



USE OF THE TITLE 'DOCTOR'

ATMS Official Policy

ATMS recognises that there is no legal restriction upon a non-medical practitioner's use of the title "Dr".

Under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* as adopted in participating jurisdictions (the National Law), an appropriately qualified practitioner can use the title "Dr". However, the practitioner must make it clear to the public what is their area of expertise and qualification. The National Law also prevents a practitioner from "holding themselves out" as having qualifications or expertise they do not have.

Advertising and the National Law

Section 133 of the National Law relates to advertising. It states that:

(1) A person must not advertise a regulated health service, or a business that provides a regulated health service, in a way that—

(a) is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to be misleading or deceptive; or

(b) offers a gift, discount or other inducement to attract a person to use the service or the business, unless the advertisement also states the terms and conditions of the offer; or

(c) uses testimonials or purported testimonials about the service or business; or

(d) creates an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment; or

(e) directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.



These guidelines require practitioners (who are not registered medical practitioners) who choose to adopt the title “Dr” in their advertising, whether or not they hold a Doctorate degree or PhD, to make it clear that they do not hold registration as a medical practitioner. In advertising they should include a reference to their health profession whenever the title is used

Consistent with this Legislation, ATMS members may not use the titles “Doctor” or “Dr” unless they hold a doctoral qualification from an approved higher education provider or an overseas institution with an equivalent accreditation status. Where an ATMS member does hold such a qualification the title “Doctor”/“Dr” may if desired be used provided the full title of the doctoral qualification is also shown. For example:

- Dr John Smith (Doctor of Laws)
- Doctor Mary Jones (Doctor of Philosophy)
- Dr Xia Zhang (Doctor of Arts)

At all times however the member must ensure that there is no implication that he/she has improperly taken a protected title. It is advisable therefore to include a further clarification wherever possible of a phrase such as “not a medical practitioner”.

This policy only applies in the clinical setting, for example when advertising your natural medicine services/clinic, your business/appointment cards for your natural medicine practice, etc. Also this policy does not prevent the use of a title by a member who is also currently registered with a Statutory Board if such use is permitted by that Statutory Board. This Policy also does not authorise the use of a title if such use is prohibited by a Statutory Board.