Project Title: Understanding chronic pelvic pain: Acupuncture practitioner's knowledge and treatment strategies.

Project Summary: The role of Chinese Medicine practice in the management of women with chronic pelvic pain (CPP).

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Dr Susan Arentz, adjunct research fellow at the National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM), Dr Mike Armour post-doctoral fellow NICM, Ms Rebecca Reid PhD candidate, Australian Research Collaboration of Complementary and Integrative Medicine (ARCCIM), University of Technology, Sydney, Professor Caroline Smith, Clinical Research, Health and Wellbeing Theme Champion, NICM and Professor Jason Abbott, Gynaecology Specialist, University of New South Wales (UNSW).

The research project consists of a survey and focus group meetings. This Participant information sheet is about participation in the Survey only.

We are investigating your understanding, treatment and referral networks of women with Chronic Pelvic Pain (CPP). CPP is defined as pain in the pelvis of greater than 6 months duration that is severe enough to affect your patient's usual activities or require medical intervention. The most common cause of CPP in women is endometriosis. Endometriosis related CPP includes a variety of pain symptoms including dysmenorrhea (period pain), dyspareunia (pain during sexual intercourse), dyschezia (pain on bowel motions) and dysuria (pain on urination). In addition to pelvic visceral or muscle pain, endometriosis reduces quality of life and increases absenteeism at work or school.

Women with symptoms suggestive of chronic pelvic pain often use complementary medicines, with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine being a popular choice. There is preliminary, but promising evidence that CM practices including acupuncture and moxibustion could help women with chronic pelvic pain. Referrals between biomedical doctors and acupuncturists are often low and there can be a lack of clear communication on what medications the woman is currently taking which can lead to possible interactions with herbal remedies. This research aims to describe the Chinese Medicine practitioner's perspective in relation their understanding of women with CPP, their treatment patterns, sources of information and education, referral practices and to develop an in-depth education resource.

How is the study being paid for?

This research is being funded by a grant awarded to the research team by Endeavour College of Natural Health.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to respond to an online survey.

How much of my time will I need to give?

Approximately 15-20 minutes.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

There will be no direct benefits for participating in this survey. However your response will help develop understanding of the role Chinese Medicine practice plays in the treatment of women with chronic pelvic pain. It may contribute to the development of education and resources to better
manage women and referral tools for integrative Chinese and Western medicine practice. Your participation may also help to identify gaps in knowledge and contribute to education programs.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

There is no foreseeable risk or discomfort no more than inconvenience for the time required to complete the survey. However should you experience discomfort whilst responding you can stop further engagement with the survey.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified. The survey is anonymous however there is an optional section where you can express interest in participating in future focus groups discussing chronic pelvic pain. This will require your contact information. Participation in the survey does not require you to participate in these focus groups and you will be provided more information and invited to consent to these focus groups separately.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide. If any other related projects seek to use your data, the human research ethics committee will be notified. If you provide your contact details, these will only be linked with your responses to two questions. The funder of this research project, Endeavour College of Natural Health may use your data to develop educational programs and course curriculum for five years after the completion of the study.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do start the survey, and change your mind, you can withdraw by simply exiting the questionnaire, without giving any reason and without any consequences. Once submitted however, the questionnaire cannot be identified to specific individuals so you cannot withdraw after you have sent your response.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by sending the survey link to other people.

What if I require further information?

Please contact Dr Susan Arentz should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

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What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, your consent will be implied by clicking submit at the end of the survey.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H12527. Ethical clearance has also been obtained from the Endeavour College of Natural Health Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is 20180212.