



Australian Divisions of **General Practice**

## Primary Mental Health Care E:Bulletin July, 2003

The Primary Mental Health Care E:Bulletin is designed to inform Divisions of General practice, general practitioners, policy makers, and other health and community stakeholders about developments in primary mental health care. The Bulletin is regularly released throughout the year and produced by the Mental Health Program at ADGP.

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### **Primary Mental Health Care Symposium**

A national Primary Mental Health Care Symposium was hosted by ADGP in conjunction with the Mental Health Council and *beyondblue* on 7 May 2003. The Symposium discussed successes, challenges and future priorities in primary mental health care reform. The event brought together national experts drawn from public policy, research, general practice, psychiatry and consumer and carer advocacy groups and featured special guests Professor Sir David Goldberg and Professor Andre Tylee, international experts in primary mental health care from the UK Institute of Psychiatry.

Important new directions forecast by the participants for primary mental health care in Australia included:

- Realising the potential for prevention and early intervention, particularly in the early childhood and adolescent years
- Work with the private psychiatry workforce to develop better ways for GPs and private psychiatrists to work together to co-ordinate and share care
- Working towards a system-wide approach to seamless shared care and improved integration with State Mental Health Services
- The management of co morbidity in general practice, both in terms of drugs and mental health, but the broader issue of the link between mental health and physical illness.

Recommendations from the symposium are being presented to the July meeting of the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Implementation Advisory Group.

The Australian Primary Mental Health Care Resource Centre has devoted the latest edition of their newsletter, PARC Update, to the Symposium. You can find the newsletter online at [www.som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PARC](http://www.som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PARC).

A highlights video and a published summary of proceedings from the Symposium are being produced by ADGP. Divisions who have ordered copies through their mental health development and liaison officer based at each SBO will receive those in the near future.

*“This is a world first for Australia. No other country is doing what you are doing and it seems to have had a tremendous start, this program. The uptake by Australian GPs in learning mental health skills exceeds my most optimistic predictions and I have already discerned a very much changed attitude towards collaborative working in mental health .....*”

*Professor Sir David Goldberg, Primary Mental Health Symposium, May 2003*

### Opportunities for showcasing primary mental health at the Divisions of General Practice Network Forum 2003

All Divisions should have received 10 copies of the Registration brochure, including the preliminary program for the Divisions of General Practice Network Forum 2003: Focussed on the Future to be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from November 20 to 23.

**THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE INNOVATIVE DIVISIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECTS NATIONALLY. A REMINDER THAT ABSTRACTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR PAPER PRESENTATIONS ARE DUE THIS FRIDAY 25 JULY.**

For the first time, one of the themes for papers and posters is primary mental health. ADGP encourages Divisions with mental health projects to submit papers and/or posters to showcase and share your experience with the wider general practice community.

As well as the paper and poster sessions, there will also be a separate Mental Health Seminar on Friday 21 November at 11.15 am. The theme of the seminar will be Mental Health and Physical Health Co-morbidity.

## **New edition Better Outcomes Familiarisation Training Resources**

By now all Divisions and mental health stakeholders should have received copies of the second edition Familiarisation Training resources. They include:

- GP and Practice Manuals
- Laminated Checklist and MBS Items Table
- Familiarisation Training CD
- Facilitator's Guide

The revised Familiarisation Training resources contain all new video vignettes and feature GPs from across Australia, sharing their experiences providing patient care using the 3 Step Mental Health Process, Focussed Psychological Strategies and the Access to Allied Health Program.

The new Familiarisation Training resources have been developed after consultation with GPs and Divisions across urban and rural regions. With new tables, completed proformas and information provided by GPs using the items, the program now incorporates a very practical element, intended to equip GPs with the tools and information they need that can be easily used in the consultation environment.

The resources are intended for the provision of Familiarisation Training to GPs interested in registering with the initiative but can also be used to add value to other mental health training events. I hope that you will find the revised Familiarisation Training resources to be a useful tool for supporting GPs, allied health professionals and practice staff in your Division.

