



Fortnightly e-newsletter of the Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd
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ADGP News is published by:

Australian Divisions of
General Practice Ltd,
PO Box 4308
Manuka ACT 2603
Phone 02 6228 0800
Fax 02 6228 0899
Email
adgpreception@adgp.com.au

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Welcome to the final edition of ADGP News for 2004. The staff of ADGP wish you all seasons greetings, and safe holidays.

Please note, the ADGP office will close at 5.30pm on Thursday, December 23, 2004, and will reopen at 8.30am on Tuesday, January 4, 2005.

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■ CEO's report – from Kate Carnell

Primary Health care policy – charting our future course

The release of two reports in recent weeks which show the impact of Australia's ageing population and the changing work hours of GPs reveal the challenge facing the divisions network and primary health care sector.

The Productivity Commission's *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia* draft report and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) medical labour force figures of 2002, highlight the vital need for a primary health care model that focuses on keeping people healthy and a change in the way the medical workforce operates to better involve ancillary health care providers in the primary care team.

The AIHW report reveals that the number of medical practitioners has risen, but overall supply in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs) per 100,000 population has fallen as more doctors choose to work fewer hours.

The number of doctors in Australia rose by 12% from 48,200 to 54,000 practitioners between 1997 and 2002. They worked an average of 44.4 hours per week in 2002, compared with 47.6 hours in 1997.

Converting to the equivalent number of full-time practitioners based on a 45-hour working week, and taking population growth into account, this translated into a decline in supply from 275 to 271 FTE per 100,000 people over the period.

The AIHW said the reasons behind the trend towards working fewer hours are complex, but may well have been influenced by an ageing workforce, a growing proportion of female doctors and a general resistance to working long hours (more than 50 a week).

If you link this to the aging of the Australian society, we have a problem unless there is a change in the way the medical workforce operates to allow ancillary health care providers to do more through introducing new item numbers and the like, and a new primary health care model that focuses on keeping people healthy, early intervention and better coordinated management of chronic conditions.

The draft Productivity Commission report highlights that our rapidly ageing population will force governments to find an extra \$2200 billion over the next 40 years to meet the drain on health care and other costs.

It estimates the extra pressure on government spending will be 7.1 per cent of gross domestic product by 2044-45, with health care with costs expected to rise to over 10 per cent of GDP.

The divisions network is uniquely placed to help lead the change needed to deal with the challenges ahead. I look forward to working with all of our members to ensure we help create a healthier future for all Australians.

AGPAL service recognised

Former ADGP director Dr Ralph Chapman has recently ended five years of service as ADGP's rural director on the board of Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL), a leading provider of accreditation for general practices.

ADGP is a member of AGPAL, and is represented on its board through two directors, one urban division position held by Dr Furio Virant, and one rural division position that was held by Dr Chapman. Dr Chapman's tenure ceased following two successive terms on AGPAL's board, commencing in 1999.

Following a national selection process through divisions, ADGP has appointed Dr Suzanne George from East Gippsland Division of General Practice to the AGPAL director (rural division) vacancy, to replace Dr Chapman.

ADGP wishes to express its appreciation of Dr Chapman's services to AGPAL and to congratulate Dr George on her appointment.

Divisions review

A communiqué has been released following the third meeting of the Review Implementation Committee (RIC) on November 3, as discussed in the previous edition of ADGP News.

The committee was established to provide advice to the Australian Government on implementing the government's response to the 2003 review of the role of divisions of general practice.

Further information is available on the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au/pcd/programs/divisions/index.htm. Feedback can be made to divisions.response@health.gov.au.

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■ **New photo resource for divisions**

The [ADGP website](#) now includes a new image gallery to provide an opportunity for divisions to share photographic resources for their promotional materials.

The gallery was established in response to requests from divisions interested in sharing promotional resources. Photos have been provided by ADGP and divisions for use in promotional materials prepared by divisions of general practice and state based organisations.

They have been provided with the permission of the respective organisations to be used for the positive promotion of the network by the network, and are for uses which enhance the profile of the divisions network throughout the health sector and within the general community. Photos must be acknowledged according to details provided with the photo.

The image gallery is still in its infancy and we are always on the look out for more good photo resources to share amongst the network. If you can help, please contact ADGP's communications manager Anna Jackson Wiseman after December 13.

If you have any queries about use of these resources, please contact Anna Jackson Wiseman or our information services adviser [Angela Nagy](#)

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■ **New falls prevention package launched**

The Central Bayside Division of General Practice in Victoria has launched a new package of training and resource materials on falls prevention.

The 'It's no accident' CDROM provides a comprehensive and multi-targeted approach to falls prevention for GPs, allied health professionals and home care coordinators/workers.

The package has been developed in consultation with the National Ageing Research Institute, GPs, and local falls agencies. It is a component of the Kingston Bayside Falls Prevention Collaboration Project funded by the Australian Government.

