



BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

The Black Dog Institute GP Newsletter

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Welcome by Professor Parker

I would like to welcome you to our first newsletter for GPs in NSW.

While we have been running general practice education for several years, we have spent quite a period of 2006 deciding how best to meet the educational needs of established GPs and GP Registrars. Strategically, this has been achieved by melding the contributions from psychiatrists and GPs who

have on-going involvement in our programs and by appointing two GP consultants. Dr Penny Browne was requested to take a 'helicopter vision' of how best to develop our educational programs. Dr Sarah Weaver was contracted to develop new programs and advance educational strategies. These two GPs have been assisted by the Institute's GP Education Team

led superbly by Julie Bell.

We have developed a pyramid model whereby we seek to reach all GPs with some educational material and information, while for those who wish to take part in ongoing activities, there would be progression up the pyramid to more specialist educational training.

Our educational programs are funded by the Institute
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Institute Responds to the New Medicare Initiatives

In line with its aim of providing up to date information for GPs, the Institute has responded quickly to the medicare changes introduced on 1st Nov 2006. All programs now reflect these changes and assist GPs in using them.

The main medicare changes are:

1. New item numbers for GP services, and
2. Rebates available for services by psychologists and other professionals.

There are 3 new item num-

bers for GPs:

- 2710 - Preparation of a GP Mental Health Care Plan,
- 2712 - Review of Care Plan, and
- 2713 - GP Mental Health Care Consultation.

Access to these item numbers is available to **ALL** GPs. There is no longer a requirement to work in accredited practice or to have special mental health training (though such training is strongly recommended).

Level 2 BOiMHC accreditation is still valid, and is a

requirement for claiming the GP-focused psychological strategies item numbers (2721 and 2725).

Once a GP has completed a 2710, patients can receive a medicare rebate for up to 12 individual sessions with an officially registered (clinical) psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist in any one year. They can also access rebates for up to 12 group sessions with these providers.

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New Item Numbers

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Full details of new item numbers can be found in the MBS book. Our new GP program, 'Mental Health

Care Plans and the New Item Numbers', teaches how to develop Mental Health Care Plans in line with the protocols outlined in the MBS book.

This program is being delivered in many divisions and will be offered here at the Institute in Randwick in 2007 (see opposite article).

"All GPs acknowledged the value of readily accessible materials to use with patients"

Focus on the Psychological Toolkit

Probably all GPs acknowledge the value of readily accessible materials to use with patients to supplement what they tell them. The 'Psychological Toolkit' is a collection of such materials the Institute has made available for widespread use.

The materials fall into 5 main categories:

1. Depression information for clinicians and patients including an extensive resource list of reputable books, websites etc.
2. Assessment and management tools that GPs can use in making clinical decisions,

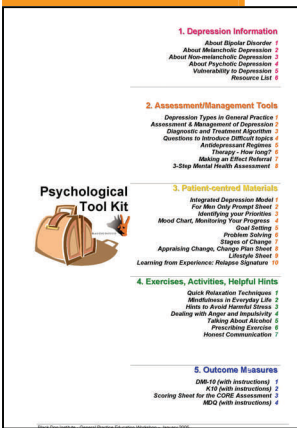
including rational medication prescription advice and developing mental health care plans

3. A range of handouts that can be used with patients to help them identify significant issues, plan changes and monitor progress.
4. Some excellent handouts for patients with strategies to address common problems such as relaxation exercises, anger management and exercise prescription, to encourage patients to be proactive in their treatment.
5. Four different outcome measures to assess initial

features and severity and to monitor progress.

These materials are all available on our website in the 'for health professionals' section. In addition, a CDROM of the entire toolkit is given to those who attend one of our programs. We recommend that you download the materials onto your work computer for easy access during consultations.

In future editions of the newsletter we will highlight some individual 'tools' along with ideas on how to use



Clinical attachment

Would you like to visit our clinic and sit in on the assessment of a patient, or work with a psychologist in delivering focused psychological strategies?

General practitioners and GP Registrars have an opportunity to sit in on patient consultations and be exposed to the way in which the Institute's consultant psychiatrists utilise a subtyping model of depression, differentiating between melancholic and psychotic depression, and non-melancholic subtypes to

assess and manage patients with mood disorders, particularly treatment resistant conditions.

The attachment involves a three-step process:

- A hands-on introduction to our detailed computer based 'mood assessment program' (the MAP)
- Sitting in on a patient consultation with a psychiatrist
- Attending a case management meeting with senior clinicians, to determine diagnosis and treatment

options.