All resources are also available from ADGP's website [www.adgp.com.au](http://www.adgp.com.au). A web-based E:program for self-directed learning based on the new resources is currently under development and will be released in August-September.

## **Mental Health and Aged Care**

A recent report by Alzheimer's Australia, *The Dementia Epidemic: Economic impact and positive solutions for Australia*, has found that the prevalence of dementia is growing rapidly – expected to reach ½ million Australians by 2040

and that dementia is more common than skin cancer yet with significantly less investment in public health initiatives. In particular, the report concludes that dementia costs more years of health-span than any of the other national health priority areas.

Dementia has links to recognised national health priorities including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression, and it is the most costly area of mental health. The report calls for greater support of GPs in the diagnosis, ongoing support and management of dementia including education and training programs, and greater access to specialist services (eg. Memory clinics).

Alzheimer's Australia is interested in collaborating with ADGP and the National Primary Mental Health Care Initiative to develop joint recommendations to government around aged care and primary mental health. A further meeting between the two organisations has been scheduled to take this work forward. Divisional input to any document that goes to government will be sought.

A full copy of the report is available from [www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au).

## Health and Alcohol: New resources

New health promotion and treatment resources for the treatment and prevention of alcohol problems are now available under the National Alcohol Strategy:

**Alcohol and your health:** is a Kit containing new National Alcohol Guidelines developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NMHRC). The Kit also includes fact sheets, a consumer information booklet, posters and other resources, including important information on standard drinks. Kits have been mailed to all Divisions.

**Guidelines for the Treatment of Alcohol Problems:** are guidelines intended for all health workers and general practitioners who come into contact with dependent or problem drinkers. They are based on a review of the evidence about the effectiveness of treatments, and on the clinical experience of an expert panel. The aim is to provide evidence that guides treatment, education and professional development.

For more information about the Australian Alcohol Guidelines and treatment guidelines see [www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au](http://www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au). If you would like additional copies, there is an order form on the website, or alternatively phone (02) 6289 7387.

**The Right Mix: Your Health and Alcohol:** is an information kit produced to assist the veteran community. These resources are the health promotion component of the Department of Veteran's Affairs' Alcohol Management Project. The project is concerned with creating opportunities to reduce

alcohol-related harm in the veteran community and ensure that alcohol and related problems are addressed in an integrated way with other physical and mental health conditions. The printed materials are supported by an interactive website, [www.therightmix.gov.au](http://www.therightmix.gov.au). The site includes an innovative self-assessment tool which assesses a patient's drinking patterns and behaviour as well as their readiness to do something about their drinking. On the home page there is a button called help a client/patient giving health providers quick access to relevant information about health and alcohol in relation to veterans.

## Co-morbidity of mental health and substance use disorders

The following reports were released under the Federal Government's National Co-morbidity Project in Drug Action Week in June:

- Co morbidity of mental disorders and substance abuse in general practice
- Co morbidity of mental disorders and substance use: a brief guide for the primary care clinician
- Current practice in the management of clients with co morbid mental health and substance use disorders in tertiary care settings

They are all available from [www.health.gov.au/pubhlth](http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth). Some of the Divisional information in these reports is now out of date, but the reports still contain a host of relevant information and signal an ongoing policy interest in co-morbidity.

ADGP has received some queries about available funding for co morbidity projects. As part of the 2003-04 Federal Budget, \$4.4 million (over 2 years) has been made available to the National Co morbidity Initiative to improve service co-ordination and treatment outcomes for clients with both illicit drug addiction and mental illness. The measure is intended to improve co-ordination across psychiatric/mental health services and drug treatment services, develop best practice guidelines for service delivery and increase professional education and training. ADGP understands from the Department of Health and Ageing that an implementation strategy is yet to be developed but a role for the general practice sector is envisaged.

