

## Meet Medicine Woman

# Rowena Kissun

**R**owena Kissun is paving the way for more accessible, scientifically proven medicines and treatments, for not only her cancer patients, but all patients who seek her guidance.

We interviewed Integrative Medicine Practitioner Rowena Kissun and her love for what she does is certainly apparent. Integrative Medicine is the art of using pharmaceutical medicines and/or natural medicines, and having the medical and scientific backing to know which medicines, diets and treatments work best together for better health.

Rowena is university qualified in Medical Science, Medicinal Chemistry, Herbal

Medicine and Nutrition and is based at her clinic called Kissun Clinics in Cannonvale.

**Rowena, tell us about growing up, and how you got into Integrative Medicine?**

Growing up in a tiny town watching my mum and dad run medical centres and pharmacies in rural areas around Rylstone and Mudgee NSW had me immersed in healthcare since I was a baby. Intellectual curiosity about the human body led to me to choosing a career in health care, but with a twist.

There are not many practitioners who do what I do and I feel this is because when we study medicine, we are drilled to believe it is the only way and natural treatments could

cause harm. In the same way, when one studies natural medicine, I unfortunately saw lecturers degrade pharmaceutical medicine and calling it the enemy.

Well, that is certainly not true. I believe that everything has its place. We need both. The life-saving and symptom 'flipping' ability of pharmaceuticals is integral. Equally, the healing ability of herbal medicine and nutrition is paramount when a patient decides they want to get down to the root cause of their problem and fix it for good.

**We would love to hear about your journey with Kissun Clinics and how it has evolved?**

Having Kissun Clinics for over 13 years, I have watched natural medicine change so much. My education and experience allow me to wear numerous hats when I am listening to my patient's story. Earlier in my career I did a lot of work with fertility and hormone management, which led to exploring hormone related cancers (prostate, ovarian, uterine and breast cancers). Many of these are driven by excess hormones and, working alongside the patient's oncologist and other practitioners, we have been able to assist in improving their health outcomes.

Approximately 70% of my patients are oncology patients, and I have worked in hospitals in Europe and Asia who implement both pharmaceutical medicine and chemotherapy alongside natural medicine in cancer treatments. I have witnessed first-hand the amazing results when a patient is looked after with not only medicines, but vitamins, nutrition, counselling and massage, and this is exactly what I provide in my clinic.

In Australia the main options given in regards to cancer are surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. For patients, it's very hard to understand what is going to work and what isn't.

A fantastic service that our clinic has access to is state of the art blood testing through medical pathology labs where they extract circulating tumour cells from the sample, then individually test the person's blood to work out which natural medicines and which chemotherapy is going to be most effective for that individual against their cancer. Rather than saying that statistically this particular method is effective in your cancer, we are doing individualised treatment through the testing of blood, with amazing successes.

**I understand your life has changed in the last 18 months with the birth of baby Eva. Has that influenced the way you work with patients?**

I want to talk about vulnerability because, prior to having a baby, it wasn't really a part of my vocabulary. When Eva was born, it was quite a traumatic birth, and I had never been a patient in a hospital. I was scared and confused. I imagined an easy natural birth, but that was not the case.

Being a patient rather than a practitioner during her birth taught me a lot about the vulnerability that people feel when they are the patient. It helped me put myself into their shoes and understand what it feels like to have a problem, to come to the clinic and lay all of that on the table, with emotion, tears. It's full on! For me the most important medicine was the conversations that I had in the week I was in hospital recovering. The midwives at Proserpine QLD hospital were amazing.

I love horse riding. I started lessons a number of years ago with well known trainer and friend Vanessa Torti. After having a baby, the recovery felt so slow. The first time I was back on a horse, I felt like I was in someone else's body. My core strength was shot, my posture was not right and I didn't have the strength or flexibility I used to. There were a few tears, but riding was my saviour. As the mileage on the saddle increased, so did my strength and confidence. Horses are beautiful, forgiving creatures, their paradox of sheer strength alongside the cuddles and affection they give is the most beautiful thing.

In my own clinic, I understand that people are on a journey. Ill health and disease often stems from stress and emotional pain. I can't verify that scientifically, but through experience I can tell you that when a person feels sad, rundown or anxious, ill health in any form can easily step in.

In my clinic I spend the time to talk, I mean really talk.

The conversation is part of the medicine, so spending that time and providing space for my patients to feel safe in their vulnerability is very important.

**Can you tell us about how things that have changed for you this year?**

COVID was scary at the start. I had a new baby, my husband and I had just purchased our first home together, and I felt isolated from my family who are all in NSW and VIC.

Our clinic remained open and we continued to see patients face to face but I saw the need to also take the business online, to book online telehealth appointments and

provide access to prescription medicines and supplements. With the help of local website genius (Jade Korosec, Slinkylinks) and marketing guru (Tolita Dukes, 8 Seconds) we suddenly had access to the world! My patients in my Sydney and Mackay clinics were happy to use Telehealth and very quickly the word spread and it opened up our unique services to the world. Regular clients from Singapore, Japan, the UK, Germany and the USA to name a few were connecting with us and referring friends.

Another amazing feat has been liaising with pathology labs in both Australia and overseas to provide in-home testing with visiting nurses, blood testing, microbiome, hormone, MTHFR, vitamin deficiency, cancer tumour marker and RGCC cancer testing.

It's been fantastic, I've really enjoyed the online aspect and coming from rural NSW myself, it has been such a pleasure to provide services and testing to rural and remote parts of Australia.

**What are your goals, vision or mission?**

Ultimately my goal is to heal.

I know for sure that my dharma (duty) on this earth is to help others and make Integrative Medicine understood, accepted and sought after.

One by one I continue to really hear the patient's story, to educate them on their options, and give them guidance and understanding. Integrative medicine allows for more options and that's what patients need. You can have 10 people with the same disease, but they all need to be treated differently whether it be cancer, hormone problems, weight loss, fatigue, gut issues etc.

I look forward to making a difference in the world when it comes to the understanding and education around the options in solving health issues. My hope is that people can appreciate and trust that there are practitioners like myself out there that are trained in the combination of science, medicine, and naturopathic healing.

There is so much hope and healing to be done, I feel privileged to be part of it.

