



Goetheanum
Medical Section

Research Congress

Whole medical systems research

February 27 - March 1, 2026

at the Goetheanum

Dear colleagues, professionals, students and researchers from all medical professions,

Anthroposophic medicine is a so-called whole medical system. Whole medical systems are complete systems of healthcare that have evolved independently from conventional Western medicine. These systems, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, naturopathy, and homeopathy, are built upon a comprehensive theory and practice that addresses the whole person, not just a specific disease or symptom.

The factual basis of and reason for the methodological specifications of all whole system approaches is medical anthropology: The human being is understood as a multidimensional system of causative forces. This comprises not only the physical body and its material substances and forces as in conventional medical theory, but also additional, namely immaterial forces which interact with the physical forces and are responsible for the properties of life, soul and spirit.

Whole medical systems

The research on whole medical systems is a type of complex interventions research, that acknowledges that health interventions aren't always simple and linear. They recognize:

- **Multiple Components:** The interventions themselves consist of several interacting parts. For example, a complex intervention to improve patient adherence to medication might include patient education, a mobile app, and follow-up calls from a nurse. Similarly, a whole medical system like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) involves multiple therapies like acupuncture, herbal medicine, and dietary changes.
- **Context is Key:** The setting in which the intervention is delivered—including the patient's individual characteristics, the practitioner's skill, and the healthcare environment—is crucial to the outcome. They move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Non-linear Pathways:** The relationship between an intervention and its outcome isn't always a simple cause-and-effect. Feedback loops and emergent properties mean that the outcome may be unpredictable or greater than the sum of its parts.
- **Methodological Innovation:** Both fields challenge the limitations of traditional research methods, particularly the standard randomized controlled trial (RCT), and are exploring new methods like pragmatic trials, mixed-methods designs, and systems-based approaches to capture the full picture.

The challenge of this type of research is that it's difficult to study an entire system using the traditional reductionist approach of conventional science, which typically isolates and tests a single variable (e.g., a specific drug for a specific condition). Whole medical systems research, on the other hand, investigates the combined effect of multiple, individualized interventions, including diet, lifestyle, physical practices, and patient-practitioner interactions.

Central questions in this congress

- What is the status of "Whole medical systems" research in conventional medicine (e.g. complex interventions, and systems biology research, case studies), Traditional Complementary & Integrative Medicine (TCIM) and anthroposophic medicine (AM)?
- How can we conceptualize, design, use and develop "Whole medical systems" (research) further to serve research in AM?
- What are the challenges of "Whole medical systems" in the context of Evidence-Based Medicine?
- How can "Whole medical systems" research improve AM clinical practice (diagnostics, therapeutic process steering/ clinical decision-making and evaluation of effects in personalized complex treatment trajectories) and AM education?
- How can we improve the impact of "Whole medical systems" research on acceptance and integration of AM in conventional medicine and TCIM?
- How can we influence policy makers?
- How can we realize reimbursement of AM whole medical system interventions for specific indications? And what does this mean for reimbursement of the individual AM therapies?

This congress

In this congress we bring together experts on whole medical systems (research) from conventional medicine, TCIM and AM. After presentations on whole medical systems research (methodology), the application of whole medical systems research, the contribution of AMPs and non-pharmacological AM therapies on two indications (functional disorders and depression), and research in anthroposophic medical anthropology, there is room for plenary discussions and workshops to deepen our understanding and to strengthen our research and education skills. In addition, all other recent AM research results will be presented in oral or poster presentations and workshops.

We invite all researchers, doctors, therapists, students, policy makers, board members of professional associations, education professionals and patient representatives (interested) in the field of AM whole medical systems (research) to participate.