## Mental Health and Physical Health Co-morbidity

The link between mental health and physical illness is topical and the focus of a growing body of work. There is increasing evidence that failing to treat people holistically results in poorer health outcomes and quality of life for consumers, and increases the overall costs of health service provision.

The recent position statement from the Expert Working Group of the National Heart Foundation published in March 2003 in the Medical Journal of Australia

(see [www.mja.com.au](http://www.mja.com.au)) highlights the significance of mental health for the development of coronary heart disease (CHD), a leading cause of morbidity and mortality. The Expert Working Group concluded that there was “strong and consistent evidence of an independent and causal association between depression, social isolation and lack of quality social support and the causes and prognosis of coronary heart disease”. This increased risk was found to be of a similar order to the currently acknowledged risk factors of smoking, dyslipidaemia and hypertension.

Although there are not yet published studies on whether treating depression and other psychosocial risk factors reduces CHD morbidity, the expert working party did conclude that those with CHD and depression are more likely to have poorer outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of mental health as a predictor for the development of a common and significant medical condition and raises whether consideration should also be given to screening for psychosocial factors in addition to blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and smoking.

The National Health Priority Action Council Advisory Group on Mental Health chaired by Professor Ian Hickie has commissioned a scoping study to explore issues relating to co-existing depression and related disorders and other national health priority areas. The study is expected to suggest where improvements need to be made in the delivery of health services in this area and targeted ways of moving forward. ADGP is a member of the Group and will consult Divisions on the draft report and recommendations as soon as it is available.

Mental health and physical health co-morbidity will be further discussed at two upcoming conferences:

- Partnerships Conference 2003: Maintaining Momentum, 17-18 October, hosted by GPDWA and the Primary Care Mental Health Unit, UWA. Papers are invited on integrating consumers' physical and mental health care. Abstracts are due **FRIDAY 25 JULY** to [ctoase@cyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:ctoase@cyllene.uwa.edu.au).
- The primary mental health seminar at the Divisions of General Practice Network Forum 2003: Focussed on the Future to be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from November 20 to 23

### **CommunityLIFE: Community-based suicide prevention**

CommunityLIFE is a new community suicide prevention project funded under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. The project is a collaboration between the Centre for Developmental Health, Suicide Prevention Australia and the Australian Network for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health (Auseinet). The project will:

- Develop and distribute suicide prevention resources and information.

- Support the development of suicide prevention initiatives at the community level through a national advisory service to be established in 2003/04
- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support the development of life promotion (suicide prevention) initiatives focusing on the social and emotional well-being of communities.

The project's website is live at [www.community-life.org.au](http://www.community-life.org.au) and contains all the latest information on projects around Australia and overseas, reference material and resources for community project development and ideas for evaluation methods and funding sources.

The project team are also developing Good Practice Guidelines. The Guidelines will provide a practical approach to planning community-centred suicide prevention initiatives. Watch the website for their publication.

Some Divisions may have already participated in State and Territory community consultations conducted by the CommunityLIFE project team. Those Divisions with suicide prevention initiatives are encouraged to share their learnings and models with CommunityLIFE.

To subscribe to the CommunityLIFE e-newsletter, go to Contact Us on the website and download the mailing list form. Alternatively email [communitylife@auseinet.flinders.edu.au](mailto:communitylife@auseinet.flinders.edu.au) and the staff will send you one.

## Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Initiative Update

Participation in the *Better Outcomes in the Mental Health Care Initiative* continues to grow steadily. A summary of level 1 and level 2 registrations as at 16 July based on GPMHSC data is presented below:

State	Level 1	Level 2
Australian Capital Territory	24	3
New South Wales	802	70
Northern Territory	14	2
Queensland	443	29
South Australia	265	32
Tasmania	76	4
Victoria	772	80
West Australia	374	33
National	2770	253

### ***Allied Health***

Up to a total of 70 allied health services covering 77 Divisions of General Practice will be funded in 2003-04. Each State and Territory will have at least one project and, nationally, 36 projects are in areas classified as rural, 34 in areas classified as urban.