The Institute is also developing a more extended attachment involving working with psychologists in delivering focused psychological strategies.

The clinic is based on-site at the Institute's facilities in Randwick, NSW. All NSW-based General Practitioners and GP Registrars are invited to participate in the clinical program.

For further information, please contact Nicole Cox on tel: 9382 8515 or email: n.cox@unsw.edu.au

GP and GP Registrar Courses for 2007

Since its launch in 2002, the Institute has delivered its accredited professional education and training programs on a total of 81 occasions to approximately 1200 GPs and GP Registrars.

To continue to meet the current needs of GPs and GP Registrars the Institute plans to launch several new accredited programs in 2007, focusing on:

- Mental Health Care Plans
- Bipolar disorders
- Equipping GPs to deliver focused psychological

strategies (interactive lectures and clinical attachments, in conjunction with psychologists).

These programs will initially be piloted on-site at the Institute in Randwick, NSW, and then offered in association with Divisions across NSW.

The Institute will continue to offer their program 'Demystifying Depression' (previously known as 'Identifying Your Priorities'), which looks at the management of depression in general practice, as well as

their specialised interactive lectures on managing mood disorders.

For more information, all details of programs and dates and locations of programs, please view the GP section on the Education and Training pages in the 'For Health Professionals' section of the Black Dog Institute website:

blackdoginstitute.org.au

These pages are regularly updated and list all GP education programs being offered both onsite at the Institute in Randwick and off-site programs run in association with NSW Divisions.

A paper by Institute's researchers published in the American Journal of Psychiatry addresses the topic of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and their effect on mood disorders.

The paper reviews a number of studies on this topic and addresses the two main themes that:

1) A shortage of Omega-3 fatty acids in the diet may contribute to mood disorders and 2) That Omega-3 fatty acids might be a useful form of treatment for mood disorders.

This paper cites several studies linking low fish consumption to higher prevalence of major depression

in countries around the world.

Amongst the key findings :

- There appears to be a plausible link between lower seafood consumption and higher rates of depression and Bipolar Disorder.
- Omega-3 may have an antidepressant role (although it is unclear whether this role is due to Omega-3 alone or as an augmenter of antidepressants).
- Higher Omega-3 levels in mothers' breast milk has been associated with lower levels of postnatal depression.
- For those with Bipolar

Disorder it is yet to be clarified whether Omega-3 has mood stabilising or anti-depressant properties

- Research needs to look into what dose of Omega-3 fatty acid and in what ratio to Omega-6 is likely to have the best results.

The paper highlights that this promising research can extend to investigating the role that Omega-3 may have not only in psychiatric disorders but in cardiac and other illnesses.

The complete paper and other latest research findings can be viewed on the Black Dog Institute website: blackdoginstitute.org.au

"This paper cites several studies linking low fish consumption to higher prevalence of major depression in countries around the world"



Welcome by P. Parker*Continued from page 1:*

which, in turn, is funded by NSW Health. Thus, our material is prepared and presented independently of any pharmaceutical company.

GPs have increasingly accepted a key role in manag-

ing the mood disorders. Following the Medicare changes on 1st November, it is likely that there will be an even greater take up by GPs.

Our personal view is that some 80% of people with mood disorders can receive

considerable benefit from a pluralistic intervention, making this one of the most successful management domains in medicinal practice.

Professor Gordon Parker is Scientia Professor at the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales, and Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute.

**Black Dog Institute**

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About us: The Black Dog Institute is an educational, research, clinical and community-oriented facility offering specialist expertise in mood disorders - a range of disorders that include depression and Bipolar Disorder. The Institute is attached to the Prince of Wales Hospital and affiliated with the University of New South Wales. The Institute is supported by NSW Health.

The Institute's mission is to advance the understanding, diagnosis and management of the mood disorders by continuously raising clinical, research, education and training standards. In so doing, the Institute aims to improve the lives of those affected - and in turn - the lives of their families and friends.

Contact the GP Education Team

If you would like more information about our education and training courses for general practitioners and GP registrars please contact Julie Bell via email:

j.bell@unsw.edu.au

Future Editions: GP Newsletter

All future editions of our GP newsletters will be delivered electronically. If you would like to regularly receive our newsletter please sign on via our website.

We will also keep you up to date with breaking clinical news that may be relevant to GPs!



Did you know?

We are often asked about the significance of the name 'Black Dog'. It comes from the metaphor most famously used by Winston Churchill to describe his own melancholic depression. The logo of the Black Dog Institute refers to and respects that origin. It acknowledges that depression can indeed 'shadow' a sufferer, even when the mood is upbeat and victorious.