The preparatory group,

Prof. Dr. Erik W. Baars, Dr. Karin Michael, Prof. Dr. David Martin, Dr. Friedemann Schad

Friday, February 27

13.30 Opening of the Congress

*Welcome by Prof. Dr. Erik W. Baars, Dr. Karin Michael, Prof. Dr. David Martin,
Dr. Friedemann Schad*

13.35 Whole medical systems research from a conventional perspective

Prof. Dr. Gene Feder

14.05 Whole medical systems research from a TCIM perspective

Prof. Dr. Nadine Ijaz

14.35 Framework for evidence synthesis of TCIM systems incorporating context and complexity

Dr. Robbert van Haselen

15.05 Break

15.30 Dialogue Walk (discussions in pairs)

16.00 Plenary discussion (whole medical systems: methodology and evidence-based medicine)

17.00 Eurythmy

17.30 Dinner (optional)

19.00 AM concepts of functional disorders and their multimodal treatment

Prof. Dr. Roman Huber

19.30 AM concepts of depression and their multimodal treatment

Dr. Johannes Reiner

20.00 Dialogue Walk (discussions in pairs)

20.15 Break

20.30 Plenary discussion (designing whole medical system programs)

21.15 End

Saturday, February 28

08.30 Vitalizing Exercises

09.00 Research in medical anthropology on the basis of epistemology, natural science and spiritual science. Its necessity for the development of anthroposophical medical research

Prof. Dr. Peter Heusser

10.00 AM rational multimodal treatment of functional disorders (contributions of AMPs and non-pharmacological AM therapies (multiple short presentations)

Several AM professionals

11.00 Break

11.30 AM rational multimodal treatment of depression contributions of AMPs and non-pharmacological AM therapies (multiple short presentations)

Several AM professionals

12.30 Lunch (included in ticket)

14.00 Workshop Round 1*

15.10 Workshop Round 2*

16.10 Break

16.30 Plenary discussion with expert panel (on functional disorders, depression, inner pathway, philosophy of freedom/ anthroposophic epistemology, WMS research) (whole medical system rational multimodal approaches)

17.15 Eurythmy

17.45 Dinner (optional)

19.00 Workshop Round 3* /Presentations round 1

20.00 End

Sunday, March 1

08.30 Eurythmy

09.00 Presentations (oral, poster, workshop) round 2

10.00 *Break*

10.10 Presentations (oral, poster, workshop) round 3

11.15 Presentations (oral, poster, workshop) round 4

12.30 Final discussion

13.00 *End of congress*

Workshops and presentations

Saturday afternoon:

Workshops and oral presentations on whole medical systems topics can be proposed in the following categories:

- Whole medical systems approaches for specific indications (e.g. oncology, pain management, ...)
- Whole medical systems: research methodologies
- Clinical decision-making in whole medical systems
- Other whole medical systems-related topics

Saturday evening and Sunday:

Workshops and oral and poster presentations on all AM topics. In addition, we invite you specifically to propose a workshop, oral presentation or poster presentation on one the following categories:

AM fundamentals

1. The inner pathway and the epistemological fundamentals of AM (research) in relation to „outer“ scientific research (elaboration after first plenary introductions)
2. Medical anthropology research
3. Karma and disease
4. Biography/ psychology and disease
5. Whole medical systems and 3-foldness & 4-foldness
6. Worldviews research
7. Innovations in AM (research)

Methodologies

8. Case studies (methodologies, guidelines, examples and discussion)
9. AM multimodal/ complex interventions research
10. AM mechanisms/ working principles research
11. Goethean science and spiritual science
12. Economic research on cost-effectiveness, cost-utility, etc.

AM therapies and clinical practice

13. Anthroposophic medicinal products
14. Non-pharmacological interventions
15. Prevention
16. Practice methods research (personalized diagnostics, therapeutic process steering/ clinical reasoning, evaluation of individualized treatments)

Young researchers and students

17. How to start research?

18. Thesis corner

19. Exchange/ AM research training program for young researchers worldwide

General Information

Translation

Conference language is English.

Conference fee

Regular Price: CHF 350,-

Reduced Price: CHF 250,-

Student Price: CHF 180,-

*Support Price: CHF 350,- + x

**amount at your discretion*

Dinner is optional and may be booked separately at a price of 28 CHF each.

Online-Participation:

We are preparing the possibility to watch some parts of the conference via live stream. Details and registration for online participation will be published shortly at

<https://medicalsection.goetheanum.ch/news/rc2026-live-stream>

Registration:

<https://goetheanum.ch/en/events/rc26>

<https://goetheanum.ch/de/veranstaltungen/rc26>

Donations to support the Research Conference

(not to be used for remittance of the conference fee):

<https://donate.raisenow.io/nqrmv?lng=en>

Purpose: "Research Congress 2026"