### ***News from the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration***

The GPMHSC has recently been taking calls from Divisions of General Practice seeking lists of GPs in their Division who have registered for the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care initiative. Unfortunately, due to Privacy legislation, the GPMHSC is unable to disclose a GP's status except to the GP (or authorised representative), the Health Insurance Commission and the Department of Health and Ageing – the latter two only because GPs sign their explicit consent on their registration forms.

**How can Divisions determine who is registered?** Unfortunately, there's no easy answer. The GPMHSC encourages GPs to get in touch with their Division via our quarterly Newsletter and in approval letters sent to eligible GPs. We also advise Divisions to contact those GPs who have completed Familiarisation Training with them. Another useful source of general information is the Health Insurance Commission website - go to:

<http://www.hic.gov.au/statistics/imd/forms/gpStatistics.shtml>

where you can build Division specific reports including reports on claims (and the number of claimants) for the 3 step process.

Individual GPs can also contact the HIC directly to confirm whether they are registered or not – the number to ring is (08) 8274 9507.

Interest in Level Two training is picking up, and the GPMHSC is set to adjudicate on several new programs at its August meeting; look out for the August edition of the GPMHSC Newsletter, which will be distributed to all Divisions by ADGP. In between Newsletters, you can always get the latest course lists, updated forms and information on the GPMHSC website:

[www.racgp.org.au/mentalhealth](http://www.racgp.org.au/mentalhealth).

Queries from Divisions can be directed to the GPMHSC at [gpmhsc@racgp.org.au](mailto:gpmhsc@racgp.org.au) or via telephone on 03 8699 0554.

### **ADGP Mental Health Policy Statement**

A new blueprint for mental health action in Australia for 2003-2008 has been developed by the Australian Health Ministers' National Mental Health Working Group - the main national policy setting body for mental health. Health Ministers are expected to endorse it mid-year and primary mental health care is expected to have some prominence.

A National Mental Health Summit was hosted by the NSW Government on 2 May 2003 facilitated by ABC's Dr Norman Swan. This was the only major public consultation forum on the new policy and plan. General practice and

Divisions was strongly represented. ADGP's Mental Health Policy Statement, *Primary Mental Health Care in Australia: The Next Ten Years*, positioned us well to contribute to the discussions and will be an ongoing platform for public advocacy as the new plan is implemented and decisions about funding priorities are made. The Statement was developed in consultation with Divisions and GPs during March and April and can be found on ADGP's website at [www.adgp.com.au](http://www.adgp.com.au), under national programs, mental health, what's new. Thank you to those Divisions and GPs who commented on the draft.

## Mindmatters Plus General Practice Initiative

The March PMHC E: Bulletin reported on the *MindMatters Plus* demonstration project and ADGP's negotiations with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing about a role for general practice. ADGP has now finalised a funding agreement with the Department to implement a general practice component of the *MindMatters Plus* Initiative.

Seventeen demonstration schools were selected and funded by the Department of Health and Ageing in 2002 under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategies. Many are well advanced with mental health promotion and prevention projects designed to strengthen life skills, resilience and wellbeing among students, particularly those at risk.

The need for a clinical referral arm for *MindMatters Plus* was identified after the initial set up phase in light of evidence that, for many young people, GPs are the only health care professional they will consult for personal and emotional problems. The general practice component will seek to increase the capacity of demonstration schools to provide support for students with high mental health needs. In particular, it will seek to promote referral pathways and networks of care for at-risk young people.

Divisions with schools in their catchment areas have the opportunity to become part of the demonstration. These Divisions should have all received letters in June outlining the initiative, its key components and next steps. ADGP is looking to organise a 2-day workshop on 21/22 August for participating Divisions.