For more information, contact Tracey Dyt at the Central Bayside Division of General Practice on 03 9521 6755, or tracey.dyt@centralbayside.com.au. Copies of the CDROM can be ordered from the division website: www.centralbayside.com.au.

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■ **Conferences and courses**

Thinking Drinking: Achieving cultural change by 2020

The Australian Drug Foundation is hosting an international conference from February 21-23, 2005, in Melbourne.

Entitled 'Thinking Drinking: Achieving cultural change by 2020', this is a three-day international conference which challenges professionals, policy makers and workers to decide on the cultural changes needed to reduce the enormous burden of alcohol problems.

The conference program is available at www.adf.org.au

Marketing and developing healthier kid food

The International Quality & Productivity Centre is presenting a two-day conference on marketing and developing healthier kid food from February 22-23, 2005, at Dockside, Sydney.

Associations and agencies with an interest in child and teen nutrition and health policy are invited to attend. Further information is available from team@iqpc.com.au, or by phoning 02 9229 1037.

4th Health Services and Policy Research Conference

The Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand will hold its 4th biennial Health Services and Policy Research Conference in Canberra from October 31 to November 2, 2005.

The association aims to facilitate communication between researchers and policy makers to promote education and training in health services research and to ensure sustainable capacity in health services research in Australia and New Zealand.

More information is available on the association website at <http://www.chere.uts.edu.au/hsraanz/>

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■ Useful information from beyond the network

Women and coronary heart disease, a national broadcast

The Rural Health Education Foundation will broadcast a live satellite program on women and coronary heart disease on Tuesday, December 7.

Although men are almost twice as likely as women to die from coronary heart disease, it was the leading single cause of death of Australian women in 2001.

This program will increase participants' awareness of coronary heart disease and its impact on women, identify successful strategies that have worked when health professionals collaborate with their female patients to prevent and reduce the impact of coronary heart disease, and assist in the prevention and early detection of coronary heart disease in women through the review of the risk factors, signs and symptoms.

The program will be broadcast at 8pm in NSW/Vic/ACT/Tas, 7pm in Qld, 7.30pm in SA, 6.30pm NT time, and 5pm in WA. This program will also be available on video and via web-streaming shortly after the broadcast.

For further information on how to view this program, go to www.rhef.com.au/programs/417/417.html or contact the RHEF on 02 6232-5480 or via email rhef@rhef.com.au

Quinine no longer the tonic for muscle cramp

An independent review of quinine in the December issue of the National Prescribing Service's RADAR alerts health professionals that the risks of using quinine for preventing muscle cramp far outweigh the benefits.

No oral quinine products are now TGA approved for muscle cramp. They will be deleted from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) in December 2004 for this indication.

Visit www.npsradar.org.au for full reviews.

Agricultural chemical use – reporting adverse experiences

General practice is being encouraged to report problems experienced by their patients when dealing with agricultural chemicals, including home garden chemicals.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, responsible for the regulation of agricultural and veterinary chemicals in Australia, is seeking the help of GPs to report any health problems they observe through a new reporting program.

For further information, go to the authority's [Adverse Experience Reporting Program for Agricultural Chemicals](http://www.apvma.gov.au/qa/aerp_ag.shtml) site at http://www.apvma.gov.au/qa/aerp_ag.shtml

Australian Journal of Primary Health – special edition out soon

A special edition of the Australian Journal of Primary Health is due out soon with a focus on current policy, practice, and research issues addressing health inequalities through primary health care settings and approaches.

Three issues of the journal are published each year, with one issue dedicated to a special theme. Published by the Australian Institute for Primary Care and the School of Public Health, La Trobe University, in association with the Primary and Community Health Network, the journal showcases research, policy and discussion papers on primary health issues.

To purchase the special edition, subscribe to the journal or for more information including article abstracts, go to the journal's website at www.latrobe.edu.au/aipc/ajph.

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■ Staff moves

ADGP will next week welcome Anna Jackson Wiseman to the role of communications manager. Anna has a background in communications, media advising and broadcast journalism. We look forward to welcoming Anna to the team.

Communications officer Helen Beringen will leave ADGP on December 7 after two years in the post. Helen has helped bring you ADGP News, the Board Bulletin, and a range of promotional resources, including the ADGP annual reports and poster series.

Helen will be moving back to Adelaide and will take up a communications role with the CSIRO's preventative health flagship program.

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■ Positions vacant

Tweed Valley Division of General Practice - Primary Health Program Officer

The Tweed Valley Division of General Practice is seeking a Primary Health Program Officer.

This full-time position for 12 months will involve the development, implementation and evaluation of primary health care and related activities, including aged care and chronic disease management initiatives.

The successful applicant will have tertiary qualifications in a health, social or behavioural science. The position is based in Murwillumbah, Northern NSW.

For the position description and selection criteria call Suzanne on 02 6672 5158. Applications close 12pm (NSW time) Monday 13 December 2004.

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