



Australian Divisions of General Practice

Lifescrpts NEWSLETTER

**Issue: 3
December 2005**

Uptake of Lifescrpts has far outstripped anticipated demand which is fantastic news! The Department of Health and Ageing is organising a reprint of the resources – new stock should hit the warehouse by February. There are resources still available, but until the stocks are built up again we are asking that only resources that are required in the short term are ordered at this point in time. Please do not stock pile resources in anticipation of future demand.

Following the expression of interest (EOI) a national profile is now available on ADGPs Lifescrpts website (in the Divisions section). The national profile provides the results of the EOI process describing how Divisions plan to implement Lifescrpts.

A summary of the Risk Factor Management: Lifescrpts & SNAP session held at the Divisions of General Practice Network Forum in Perth during November is available on ADGPs Lifescrpts website.

Don't forget Exercise Physiologists are included as an eligible allied health service provider under the Allied Health items from 1 January 2006. The term "Exercise Physiologist" describes professionals from within the field of exercise science who have specialised into either health and fitness or exercise rehabilitation streams. To find an accredited exercise physiologist in your area go to: <http://www.aaess.com.au/>

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Focus on: Mental Health

Preventing lifestyle risk factors in mental health clients

People living with mental illness experience physical illnesses at higher rates than the general population according to the Duty to Care study conducted by the University of Western Australia. Nearly 70% of Divisions expressing their interest in participating in Lifescrpts have nominated mental health programs as one area in which they plan to incorporate Lifescrpts. This article explores some options for incorporating Lifescrpts into the health care of people living with mental illness.

The Duty to Care report released in October 2001 reports that people with mental illness have higher rates of physical illnesses related to behavioural risk factors including smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, obesity and poor diet. This population is likely to benefit from individualised healthy lifestyle advice and support to put that advice into practice.

The Lifescrpts initiative and resources provide a comprehensive framework for GPs, practice nurses, Aboriginal health workers and others working in the general practice setting to provide lifestyle advice and support for behaviour change in smoking, nutrition, alcohol, physical activity and weight management. Implementing Lifescrpts involves discussing risk factors with patients; conducting an assessment of risk behaviours; setting lifestyle-change goals; providing written lifestyle

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Lifescrpts

Advice for Healthy Living

prescriptions; organising ongoing review of lifestyle risk factors; and referring patients to other services that support healthy lifestyle choices.

The Lifescrpts resources¹ include:

- Waiting room materials (Checklist, Flyers*, Poster*)
- Assessment tool pads
- Five A's guideline & summary of evidence
- Prescription pads
- Medical record summary stickers
- Practice manual
- Division manual
- CD Rom (includes motivational interviewing component)

(*Including versions designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients)

A range of programs are available to assist general practice in providing high quality mental health care to patients and to promote mental health in secondary schools. Of particular note is the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Initiative, Managing the Mix and the Mind Matters Plus GP initiative, which provides a youth mental health program for secondary school students. These programs provide a comprehensive approach to raising awareness and managing a patients' mental illness. There are many opportunities to link Lifescrpts to these programs. Some examples of ways to link Lifescrpts are outlined below.

Given the Duty to Care findings that illness associated with lifestyle risk factors are a problem for people with mental illness, the Lifescrpts resources provide an opportunity to address some of these lifestyle risk factors. The Lifescrpts package provides evidence based resources that can be tailored to address the individual circumstances for a patient for example any interactions that medications may have in a patients lifestyle (diet, weight management, energy levels). It is well known that some psychotropic medications can have side effects that include weight gain. For patients either already on or commencing psychotropic medications this might be an opportunity to introduce a weight management prescription to assist the patient in managing their weight in conjunction with using the medication.

The WA Health response to the Duty to Care report recommends that health promotion and illness prevention are reinforced in every clinical encounter with mental health consumers. Interventions on lifestyle risk factors using the Lifescrpts framework and resources provide an excellent opportunity to reinforce healthy lifestyle messages. The response also recommended that prevention activities that address lifestyle risk factors are promoted through mental health settings. For those Divisions working in collaboration with mental health services there may be opportunities to

¹ A consortium comprising Kinect Australia (formerly the Victorian Council on Fitness and General Health); the Centre for General Practice Integration Studies, University of NSW; the National Heart Foundation of Australia (NSW Division); School of Health Sciences, University of Newcastle; Department of General Practice, Flinders University; and Southcity GP Services received funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to produce the Lifescrpts resources.

use Lifescrpts as a way of introducing healthier lifestyle programs into mental health services.

ADGP and the pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly have entered in a partnership to promote the MindBodyLife wellness clinic program. ADGP is providing funding for up to 25 Divisions to participate in MindBodyLife. Divisions participating in this program might like to consider how the Lifescrpts resources could augment MindBodyLife materials and sessions. For example by promoting Lifescrpts to practices and particularly through mental health programs, Divisions can facilitate support for healthy lifestyle choices through the use of Lifescrpts resources in clinical encounters between MindBodyLife participants and their GPs. Lifescrpts risk factor assessment pads and prescriptions might be used through the MindBodyLife program to provide patients with a plan to address one of the lifestyle risk factors outside of the wellness clinic program.