ADGP recognises the ongoing work being done across many Divisions of General Practice on youth mental health programs, including collaborative work with schools. A key legacy of the initiative will be a practical resource kit that is likely to include information sheets, guidelines, checklists and other clinical and practical tools and a 'menu' of models of school-primary mental health care integration that can be applied locally. This resource kit and the learnings from the demonstration will have broad application across Divisions and schools.

Over the next few weeks, a communication strategy will be developed to encourage all interested Divisions to exchange views and their knowledge to

ensure that the resource kit reflects existing good practice and the learnings from existing activity and that of the demonstration can be widely disseminated across the Divisions Network.

For more information, contact Ms Audrey Graviou, Senior Project Officer, *MindMatters Plus GP Initiative* on (02) 6228 0844 or [agraviou@adgp.com.au](mailto:agraviou@adgp.com.au).

## NMHRC study: Mental Health help seeking in young people

A research study into GP referral practices when working with young people funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NMHRC) has found that for many young people, GPs are the only health care professional that young people will consult for personal, emotional and suicidal problems. The study was conducted by the Illawarra Institute of Mental Health and the Illawarra Division of General Practice.

For PDF copies of the following reports from the study, email Coralie Wilson at [coralie\\_wilson@uow.edu.au](mailto:coralie_wilson@uow.edu.au):

- *Mental Health Help Seeking in Young People*. Deane, Wilson, Ciarrochi & Rickwood, 2002
- *Youth Barriers to helping seeking and referral from General Practitioners*. Wilson, Deane, Biro & Ciarrochi, 2003.

## National Early Childhood Agenda

The Government has announced the development of a *National Agenda for Early Childhood*. Child and maternal health has been identified as one of three priority areas for the Agenda. On 9 May, Dr Tori Wade, Ms Leanne Wells and Ms Verity Newnham from ADGP's mental health and youth health programs represented ADGP at a national consultation workshop on the *Agenda*.

A response to the Government's consultation paper on the Agenda has been submitted by ADGP in collaboration with the National Divisions Youth Alliance. A key point in the submission was that general practice is a key setting for health promotion and prevention in the child and maternal health arena and for identifying early childhood risk factors, particularly vulnerability to later mental health problems. The submission can be found on ADGP's website under [www.adgp.com.au](http://www.adgp.com.au), under national programs, mental health, what's new.

## Australian Research Alliance Children and Youth

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth has been recently established by leading child and youth-focused organisations to bring about a significant improvement in the health and wellbeing of young Australians. The Alliance will be working to establish new collaborations across disciplines and

sectors to produce and apply useful knowledge about a broad range of child and youth issues. The Alliance is supported by governments, business and philanthropic organisations and other specialised non-government organisations. The Alliance is in the early stages of establishment and ADGP has been invited to become a member. For further information see [www.aracy.org.au](http://www.aracy.org.au)

## National Divisions Youth Alliance

Have you got something you would like to share with the National Divisions Youth Alliance, Divisions, SBOs and stakeholders about Youth Health? If so make a contribution to NDYA News Update. The first edition is now available from NDYA's website at <http://ndya.adgp.com.au>. This e-digest is an important part of the new NDYA On-line strategy to be launched in July which is an on-line vehicle to facilitate the sharing of, and access to, information on youth health issues and programs within the Australian Divisions of General Practice. This includes providing you with updated information on youth health issues, providing a space for you to network with others and discuss youth health issues and challenges.

NDYA will be calling for contributions for future editions and will be providing Division staff with further information about how to contribute to NDYA on-line forums and chat sessions. Contributors can email their contributions of between 100 – 300 words to [ndya@adgp.com.au](mailto:ndya@adgp.com.au). Information about the project / research / new item and contact details or a web link for further information would be appreciated.

## Contact ADGP

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*Please advise if you wish to be removed from this group mailing list. Please advise of any additional interested parties who would like to receive the PMHC-E:Bulletin. Please contact Leanne Wells, Principal Adviser, Mental Health, Australian Divisions of General Practice on 02 6228 0854 or [lwells@adgp.com.au](mailto:lwells@adgp.com.au) for further information.*