



Australian Divisions of General Practice

Lifescrpts NEWSLETTER

Issue: 7
July 2006

Update from ADGP's Lifescrpts Coordinator

Lifescrpts implementation has continued across the Network despite a shortage of resources. To date, 4,840 risk factor kits and 2,440 practice kits have been distributed with a large number of kits still on backorder. The Department of Health and Ageing has organised a reprint of the Lifescrpts resources and are producing another 5,400 risk factor kits and 2,700 practice kits. The reprinted resources are expected to be available from the national warehouse in early August.

To find out more about the scoping of Electronic Lifescrpts resources see an article in the useful resources section below.

For a fantastic offer to Practices check out what the Healthy Food Guide is offering GPs under the useful resources section of this newsletter on page 6 (but get in quick the offer runs out on 28 July).

The responses provided by Divisions to the data collection conducted earlier this year were collated by ADGP into a National Profile of Lifescrpts Implementation. The profile is available in the Resource Library (in the Division Support Resources category) on ADGP's Lifescrpts website. The data collection exercise found that over 100 newsletter articles have been written including information on Lifescrpts. If you have written a newsletter article introducing Lifescrpts or on how Lifescrpts can be incorporated into general practice and have ever thought *I wish there was an article already written that I could use and adapt for my local members* then why not send your newsletter article into ADGP's Lifescrpts Coordinator to include in the resource library accessible by all Divisions.

The 45 year health check Medicare item number announced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2006 is due to be included in the 1 November update of the Medicare Benefits Schedule. ADGP is lobbying the Department to seek support for an implementation strategy funded through the Divisions Network prior to the introduction of the item on 1 November. What ADGP would like to see in an implementation strategy is funding the Network to support the implementation of the new item including education, practice support, development of supporting tools such as templates, assessment tools, flow charts and case studies and facilitation of referral pathways.

COAG met in July and announced that a new Medicare Item will be introduced for practice nurses and registered Aboriginal health workers to provide ongoing support for patients with chronic disease for, and on behalf of, general practitioners.

Megan Hansford
Lifescrpts Coordinator, ADGP

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Lifescrpts

Advice for Healthy Living

Focus on: Case Studies

Challenging General Practice: do you put your own advice into practice?

The ageing GP population, unhealthy GPs and practice staff, problems with general practitioner retention in a rural community and the need for practices to adopt a team working environment were all issues that prompted Capricornia Division of General Practice to issue a Healthy Lifestyle Challenge to their GPs and practices. The Challenge asks practices: **Can we ask our patients to change if we ourselves are not willing?**

"I think it will be a lot easier to discuss weight loss issues if you're obviously making an effort yourself..." Dr Michael Donohue, Yeppoon Family Practice

To download this case study log on to the ADGP Lifescrpts Resource Library (www.adgp.com.au) and change the category to Case Studies to find all available case studies.

Backing youth smoking into a corner

GP North in Tasmania is working with *The Corner* a youth health service in Launceston to encourage smoking cessation in young people. The Division funds 5 GPs to deliver five general practice sessions at the service, so the Division has a keen interest in the health outcomes of young people attending *The Corner*.

The Corner is a multidisciplinary primary health service for Launceston young people that offers a range of services including access to GPs, an alcohol and other drugs counsellor, nurses and a drop in service. The project to support smoking cessation with young people at *The Corner* involved a range of activities. The Division's Project Officer conducted a practice visit at *The Corner*, met with individual staff and provided training at a practice meeting to demonstrate how to use the Lifescrpts smoking resources. The receptionist at *The Corner* collected baseline data to identify the number of smokers and ex-smokers, this data will be collected again in six months time to assess the impact of the project.

"GPs working at *The Corner* really engaged with the quit smoking messages and have found the Lifescrpts tools and the referral pathways the Division put in place a very useful guide for talking with young people about their smoking" said Jan Dawkins, Program Officer, GP North.

To download this case study log on to the ADGP Lifescrpts Resource Library (www.adgp.com.au) and change the category to Case Studies to find all available case studies.

Articles of Interest

Weight management in general practice: what do patients want?

Daisy Tan, Nicholas A Zwar, Sarah M Dennis and Sanjyot Vagholkar.
Med J Aust 2006; 185 (2): 73-75.

This research looked at patients views on the role of general practitioners in weight management. Whilst the study involved only five practices and 227 patients the results demonstrated that most patients (78%) felt that GPs had a role in weight management, but only 46% thought that GPs would be able to spend enough time to provide effective weight loss advice.