Through the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Initiative there are opportunities to include lifestyle messages using the Lifescrpts resources. The 3 Step Mental Health Process Mental Health Assessment has an area to record alcohol use, tobacco use and Body Mass Index² (BMI). When undertaking the mental health assessment and recording these items, a practitioner may choose to use the Lifescrpts assessment pads for alcohol, smoking, and weight management (if BMI is over 25) as an initial prompt to look at current patterns of behaviour and discuss these with the patient.

With a focus on alcohol and mental health comorbidities the Divisions participating in the Managing the Mix program, have already conducted a significant amount of work in the alcohol area. Practitioners engaged in Managing the Mix may be interested in using the alcohol components of the Lifescrpts resources. The Lifescrpts materials could be publicised through the activities already planned for these projects such as education sessions, peer support events and resources disseminated to practices.

During the Mental Health Plan and Review stages in the 3 step process a practitioner and patient may wish to address lifestyle issues and set goals, actions and tasks. The Lifescrpts prescriptions may be a useful tool to aid those discussions and gives patients a prescription to take away with them. General Practices may have further referral options in which they provide additional support to patients regarding lifestyle risk factors.

Lifescrpts resources are available free of charge to Divisions and Practices electing to participate in Lifescrpts. Electronic copies of the resources are available for download from the ADGP web site at www.adgp.com.au. To order your copy of the resources contact your local Division of General Practice or your State Based Organisation. For more information on Lifescrpts please contact Megan Hansford, ADGP's Lifescrpts Coordinator on (02) 6228 0829 or mhansford@adgp.com.au

² BMI is calculated by dividing an individual's weight (in kilograms) by their height in metres squared, $BMI = kg/m^2$

Articles of Interest

Health of Australian Indigenous people

van Holst Pellekaan SM & Clague L (2005): Toward health and wellbeing for indigenous Australians. *Postgrad Med J* 81 (960) 618-24.

Summary: Western health care systems are slow to learn from Indigenous people in Australia and elsewhere that wellness maintenance and not illness management should be the goal of health care.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&dopt=Abstract&db=PubMed&list_uids=16210456

Health promoting influence of primary care

Starfield B, Shi L & Macinko J (2005): Contribution of primary care to health systems and health. *Milbank Quarterly* 83 (3) 457-502.

There is evidence that primary care helps prevent illness and death, and that it is associated with a more equitable distribution of health in populations.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&dopt=Abstract&db=PubMed&list_uids=16202000

Effects of Physical Activity on Life Expectancy with Cardiovascular Disease

Franco, O.H., de Laet, C., Peeters, A., Jonker, J., Mackenbach, J., & Nusselder, W. (2005). Effects of Physical Activity on Life Expectancy with Cardiovascular Disease. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol 165 No. 20:2355-2360

The researchers found that "moderate and high physical activity levels led to 1.3 and 3.7 years more in total life expectancy and 1.1 and 3.2 more years lived without cardiovascular disease, respectively, for men aged 50 years or older compared with those who maintained a low physical activity level. For women the differences were 1.5 and 3.5 years in total life expectancy and 1.3 and 3.3 more years lived free of cardiovascular disease, respectively. "

To read the abstract, go to:

<http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/165/20/2355?eaf>

Media

National cancer agency to be established

On 28 November 2005 the Government announced that a new national cancer agency, Cancer Australia, is to be established. The agency is expected to influence the areas of prevention, support for consumers and health professionals and make recommendations to the government about cancer policy and priorities.

The advisory council is to be chaired by Dr Bill Glasson, the CEO position has not yet been filled.

To view the media release, go to:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-ta-abb146.htm>

Youth Tobacco Prevention Report Launched

Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Christopher Pyne, launched the *Youth Tobacco Prevention Report* on 25 November 2005.

The report was prepared by Eureka Strategic Research for the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

To view the media release, please go to:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-cp-pyn067.htm>

The study makes a number of recommendations for smoking interventions with young people. Some key points discussed in the qualitative report are:

- Most smokers commence smoking before the age of 18 years, with a median age of initiation at 15 years
- Young people participating in the study significantly over estimated the prevalence of smoking, young females smokers estimated that at least 50% of young people smoked.
- The over estimation of smoking prevalence contributed to the perception of smoking as a relatively normal adult behaviour
- Most young smokers did not think it was likely that they would become addicted or a long term smoker
- Participants had a poor understanding of addiction and underestimated their own level of dependence

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) invites public comment about draft health claims standard

On 28 November Food Standards Australia New Zealand has released a draft food standard on nutrition, health and related claims about food for public comment.

The proposed standard is out for public comment from 28 November 2005 until 22 February 2006. The Draft Assessment Report for Proposal P293 Nutrition, Health and Related Claims and a Guide to the new food standard are available of the FSANZ website at www.foodstandards.gov.au. The Standard is expected to be finalised in mid-2006.

