying out a translational research program comprising human intervention studies investigating the bioavailability and potential health effects of oral and intravenous vitamin C, including research into the prevention and treatment of acute and chronic diseases such as respiratory infections, cancer and diabetes. Anitra was awarded a 4-year New Zealand Health Research Council Fellowship to investigate the role of vitamin C in severe infections such as pneumonia and sepsis, two major complications of COVID-19. More recently, Anitra has been investigating the requirements for vitamin C in haematological cancers, obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus. Anitra is considered an international key opinion leader on the role of vitamin C in human health, being involved in the recent updating of the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations, and has been awarded a Gold Medal in recognition of her sustained Research Excellence.



Rhiannon Hardingham

Naturopath

Endometriosis: A Multifactorial Perspective

Clinically endometriosis is a deeply challenging chronic condition, affecting over 10% of women and all those who menstruate. It is also disproportionately overrepresented in reproductive medicine, affecting 20%-50% of those presenting to fertility clinics in Australia. Conventional medical management fails to fully address underlying causes, meaning that even with surgery and hormone suppression, disease progression and infertility often persist. In many cases, understanding the diverse drivers of the condition is essential for effective long-term clinical management.

This presentation will include an exploration of the multifactorial approach required for functional medicine management of endometriosis and adenomyosis, including the microbiome, immune response, hormones and genetic factors. Rhiannon will take practitioners through the most recent evidence, as well as insights from her significant clinical experience, illustrating the breadth of considerations required for effective patient care in this field.

BIO: Rhiannon is an experienced fertility naturopath, presenter, practitioner educator, mentor and author.

As a practitioner Rhiannon is committed to the successful integration of natural and conventional medicine, regularly working alongside Melbourne's top fertility doctors to achieve the best outcomes for her patients. As testament to this, Rhiannon is routinely invited to present on the topic of collaborative patient care to medical specialists and naturopaths alike.

After almost 20 years clinical experience in the area of reproductive health, Rhiannon provides professional mentoring and education in both group and individual settings. Her education style is approachable yet thorough, attracting practitioners from all areas of functional medicine, as she assists them to best understand hormone, fertility and pregnancy cases through expertise in nuanced pathology interpretation and herbal and nutritional medicine prescription.



Melinda Jackson

Associate Professor

Sleep on it: the relationship between sleep & chronic health conditions

Sleep is one of the three pillars of good health, alongside diet and exercise. In this presentation, Melinda will discuss the bi-directional links between sleep disturbance and chronic health conditions, with a particular focus on brain health. She will also outline key, evidence-based approaches to addressing sleep disorders and their impacts on improving both sleep and mental health outcomes.

BIO: Associate Professor Melinda L. Jackson is an academic and sleep psychologist, and heads the Sleep, Cognition and Mood Laboratory in the School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University. Her research examines the impact of sleep loss and sleep disorders on cognition, mood, and brain health, and explores the impact of different treatment approaches, including cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia and mindfulness, to address sleep issues in community and cognitive populations.



Dr Douglas Jones

MD, FAAAAI, FAAAAI, Director, Global Food Initiative

How to handle the Spectrum of Food Adverse Reactions

1. Understand the broad spectrum of Food Adverse Reactions and the variety of ways food interacts with people and define the terms.
2. Present the evidence behind the various types of testing that is available: what is validated and what is not and when to utilize the tests. Busting the myths.
3. How to integrate and individualise the management approach to patients.
4. What are the evidence-based treatments and what is currently under investigation.
5. What is the role of the microbiome in prevention and treatment of food adverse reactions.

BIO: Founder and director of Rocky Mountain Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology in Utah, and Immunity Group Australia in Sydney. Dr Jones is a cofounder of Global Food Initiative, a company dedicated to furthering food allergy treatment globally. Dr. Jones is also the director of Allergy Microbiome Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the science of integrated prevention and treatment of allergic disorders. He also directs the Covid Long-Hauler's program at Tanner Clinic. After receiving his medical degree from Penn State University College of Medicine in Hershey, Pennsylvania, Dr. Jones completed a residency program in internal medicine and subspecialty fellowship training in allergy, asthma, and immunology at Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. Dr. Jones is board certified by the American Board of Allergy and Immunology. Dr. Jones is internationally recognized for its innovative food allergy treatment program involving oral immunotherapy and the microbiome. Dr. Jones has published in peer-reviewed journals and is a national and international speaker at medical meetings. He is a Hereditary Angioedema Allies Award Winner and has also earned numerous awards including Most Compassionate Doctor, America's Top Physicians, Patient's Choice Award, and Salt Lake City's Best of Utah's Body and Mind 2022 #1 Allergist.