Over 80% of patients perceived advice on healthy eating and physical activity to be useful or very useful, and were likely to follow weight-loss recommendations; 78% were in favour of regular review. Patients indicated they would be less likely to see a dietitian or to attend information sessions, and unlikely to take weight-loss medication.

To access the article please go to:

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/185_02_170706/tan10063_fm.html

Using Action Plans to Help Primary Care Patients Adopt Healthy Behaviors: A Descriptive Study

Handley, M., MacGregor, K., Schillinger, D., Sharifi, C., Wong, S., Bodengeimer, T. J Am Board Fam Med 2006; 19:224-31

This American study aimed to determine whether it is feasible for patients to make action plans in the primary care visit; determine whether patients reported carrying out their action plans; and describe the action plans patients choose. The study found that most patients reported making a behavior change based on an action plan, suggesting that action plans may be a useful strategy to encourage behavior change for patients seen in primary care. The researchers note that patients and clinicians agreeing on a small change with a high probability of success may convert some pre-contemplative patients to the action stage of behaviour change.

To download a full copy of the article click on the link below:

<http://www.jabfm.org/cgi/reprint/19/3/224>

Age at Drinking Onset and Alcohol Dependence Age at Onset, Duration, and Severity

Ralph W. Hingson, ScD, MPH; Timothy Heeren, PhD; Michael R. Winter, MPH

Hingson and colleagues surveyed 43 000 adults and found that those who began drinking before the age of 14 years had nearly double the risk of alcohol dependence compared with those who started drinking after the age of 21 years.

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2006;160:739-746

<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/160/7/739>

Healthy Lifestyle and the Risk of Stroke in Women

Tobias Kurth, MD, ScD; Steven C. Moore, MPH; J. Michael Gaziano, MD, MPH; Carlos S. Kase, MD; Meir J. Stampfer, MD, DrPH; Klaus Berger, MD, MPH, MSc; Julie E. Buring, ScD

Arch Intern Med. 2006;166:1403-1409.

In a prospective cohort study among more than 37 000 women, Kurth and colleagues evaluated the association between lifestyle and risk of stroke as well as stroke subtypes. The authors found that a healthy lifestyle composed of abstinence from smoking, low body mass index, moderate alcohol consumption, regular exercise, and healthy diet was associated with a substantially reduced risk of total and ischemic stroke but not hemorrhagic stroke.

<http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/166/13/1403>

PHCRIS Fact Sheet – Conference Works: getting the most out of conferences

This fact sheet provides tips for delegates and presenters to get the most out of attending a conference.

http://www.phcris.org.au/publications/pdfs/Fsheet06_Conferences.pdf

Media

Anti-obesity research exercises the good oil

Taking a daily dose of omega-3 enriched fish oil combined with regular exercise provides significantly greater benefits in the fight against obesity than exercise or fish oil alone, a University of South Australia study shows.

While previous research has shown that modifying diet and participating in regular exercise can reduce cardiovascular risk, few studies have evaluated their combined benefits, according to Professor Peter Howe, Research Fellow in Nutritional Physiology at UniSA's School of Health Sciences.

For more information you can find the media release at:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/news/2005/300305.asp>

Tackling Obesity Head On

The Australian Government has announced a new ministerial taskforce to tackle the nation's rising obesity rates. The taskforce will coordinate an anti-obesity campaign. Community ambassadors will promote healthier living, a series of surveys will determine what Australians are eating and their levels of physical activity and a new healthy weight website has been launched.

To view the full media release, click on the link below:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb108.htm>

For more information about the package of activities discussed in this media release go to:

<http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/Content/working-together>

National children's survey to help tackle obesity

The Australian Government, with industry backing, will undertake a comprehensive national child nutrition and physical activity survey. Work on the survey has commenced with a pilot to be conducted before the end of 2006. The results of the full survey are to be available by late 2007.

To view the full media release, click on the link below:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb109.htm>

Good (fresh) news on food for remote Indigenous communities

Transport operators working in remote areas, community representatives and health professionals agreed this week to work together to improve the delivery of fresh food to Indigenous stores in remote areas. They agreed to increase national effort to check the security of each step in the cold chain system that stretches from where fresh food is sourced to where it is finally bought and consumed. This will entail both the adoption of some new technologies and work practices, and a commitment to ongoing collaboration between the community, private transport and government sectors in remote areas.

