

December 2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF ADGP'S MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

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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.

HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Mental Health Foundation

ADGP is ending a very successful year in our primary mental health care activities with the Prime Minister's December announcement of the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. ADGP is part of the winning consortium involving Orygen Research Centre, the Australian Psychological Society and the Brain and Mind Research Institute. This an exciting investment in youth mental health and will add to the many programs the Divisions Network has been closely involved with such as the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Initiative and MindMatters. ADGP's primary role will be to coordinate the implementation of youth mental health education and training for GPs and other providers working in the general practice setting. We expect that individual Divisions will have the opportunity to work in innovative service provider coalitions spanning primary, community and specialist systems to deliver quality evidence-based mental health services to young people.

Federal Budget Submission

We lodged our 2006-07 Federal Budget Submission in mid November (see <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?module=NEWS>) which features calls to action around mental health and we are developing a supplementary submission focused exclusively on mental health given the broad interest in this important issue in public policy arenas. This will be available on our website soon.

New Mental Health Training

In 2006, we will be working to support the Divisions network with improved access to mental health education and training. With funding support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs we will be offering an on-line level 1 Better Outcomes accredited course free of charge to GPs and other primary care providers. We have also successfully attracted funding from *beyondblue:the national depression initiative* to develop a level 1 package in both on-line and face to face modes on youth mental health.

BETTER OUTCOMES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE INITIATIVE

November 2005 MBS Item Update

A small amendment to the MBS schedule was made in the November Update. Since May GPs have been able to conduct the 3-step mental health visit over two 20 minute+ consultations. That means that the assessment and management plan may be conducted in the same consultation. The November schedule changes the number of 'planned consultations' from 2 to 1. That means that only the review needs to be a planned visit, and the GP can undertake a mental health assessment and develop a management plan on the first 'walk up' consultation, at the end of which a review consultation would be scheduled. Provided the requirements of each step as specified in the MBS are met, a claimable 3 Step Mental Health Process would be completed at the subsequent review consultation.

Updated GPMHSC forms

There have been some minor changes to the GPMHSC application forms. The Level 1 and Level 2 forms and the supplementary forms for recognised prior learning (RPL) applicants are now available with the new GPMHSC logo and in relation to the RPL application, there is some extra room for responses and some additional information which has emerged from 'precedents' established through assessment of applications during 2005.

Word versions of the new forms are available at <http://www.racgp.org.au/folder.asp?id=1113> or the ADGP website.

Access to Allied Psychological Services: Putting Evaluation into Practice

The Project Evaluation Unit (PEU) has now produced the 6th Evaluation Report on the Access to Allied Psychological Services Projects. This report includes projects from Rounds 1, 2, and 3 and addresses the following questions;

- Has participation in the project changed?
- Has access to and the nature of mental health care for consumers changed?
- Have the experience of GPs, allied health professionals and consumers changed?
- Are consumers experiencing positive outcomes?

Interesting findings from the evaluation show that a total of 26,444 consumers have received care through the projects. The profile of consumers is typically female, aged around 40 on low incomes, have no previous history of mental health care and have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety disorders. Data available from the minimum data set reveal that in 88% of cases, consumers who have contact with allied health professionals through the project get better.

Divisions are to be thanked for providing evaluation reports and entering data into the minimum data set, as a continued commitment to the evaluation of local projects and compliance with the minimum data set will ensure that the Program Evaluation Unit will be able to continue to showcase and provide further insights into the Access to Allied Health Services Projects who are now a crucial part of the mental health care landscape in Australia.

New guidelines for mental health small groups and clinical attachments

Many GPs enjoy undertaking 'self directed' education including online and distance education, supervised clinical attachments or small group learning (also known as peer review groups)

The GPMHSC has developed guidelines for Better Outcomes registered GPs to assist in planning activities which meet GPs' continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for mental health.

The guidelines explain the criteria against which the GPMHSC determines whether a particular small group learning cycle or clinical attachment attracts Level 1 or Level 2 ongoing CPD points. Copies can be requested from the GPMHSC Secretariat on 03 8699 0554, or downloaded from the RACGP website at <http://www.racgp.org.au/mentalhealth>

Small grants program to support education and training

A small grants program to support General Practitioner's travel and accommodation for education and training under the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Program has been announced by Dept of Health and Ageing. Divisions are able to apply for funding to support GPs undertaking accredited Better Outcomes training. Funding is limited and will be provided on a competitive basis. Priority will be given to Divisions where GPs are undertaking Level 2 training and are from rural and remote areas. Applications should be submitted by Friday 24 February 2006. Application forms and additional information can be obtained from Elaine Pringle on (02) 6289 8693 or email elaine.

pringle@health.gov.au

OTHER ADGP PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES

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.

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 patient; conducting an assessment of risk behaviours; setting lifestyle-change goals; providing written lifestyle prescriptions; organising ongoing review of lifestyle risk factors; and referring patients to other services that support health lifestyle choices. The package provides evidence based resources that can be tailored to address the individual circumstances for a patient and includes but is not limited to; waiting room materials, assessment tools, prescription pads, practice and Divisional manuals and CD Rom which contains a motivational interviewing component.