Useful resources

GP Tip Sheet for putting Lifescrpts into Practice

Developed by Dr Nancy Huang of Kinect Australia, this tip sheet documents an approach to implementing Lifescrpts in the practice setting and is based on Dr Huang's experience of implementing Lifescrpts in a

small practice in Victoria. The tip sheet is available in the Health Practitioners section of ADGPs Lifescrpts webpage at www.adgp.com.au

Enjoy Healthy Eating Fact Sheets in 15 languages

The National Heart Foundation has developed fact sheets in 15 Different languages called 'Enjoy Healthy Eating – a guide to keeping your blood cholesterol in check'. These fact sheets are only available electronically and can be downloaded from the NHF website at www.heartfoundation.com.au

The fact sheets contain the following messages:

Enjoy Healthy Eating

- Use margarine spreads instead of butter or dairy blends.
- Use a variety of oils for cooking - some suitable choices include canola, sunflower, soybean, olive and peanut oils.
- Use salad dressings and mayonnaise made from oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean and olive oils.
- Choose low or reduced fat milk and yoghurt or 'added calcium' soy beverages. Try to limit cheese and ice-cream to twice a week.
- Have fish (any type of fresh or canned) at least twice a week.
- Select lean meat (meat trimmed of fat and chicken without skin).
- Try to limit fatty meats including sausages and delicatessen meats such as salami.
- Snack on plain, unsalted nuts and fresh fruit.
- Incorporate dried peas (e.g. split peas), dried beans (e.g. haricot beans, kidney beans), canned beans (e.g. baked beans, three bean mix) or lentils into two meals a week.
- Make vegetables and grain-based foods such as breakfast cereals, bread, pasta, noodles and rice the major part of each meal.
- Try to limit take-away foods to once a week. Take-away foods include pastries, pies, pizza, hamburgers and creamy pasta dishes.
- Try to limit snack foods such as potato crisps and corn crisps to once a week.
- Try to limit cakes, pastries and chocolate or creamy biscuits to once a week.

National Guide to a Preventive Health Assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The *National guide to a preventive health assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* is an initiative of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and was prepared by NACCHO as lead agency with the Chronic Disease Alliance (CDA) of Non-Government Organisations. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners supported the development of this guide.

The Guide has been officially launched by NACCHO (on behalf of the Chronic Disease Alliance of non-government organisations) and the RACGP at the recent RACGP conference in Darwin.

The Guide has been sent to 5000 GPs across Australia, all Affiliates of NACCHO and NGOs. It can be accessed online at:

<http://www.racgp.org.au/folder.asp?id=1259> or

<http://www.naccho.org.au>

Green Prescriptions

A Green Prescription is a health professional's written advice to a patient to be physically active, as part of the patient's health management. The Green Prescription program in New Zealand has electronic resources and tools to assist patients, success stories are also documented on the website below. The processes undertaken through the green prescriptions program are described on the web at:

<http://www.sparc.org.nz/getting-active/green-prescription/overview>

DoHA Lifescrpts webpage

A new shortcut is available to access DoHA's Lifescrpts webpage, this is at: www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts

The Department's webpage provides electronic copies of the Lifescrpts Resources, information on motivational interviewing, and a background to the Lifescrpts Initiative (including documentation of early workshops, meetings and a scoping of the Lifescrpts Resources).

Choose Health: Be Active

Choose Health: Be Active, a new booklet produced by the Australian Government, will help older Australians improve their health and well-being. The free booklet outlines a variety of ways to include appropriate forms of physical activity into everyday life. For many older Australians, particularly those with poor health, remaining physically active could be a challenge, but this booklet provides solutions.

Choose Health: Be Active is designed to help older people choose the types of activity that best suit them no matter how old, able or active. It has sections on strength and balance exercises that can be integrated into everyday living, and gives practical advice on coping with health problems and overcoming setbacks.

The booklet was jointly developed by the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Health and Ageing in association with Sports Medicine Australia. It is available free from the Department of Veterans' Affairs by calling 133 254, or the Department of Health and Ageing on 1800 500 853.

Lifestyle Prescription for Cholesterol Management

'Logical' have produced a "Lifestyle Prescription for Cholesterol Management" and are interested in providing hard copies of their kit to General Practice through Divisions. The resources produced by Logical are:

- Patient Information Brochure on Logical
- A Health Professional Kit on Lifestyle Prescription for Cholesterol Management which contains three fact sheets (attached)
- A Patient Non-Prescription Pad
- A Patient Appointment Card

The Health Professional resources can be previewed at the following website:

http://www.logicol.com.au/professionals/patient_resources/default.aspx

Electronic copies of the resources (PDF versions) are available as are hard copies. Please contact Megan Hansford at ADGP (mhansford@adgp.com.au) if you are interested.

Diary dates

1 December	World AIDS Day http://www.worldaidsday.org.au/index.htm
7-8 December	Lifescrpts SBO National Meeting & Motivational Interviewing Training, Canberra
13 December	Obesity and Overweight: It CAN be Managed Rural Health Education Foundation broadcast Channel 4 5.00pm in WA (repeated on Channel 23 at 8pm) 6.30pm in NT 7.00 pm in QLD 7.30pm in SA 8.00pm in ACT, NSW, TAS & VIC For more details visit the program page at: http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/408/409.html

Contact the editor

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