Dr Brad Leech

PhD, Clinical Nutritionist

Polyphenols and Gut Health: Therapeutic Application

Polyphenols are considered an essential functional food that brings a richness to our diets. While there are thousands of different types of polyphenols, there are four main families of polyphenols with unique chemical structures – flavonoids, lignans, stilbenes and phenolic acids. Understanding the role these polyphenols have in human health has been of great interest to the integrative and functional medicine community. The current research has started to scratch the surface of how polyphenols can influence different body systems, with the link to gut health and the gut microbiome taking centre stage.

Dr Brad Leech will delve into the dynamic interplay between dietary and supplemental polyphenols and their clinical impact on the gut microbiome and gastrointestinal health, shedding light on their potential therapeutic applications. Brad will examine the diverse mechanisms through which polyphenols influence the gut ecosystem and modulate intestinal barrier function, with a focus on their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial and prebiotic actions. Evidence-based strategies are provided for prescribing polyphenols based on patients' clinical presentations and microbiome assessments. Brad further highlights how intestinal inflammation markers, such as calprotectin, and microbial markers 3-indolepropionic acid (IPA) and trimethylamine (TMA) may be altered with polyphenol prescription.

Real-world clinical scenarios where polyphenols may be pivotal in restoring gut health and alleviating gastrointestinal symptoms are shared, along with clinical evidence supporting the benefits of polyphenol-rich diets and supplements.

BIO: Dr Brad Leech is a PhD-qualified Clinical Nutritionist specialising in chronic autoimmune conditions and complex gastrointestinal disorders. After entering the profession in 2008, Brad has taught and developed subjects at leading universities and conducted research on intestinal permeability, autoimmune disease management and food-based probiotics. Brad is the Lead Clinical Educator at Co-Biome by Microba where his expertise in gastrointestinal healthcare enables him to translate the latest science on the gut microbiome into practical clinical applications. In addition to being an Adjunct Fellow at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine Brad offers practitioner support through his mentoring program Brad's Brainiacs.



Prof Avni Sali AM

Founder - NIIM.

MBBS, PhD, FRACS, FACS, FACNEM

HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

Prof Sali will present evidence-based indications for the use of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT). He will outline what HBOT is and discuss its use for various conditions, including brain and cognition, concussion, cancer, fibromyalgia, wound healing, stroke, anti-ageing and other.

There is an exciting growing body of evidence to support the use of HBOT for many conditions. From an integrative medicine perspective, HBOT can be used safely in the treatment of patient care.

The NIIM Clinic utilises the Perry HBOT system which is regarded as the certified world leader in the manufacture, installation and service of hyperbaric oxygen therapy systems for medical application.

Integrative medicine, with its whole person and whole medicine approach can bring together the best that all medicine has to offer.

BIO: Prof Sali is a pioneer in Integrative Medicine (IM), he is often referred to as 'the Founding Father' of IM in Australia. Drawing on his many years of experience in medical practice, research and education he brings a wealth of knowledge to the field of Longevity. He conducted the first comprehensive research in Australia looking at nutrition in primary school children as well as laboratory studies on nutrients, from the 1970's. This work was oriented to exploring healthy lifestyle from childhood and what factors could lead to longevity.



Dr Janet Schloss

Clinical Research Fellow

A pilot feasibility trial: Medicinal Cannabis as a treatment option for Fibromyalgia.

Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is a complex condition characterised by widespread chronic pain, often combined with fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, sleep disturbances, and other somatic and psychological impairments. FMS has a significant physical and mental impact on patients, decreasing their quality of life and a substantial healthcare system burden. The heterogeneity of FMS risk factors and pathophysiological mechanisms requires individualised disease management strategies, with most having only moderately effective outcomes. We conducted a feasibility study through a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial with a 10:10 (THC:CBD) medicinal cannabis oil. Participants underwent a month of titration, then 12 weeks on a set dose. Bloods were taken at day -28, baseline, week 4, 8 and 12. The feasibility of this study was assessed via study procedures (cross-institutional implementation, recruitment, attrition, compliance, acceptability, tolerability and safety). Secondary outcomes were based on effectiveness of cannabis in reducing pain and other FMS-related symptomology e.g. depression, anxiety, poor sleep, fatigue and quality of life. Bloods were also taken for endocannabinoids and inflammatory cytokines. This talk will discuss the overall outcomes of the trial.

