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# AACMA

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PRESS RELEASE

## **ASTHMA CARE GAP EXPOSED IN AUSTRALIA**

***With only one in three patients following daily management plans, experts are calling for a shift beyond reactive treatment.***

As asthma continues to affect millions of Australians, the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association [{AACMA}](#), Australia's national peak body representing qualified and registered acupuncturists, is urging Australians to take a more proactive approach to managing the condition, warning that too many people are relying on reactive treatment rather than consistent day to day care.

Asthma affects around **2.8 million Australians**, roughly 1 in 9 people, making it one of the most common chronic respiratory conditions in the country. While symptoms such as wheezing, breathlessness and coughing are widely recognised, for many people it is the ongoing management of triggers, inflammation and breathing patterns that has the greatest impact on daily life.

AACMA says this is where a more integrated approach to care, including complementary therapies such as **acupuncture, may help support long term management alongside standard treatment.**

According to national data highlighted in the [Asthma in Australia](#) report, asthma also continues to have a significant impact across the healthcare system. It was the leading cause of disease burden for children aged 1 to 9 in 2024, highlighting the long-term impact of the condition from an early age.

The same data shows that only 1 in 3 people with asthma use regular daily medication or have an Asthma Action Plan in place, reinforcing concerns that asthma is still being managed too reactively rather than through consistent, preventative care.

Recent data also highlights the continued burden of the condition. In 2024 alone, 478 Australians died from asthma, and tens of thousands required hospital or emergency care.



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“Asthma is often treated as something that only needs attention during flare ups, but the reality is many Australians are not managing it consistently day to day,” said Rodd Sanchez, Deputy Chair of AACMA.

“There is a clear opportunity to support people earlier and more consistently, including through integrated approaches that look beyond symptom relief alone.”

Sanchez states this could include incorporating acupuncture as part of a broader, integrated asthma management plan alongside prescribed medication and regular medical care.

“Acupuncture is not intended to replace conventional treatment, but to work alongside it, supporting respiratory health and helping the body respond more effectively to triggers over time.”

However, any asthma management plan must also consider the individual triggers that can drive symptoms and flare ups.

Triggers can vary significantly from person to person, but commonly include allergens such as pollen, dust mites, pet dander and mould, as well as irritants like smoke, air pollution and strong chemical odours. Respiratory infections, exercise, cold or changing weather conditions, and even stress or strong emotions can also contribute to flare ups.

“Understanding what drives those flare ups is a critical part of managing asthma more effectively,” Sanchez continues. “When people are aware of their triggers, they are in a stronger position to reduce frequency and severity over time.”

From a medical perspective, asthma involves inflammation and sensitivity in the airways, along with tightening of surrounding muscles that can make breathing more difficult.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, asthma is referred to as Xiao Chuan, or wheezing and breathlessness, and is understood as a pattern of imbalance rather than a single condition.

“In Chinese medicine, Xiao Chuan is not just about the lungs,” Sanchez said. “It may involve systems such as the Lung, Spleen and Kidney, along with contributing factors like phlegm, cold or heat, allowing treatment to be tailored to the individual.”

With this in mind, treatment may include a combination of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, prescribed according to individual needs and, in some cases, used on a regular basis as part of ongoing care. Emerging research is exploring how acupuncture may support respiratory health and inflammation, particularly alongside standard medical care.

***AACMA emphasises that asthma requires proper diagnosis and ongoing medical management, with complementary therapies designed to support, not replace, conventional treatment.***



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AACMA is urging Australians to take a more consistent, integrated approach to asthma care, combining medical treatment with a better understanding of triggers and long-term respiratory health.

More information and a directory of qualified practitioners can be found at [www.acupuncture.org.au](http://www.acupuncture.org.au).

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