



## Research Information Sheet (RIS)

### Survey of the Effect of Falun Gong on Health and Wellness

#### Purpose of the Study

This research investigates the effects of Falun Gong on health and the maintenance of existing wellness from the self-reports of individuals who practise Falun Gong as contrasted with those who do not practise Falun Gong or similar practices and other forms of meditation.

The aim is to gain a snapshot of the demographics of Falun Gong practitioners, to study the impact of the practice on individuals' health and wellbeing as perceived by practitioners, and how that compares with people who do not practise Falun Gong or other forms of meditation.

*Falun Gong is also known as Falun Dafa. For consistency, Falun Gong is used in all research materials.*

#### Value

There is a growing awareness in the West of self-help meditative practices from Eastern cultures. These self-improvement therapies like Yoga, Tai Chi and Qigong practices share common characteristics and are traditionally valued for better health and wellness outcomes.

While there is substantial literature on Yoga, Tai Chi, and other forms of qigong, little research has been done on the efficacy of Falun Gong. This is despite the fact that the practice has attracted tens of millions of people from over 80 countries. Many gain better health, inner peace and joy from the practice. A survey conducted in Beijing (1998), with over 12,000 respondents indicated that Falun Gong has a significant effect in promoting physical and mental health and enhancing wellness.

This Australian-based research will be the first worldwide demographic survey involving a comparative sample. The value of the proposed study is that it will explore the potential for Falun Gong to improve the health and wellbeing of practitioners. It will augment existing limited research on Falun Gong and offers insight into its role as a body-mind intervention, self-improvement therapy and spiritual practice.

By participating, you will be contributing to the study on how Falun Gong affects health and wellness, and the degree to which this meditation practice makes a pivotal difference in your life. Findings of the survey will assist in validating the role of Falun Gong in maintaining health and wellness. It will also provide insights into the wider implications of the significance of Falun Gong practice in the promotion of body-mind health and wellness and as a form of group intervention strategy for better health and wellness outcomes for the public, contemporary and future society.

#### Design and Methodology

The study addresses the following research question:

**Effects of Falun Gong: Whether the practice affects the health and wellbeing of practitioners.**

To investigate this question, the study will use a quantitative method with anonymous questionnaires administered via Internet. The study consists of the following three phases:

1. Participant identification: This online survey is open to Falun Gong practitioners around the world. There are two groups of participants; (1) individuals who identify themselves as Falun Gong practitioners and (2) individuals who do not practise Falun Gong, or other type of meditation practice in the past 6 months and who are invited by practitioners to do the survey.
2. Data collection: A time frame of 5+ weeks will be set for data collection. There are two questionnaires. Health & Wellness Survey One is for Falun Gong practitioners; Health & Wellness Survey Two is for non-practitioners. Letter to participants, Research Information Sheet (RIS) and web links for the two surveys will be posted on the Australian and European Falun Dafa websites. There is no restriction placed on the number of participants completing survey.
3. Data analysis: Data collected will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A summary of the findings will be published on Falun Dafa websites and a subsequent date will be announced for the completion of the final research report.

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### Participation Criteria

1. **Health & Wellness Survey One (HW1):** You must be a Falun Gong practitioner for more than 6 months, engaging in regular and consistent daily/weekly practice of the exercises and study of Falun Gong teachings.
2. **Health & Wellness Survey Two (HW2):** One friend or family member invited by Falun Gong practitioners. He/She must NOT be practising Falun Gong, meditation, or similar practices, e.g. tai chi, qigong, yoga on a regular (daily/weekly) basis during the past 6 months. Ideally, this person is from your age range.  
**18 – 29 years; 30 – 39 years; 40 – 49 years; 50 – 59 years; 60 – 69 years; Above 70 years**
3. Failure to invite a non-Falun Gong practitioner to do the HW2 Survey will not disqualify you from participation. However, please do your best to meet this criterion.
4. **Participation is voluntary.** No one is under any obligation to do the survey. The researcher will not be approaching Falun Gong practitioners in China. Please do not complete the online survey if Falun Gong is banned in your country, or if participating poses a security risk for you and your family.

### Research Process & Instructions

1. **All participants should try to complete the survey online.** The process should take about 20 minutes. Please give yourself enough time to complete the entire survey.
2. **The online surveys are in English.** Chinese versions are on the website to help guide respondents through the online surveys. You may also seek help from practitioners/friends to complete the survey.
3. **There are two online surveys as listed above.** Web links for research information and surveys will be posted on [www.falunau.org](http://www.falunau.org)
4. To go directly to the online surveys, click on the links provided here.  
**URL for HW1:** <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/TellUS2/SurveyForm.asp?ID=4705>  
**URL for HW2:** <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/TellUS2/SurveyForm.asp?ID=4706>
5. Under **exceptional circumstances**, if you are unable to complete the online survey, you can complete and submit a paper version to Margaret Lau, c/o Dr John Court and post it to the address given below. The researcher will then use an independent third party to electronically input data.

Participants' responses will be kept confidential and unidentified in the research report. Researchers, however, cannot guarantee the confidentiality or anonymity of material transferred by email or Internet. Every care will be taken to separate responses from any identifying material as early as possible.

Hard copies of summarized results will be stored in lockable filing cabinets in the School of Psychology. All data and summarised results will also be stored on computers with CD backups in a lockable cabinet by the researcher. The recorded data will be securely stored for a minimum of 7 years in accordance with the Australian Freedom of Information legislation.

The University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has reviewed this study. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: [vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au](mailto:vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au).

Thank you for your contribution and help with the survey.

#### **Project Researcher**

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