Media release available at: <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhpublic/>

Binge drinking affects workers and workplace safety

A new report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), shows 17% percent of workers had a binge-drinking episode at least once a month that placed them at risk of harm, including injury or death, and 9% of workers had such an episode at least weekly.

The report, Alcohol and Work - patterns of use, workplace culture and safety, looks at previously unexamined aspects of the 2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey and highlights the strong links between alcohol use and adverse workplace events, such as absenteeism and attending work under the influence of alcohol.

Media release available at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2006/mr20060628.cfm>

Boost for Indigenous health

Health services for Indigenous mothers, babies, children and people with a chronic disease are to be boosted in 26 locations around Australia as part of the Commonwealth Government's \$102.4 million Healthy for Life program, announced in the 2005-06 Budget.

To view the full media release, click on the link below:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb100.htm>

Useful resources

Healthy Food Guide

Healthy Food Guide is an independent monthly magazine, written by dietitians, which explains the proven scientific links between nutrition and health in every day language. The publishers have created an exclusive below cost subscription price for Doctors of just \$38 for 12 issues. To take up this tax deductible subscription for your surgery simply phone (02) 9957 4655 and quote GP offer. The offer closes on 28th July. For more information about Healthy Food Guide, its editorial board of advice and content go to www.healthyfoodguide.com.au

Healthy Weight Website

A new website was launched on 19 July to provide practical online advice on how to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The website is available at <http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/healthyweight>

Electronic Lifescrpts

We are delighted to report that an initial step towards making Lifescrpts available on GP desk tops has been completed. Kinect Australia was contracted by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing to prepare functional specifications for incorporating the Lifescrpts materials into GPs desk tops. Kinect Australia (formerly VICFIT) led the consortium that developed the hard copy Lifescrpts materials and is working on this project in conjunction with PEN Computer Systems.

The functional specifications are necessary for the development of technical specifications which will align the system with appropriate national health informatics standards.

- A number of meetings and workshops were conducted, including:
- a meeting between PEN Computer Systems and Kinect Australia to understand the Lifescrpts workflow and prepare for workshops with potential users; and
 - two workshops with potential users including staff from two Divisions of General Practice and GPDV that included a demonstration of the possibilities of the software, discussion of the workflow associated with Lifescrpts and determining the requirements of the software.

The functional specifications:

- describe the workflow of the Lifescrpts tool;
- present a possible model for user interaction with the tool; and
- define the level of compatibility with other systems.

The Department and Kinect Australia are discussing how to progress this project.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres

It's worth having a look at the Commonwealth Carelink Centres to find out about services in your local area. Whilst the Carelink Centres were established to provide information for older people, people with disabilities and those who provide care and services the searchable databases provide information on a range of useful services.

The centres provide free and confidential information on community aged care, disability and other support services available locally, interstate or anywhere within Australia. The website has a searchable database that provides details of a range of service types that can be accessed by the community.

Anyone can contact a Commonwealth Carelink Centre by phoning a national telephone number Freecall™ **1800 052 222*** or log on to their website at <http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au> (*Calls from mobile phone are charged at applicable rates)

Diary dates

August 2006

- 9-10 "Managing Health and Disease in Today's Society" 12th Annual National Health Outcomes Conference, Canberra
<http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/ahoc/upcomingconference.html>
- 25 Daffodil Day
- 28-29 ADGP – SBO Lifescrpts Network Meeting
- 31 Doctors for Doctors Day

September 2006

- 3-8 10th International Congress on Obesity, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre <http://www.ico2006.com/>
- 7-8 "Evidence-Based Disease Management in the 21st Century" 2nd Annual National Disease Management Conference; Australian Disease Management Association.
www.adma.org.au
- 13-16 Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health 7th National Conference – Building Bridges Crossing Borders Convention Centre, Albury NSW
<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/sarrah2006/home.htm>
- 25-27 "Tackling the Determinants of Health from the Bush to Bondi" 37th Public Health Association of Australia Annual



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Conference, Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour

www.phaa.net.au

October 2006

6 Walk to Work Day

<http://www.walk.com.au/pedestriancouncil>

15-21 National Nutrition Week

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/>

November 2006

25-28 Australian General Practice Network Forum, Gold Coast, QLD

www.gpnetworkforum.com.au

Contact the editor

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the Lifescrpts Newsletter or to submit an article please contact Megan Hansford at mhansford@adgp.com.au or by telephone on: (02) 6228 0829.

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Advice for Healthy Living