BIO: Dr Janet Schloss is the Clinical Research Fellow at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, Southern Cross University. Janet is an accomplished researcher with extensive experience in coordinating clinical trials and conducting research. In addition to her academic career, Janet is a practicing clinical nutritionist and naturopath with over 23 years' experience. Following the completion of her doctorate in 2015, Janet has focused her research on supporting people who have cancer through studying the use of complementary medicines to assist side effects of cancer treatments. Janet has completed a number of ground-breaking studies, been involved as the chief investigator for over 20 trials and has over 70 publications, and now focuses a lot of her research on medicinal cannabis and supplements to assist chronic diseases.



Dr Ross Walker

Cardiologist

Epigenetics & Lifestyle: You are the master of your genes, not the victim

BIO: Dr Ross Walker is an eminent practising cardiologist with a passion for people and health with 40 years' experience as a clinician. For the past 25 years he has been focusing on preventative cardiology & is one of Australia's leading preventative health experts. A world-renowned keynote speaker, life coach, author of seven best-selling books and a regular health presenter in Australian Media. He had his own national radio show, Healthy Living for 8 years on radio 2UE. Dr Walker broadcasts on 2GB, 3AW, 4BC, 6PR, 2CC & 5AA. Dr Walker runs the Sydney Heart Health Clinic in Lindfield on Sydney's North Shore, that focuses on all aspects of non-invasive & preventative cardiology. Dr Walker is also the Chief Medical Officer for the Access Corporate Group. Dr Walker is on the scientific advisory board of SRW.com, a company developing evidence-based anti-ageing products & the Ambassador for Theronomics. Dr Walker is the Chief Medical Officer for Miyagi Coach, an online coaching service to support health & wellness. He is also the Chief Cardiologist for the Miskawaan Health Group, an integrative health service in Southeast Asia. Dr Walker is a consultant for the Kaneka Corporation. Dr Walker is a consultant for Nathealth, a company that has developed high quality Bergamot products for metabolic health. Dr Walker is the Chairman of the Gut Foundation of Australia. Dr Walker is the patron for Heart Support Australia.



Dr Christabelle Yeoh

Integrative General Practitioner

The biophysics of mitochondrial heteroplasmy

Mitochondrial heteroplasmy has major implications on health and disease. The clinical picture varies depending on the level of heteroplasmy and the specific tissues affected, such that mitochondrial mechanisms are easily overlooked, since we do not have simple tools to measure them. However mtDNA heteroplasmy is linked to all chronic disease we deal with today- metabolic, neurodevelopmental, neurodegenerative, psychiatric, cancer and autoimmune disease.

In our modern times of extensive and frequent energy deficit, everyone is after more energy. Integrative medicine practitioners are highly aware of macronutrient balancing and micronutrient requirements for mitochondrial medicine and the need to support cellular respiration. The diet and nutrient protocols for these are countless! Many have decent evidence base to them and are often times useful, but which ones should we pick for our patients?

In this talk, we explore mitochondria epigenetics to build a context of energy supply and demand. We dive into the biophysics components that have built our evolutionary systems from the ground up. This discussion will provide you and your patients the basis for the foundation of mitochondrial health and vital force.

BIO:

Dr Christabelle Yeoh has over 2 decades of experience in clinical care, most of which has focused on understanding root causes of chronic disease. She works with her patients to optimise digestive health, microbiome, mitochondria and brain performance. She applies the premise that dysfunctions can be corrected with established practices of nutritional and environmental medicine. Through clinical assessments, you gain a perspective of your gastrointestinal and microbiome function. We then apply specific lifestyle and nutrition advice to positively influence metabolism.

Dr Yeoh has a strong interest in chronic disease management, neurological, gastrointestinal and metabolic health. She is passionate about sharing her in-depth knowledge on the interconnectedness of human metabolism, biology and behaviour. Dr Yeoh dedicates her practice to working with patients with complex chronic conditions, neuro-immune mediated or chronic inflammatory illness. She helps address the chronic conditions that can be related to adverse factors in her patient's lifestyle, nutrition and environment to help optimise their overall function and wellbeing.

Dr Yeoh graduated from medicine at the University of London in 1999 and obtained her membership with the Royal College of Physicians (UK). She has a Masters degree in Nutrition from King's College London. After practicing hospital medicine, she worked as a general physician with an interest in Nutritional and Environmental Medicine. She was a director and past president at the Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine (ACNEM) and is active on the teaching faculty.