

Chinese mind-body therapy boosts health for people with chronic disease

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UQ researcher Dr Xin Liu proves ancient Chinese mind-body movement therapy could offer dramatic health benefits for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes or obesity.

(Medical Xpress)—A University of Queensland study has shown ancient Chinese mind-body movement therapy could offer dramatic health benefits for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes or obesity.

The study examined whether adults with diabetes or at risk of [type 2](#)

[diabetes](#) could improve their health by undertaking the SMILE Wellness program, a low-impact gentle mind-body movement therapy based on Tai Chi and Qigong.

Researcher Dr Xin Liu, from UQ's School of Medicine, said the study results were encouraging.

"The therapeutic program resulted in many [health benefits](#) for participants, including reduced blood sugar, [blood pressure](#), body weight and waist circumference," Dr Liu said.

"Average blood sugar levels decreased by six per cent, blood pressure decreased by nine per cent, and [body mass index](#) and waist circumference decreased by four per cent and three per cent respectively."

Participants also showed improvements in mental health, strength and flexibility, sleeping patterns, immunity, pain reduction and quality of life.

"The SMILE Wellness program may be the first exercise program to scientifically demonstrate the significant effects of exercise alone on the management of diabetes, weight and [waist circumference](#), depression and stress," Dr Liu said.

"The program may be most beneficial for those who are unable or unwilling to participate in conventional types of physical activity, such as strength training or gym-based exercises."

The study was funded by the Diabetes Australia Research Trust and findings have been published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* and the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

The SMILE Wellness program is now being offered to the public to benefit the community.

More information: "Qi-Gong Mind–Body Therapy and Diabetes Control: A Randomized Controlled Trial." Xin Liu, Yvette D. Miller, Nicola W. Burton, Jiun-Horng Chang, Wendy J. Brown. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* August 2011, Vol. 41, Issue 2, Pages 152-158, [DOI: 10.1016/j.amepre.2011.04.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2011.04.007)

"A preliminary study of the effects of Tai Chi and Qigong medical exercise on indicators of metabolic syndrome, glycaemic control, health-related quality of life, and psychological health in adults with elevated blood glucose." X Liu, Y D Miller, N W Burton, W J Brown. *Br J Sports Med* 2010;44:10 704-709 Published Online First: 16 October 2008 [DOI: 10.1136/bjism.2008.051144](https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.2008.051144)

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