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 website at www.adgp.com.au To order your copy of the resources contact your local Division of General Practice of your State Based Organisation. For more information on Lifescrpts contact Megan Hansford at ADGP on (02) 6228 0829 or mhansford@adgp.com.au

GP Psych Support

The GP Psych Support service has been operational since April 2004. during this time, GPs from around Australia have accessed patient management advice from the GP Psych Support psychiatrists. A resource kit to provide GPs with more information about the service is now available. As well as promotional flyers and email registration forms the kit also includes a CDROM. The CDROM, which runs for about 5 minutes, contains information about the service and how GPs can access it via phone, email or fax. It also includes information about the subspecialties of child and adolescents and alcohol psychiatry. The CDROM and resource kit would be a useful addition to a mental health CPD event. McKesson staff are also willing to present at education and training events. Contact the GP Psych Support service on 1800 026 965 or email info@e-hs.com.au

GP – Psych Liaison

A financial increase has been made to MBS Item numbers 291 and 293 in the November MBS Update. For psychiatrist conducting item number 291 the full fee is now \$222.50 and for item number 293 the full fee is \$139.70. The first claim data for these item numbers have been posted on the Medicare Australia website. From July to September 2005 there have been 284 assessments / management plans claimed and 3 reviews claimed. The strongest activity has been in NSW = 133 services, VIC = 18 services, QLD = 78 services and SA = 54 services. Information about these new MBS item numbers and how GPs can access them is posted on both the RANZCP and ADGP websites.

MindBodyLife Wellness Clinics

Twenty six Divisions have been funded to conduct MindBodyLife Wellness Clinics during 2006. MindBodyLife Wellness clinics, an initiative of Eli Lilly Australia, provide a structured management program for people whose mental illness and medication are having an impact on their overall wellbeing. The program addresses physical and mental factors associated with serious mental illness, such as weight management, a sedentary lifestyle, demotivation and low self esteem, in a weekly group forum where people learn about nutrition, exercise and lifestyle changes. Patients will be referred to the clinics by general practitioners and through existing Divisional mental health programs. Divisions in their funding submissions anticipate consolidating links between the MindBodyLife Wellness program and other programs such as Better Outcomes, MAHS, Lifescripts, Practice Nursing and shared care.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST

PARC Newsletter

The December issue of the PARC newsletter focuses on depression and its impact on individuals and the community. The newsletter highlights a number of innovative programs being undertaken with a range of populations experiencing depression., including: an evaluation of an antenatal and postnatal depression screening program for women in primary care settings being undertaken by beyondblue; a community based intervention study for older people; and two schools based initiatives – MindMatters Plus GP and the beyondblue Schools Research Program.

Out of the Blue: Managing Depression – DVD and Video

Limited free copies of the Rural Health Education Foundation's Out of the Blue: Managing Depression program are now available on DVD and VHS video. The program was first broadcast in May of 2005 and has been edited for distribution. Additional resources are included on the DVD.

To order your free DVD or VHS video copy (one copy per person or organisation only within Australia), simply email rhef@rhef.com.au or fax on (02) 6232-5484 specifying your preferred format, your name, organisation, postal address, contact telephone number and/or email address.

For more information, go to www.rhef.com.au/programs/505/505.html

This free offer is provided with generous support from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (www.health.gov.au) and beyondblue - the national depression initiative.

YOUTH MATTERS

MindMatters Plus GP

Over the past few months, all of the resources which Divisions have sent to ADGP in relation to the MindMatters Plus GP initiative have been added to the ADGP MindMatters Plus GP website www.adgp.com.au. The site contains sections for GPs, Divisions, parents, teachers and counsellors and young people.

Phase two of the initiative is now wrapping up. ADGP is compiling results from individual projects for the final project report to DoHA. During the next six months, ADGP will consult with Divisions and others involved in youth mental health service provision to develop a comprehensive proposal for a more integrated MindMatters program. We would value any suggestions you may have and will keep you informed of progress.

MindMatters Plus GP DVD

Under the MindMatters Plus GP initiative, a DVD showcasing the outcomes of the MindMatters Plus GP initiatives has been developed. The DVD comprises overviews of the outcomes of four MindMatters Plus GP partnerships – Adelaide Northern Division of General Practice and Freemont-Elizabeth High School; Barossa Division of General Practice and Eudunda Area School; Central; Coast Division of General Practice and Narara Valley High School; and Central West Division of General Practice and Walcha High

School. Each segment contains testimonials from students, teachers, GPs and Divisional project officers. A brief compilation of these stories has been compiled into a Vox Pop which is being used to highlight the successes of the initiative. The DVD could be used as part of a youth mental health CPD event. Copies can be obtained from Dr Johann Sheehan, MindMatters Plus GP project officer at jshiehan@adgp.com.au

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sport and Mental Health Conference: From Chemistry to Communities

A conference presented by Monash University, *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, Australian Institute of Sport and Kings College, London. Exercise and sport provides immense benefits in promoting mental wellbeing for individuals and communities and is integral to health promotion in all societies. 6-7 March 2006, Hilton on the Park - Melbourne. Early bird registration closes 15 January 2006. Contact Rebecca Stewart at *beyondblue* on 03 9810 6100

**Wishing everyone a happy and safe
Christmas and an enjoyable holiday
break**

**From the mental health team at
ADGP**



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