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The Sydney GPCE

The Institute's General Practice Education team will be out in force at the 12th annual Sydney General Practice Conference and Exhibition (GPCE). The GPCE is being held at Sydney Olympic Park from 18th May to 20th May 2007 and will be held in conjunction with the ANSWD Vital Links State Forum.

Black Dog Institute will have a stand at the event which will provide informa-

tion about our training programs, plus you will have the chance to view our website, which includes materials and resources used in our GP programs.

The Director of the Black Dog Institute, Professor Gordon Parker, is scheduled to speak on Saturday 18th May, about depression and its subtypes.

The recently launched 'Ups and Downs: An Introduction to Bipolar Disorder

for General Practitioners', a 3-hour workshop, will be run every morning of the GPCE. Attendance will earn CPD points and if combined with other relevant workshops will contribute to an ALM in mental health. Details about this program can be found in the article on page 2.

The team is very excited to be attending and is looking forward to meeting lots of GPs.

CBT or Mindfulness?

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) involves teaching people skills and strategies to manage negative thoughts and behaviours that are associated with depression. It has been studied for over 20 years and there is good evidence that it is an effective treatment for depression. However, researchers are still not sure how CBT works in helping depression.

Mindfulness based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (MCBT) is a new variant of

CBT, which involves teaching people to make simple shifts in their awareness of thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations.

The Black Dog Institute is conducting a free clinical trial comparing CBT and MCBT as treatments for depression. They want to compare the groups and examine how these treatments work.

If you feel you have a patient who would benefit from either CBT or MCBT and might be suitable, (participants must fit certain criteria, including being Syd-

ney based, able to attend weekly group sessions in Randwick and have been depressed for more than 3 months) then contact Aimee Gayed for further details via tel: 02 9382 2993 or email:

groupprogram@unsw.edu.au

If you are interested in training in these strategies, the Institute is planning to develop a GP program in the near future, and you can access information and exercises on many CBT and mindfulness strategies in the 'Psychological Toolkit'.

FOCUS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLKIT: OUTCOME TOOLS

“outcome tools do not define whether a patient meets criteria for a specific diagnosis but measure current symptomatic distress and its change across time.”



DMI-10

The new Better Access item numbers for **GP Mental Health Care Plans and Reviews** encourage GPs to use **outcome tools**.

Outcome tools are widely used in psychological and psychiatric practice and research. Many have been developed and validated, and a number are in the public domain. As distinct from diagnostic tools, outcome tools do not define whether a patient meets criteria for a specific diagnosis but measure current symptomatic distress and its change across time. This is done by administering the tool initially (as part of developing a MHCP) and again at review (between 4 weeks and 6 months later).

Our ‘Psychological Tool-

kit’ (PTK) has 3 such tools with explanatory notes about scoring and interpretation.

K10 (Kessler Psychological Distress Scale)

This is a simple measure of psychological distress across a wide range of mental health disorders. It consists of 10 questions relating to how much of the time (on a 5-point scale) in the previous 4 weeks the patient has experienced particular feelings, such as hopelessness, sadness, nervousness.

The score obtained will range from 10 (no distress) to 50 (extreme distress).

DMI-10 (Depression in the Medically III)

This is a screening measure for depression that avoids the use of items such as

fatigue, sleep and weight change that are common to many illnesses as well as depression. It focuses instead on ‘cognitive-based’ items. It consists of 10 questions, asking how true certain statements are for the patient in the last 2-3 days and rated on a 4-point scale.

The answers are rated from 0-3 and a score of 9 or more is highly suggestive of depression. It is useful as an outcome tool since it is a dimensional measure, the higher the score the greater the depression.

DASS (Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale)

This is a quantitative measure of distress along the 3 axes of depression, anxiety (symptoms of physiological *Continued on page 4.*

New Bipolar Disorder Training

The Institute has just launched a new educational program specifically for general practitioners about Bipolar Disorder.

The 3-hour workshop aims to introduce GPs to the current understanding of Bipolar Disorder and its management. The workshop incorporates case studies and interactive exercises and allows GPs to discuss different patient presentations.

The program covers:

- What is Bipolar Disorder and what are the different subtypes?
- Diagnostic techniques and treatment options including medication and non-medication treatments,
- Relapse prevention and Wellbeing Plans.

The first workshop, run at the Institute in Randwick on 31st March, received very positive feedback from attendees. GPs felt it offered

a useful and comprehensive introduction to Bipolar Disorder.

The program will be offered at the GPCE in May and also again at the Institute in late July. To attend the program register online at:

blackdoginstitute.org.au

Divisions interested in running this program locally should contact Julie Bell, tel: 02 9382 4518 or email: J.bell@unsw.edu.au



New Program: Big Success!

The new program 'Mental Health Care Plans and the New Item Numbers' has been delivered with much success, with 14 programs being run since November 2006, training a total of approximately 550 NSW GPs.

The introduction of new GP Mental Health item numbers rewards GPs for completing comprehensive Mental Health Care Plans (MHCP) for patients with a wide range of mental health diagnoses. It is also the gateway to referring patients to psychologists and other Allied Mental Health professional for psychologi-

cal services rebatable through Medicare.

The new item numbers replace the 3-step process which has been phased out (ending on 30/04/07).

The accredited 2-hour and 3-hour workshops were designed to ensure GPs are familiar with the new item numbers and understand the requirements for developing (item 2710) and reviewing (item 2712) GP MHCPs and for a GP Mental Health Care Consultation (item 2713).

The training programs enhance GP skills in devel-

oping inclusive and clinically useful care plans that benefit the GP, the patients and the providers to whom they are referred.

The program will continue to be delivered across NSW in conjunction with the NSW Divisions of General Practice. See our website for the course locations and dates, or alternatively contact your division.

Divisions interested in running this program locally should contact Julie Bell, tel: 02 9382 4518 or email:

J.bell@unsw.edu.au

"The workshop was designed to ensure GPs are familiar with the new item numbers and understand the requirements for developing (item 2710) and reviewing (item 2712) GP MHCPs and for a GP Mental Health Care Consultation (item 2713)."

Research: Online Bipolar Disorder Education

The University of NSW is conducting a study into a web-based information education program of 8 modules for people with newly diagnosed Bipolar Disorder.

It is designed to complement existing treatment and help people take control of their illness through education and self-management.

The on-line educational program provides expert consumer-orientated information and is designed to help people better understand Bipolar Disorder.

The UNSW research team is currently recruiting patients who:

- Have been diagnosed

with bipolar disorder within the last six months

- Are being seen on a regular basis for treatment by a mental health professional
- Have a valid email address and access to a computer and the internet
- Can undertake eight sessions of approximately 30 minutes each, one per week, on their computer
- Are aged 18-yrs or over and live anywhere in Australia.

Participants will be randomly allocated one of four

conditions: all involve an the online education for Bipolar Disorder and, in addition, two include email support from an 'informed supporter'. Participants will be asked to complete questionnaires before, during and after the program. Please note: the education program is not a treatment program and participants will need to continue to see their managing health professional to be eligible to take part.

For more information please contact Simon Byrne on tel: 02 9382 8206 or email

bipolareducation@unsw.edu.au

"a web-based information program of 8 modules designed to help patients take control of their bipolar disorder through education and self-management."



Outcome Tools

Continued from page 2:

arousal) and stress (the more cognitive, subjective symptoms of anxiety). It is **not** a categorical measure of clinical diagnoses. It was developed as a 42-item questionnaire but the shortened 21-item form has also been validated and is the version in the PTK.

Each item is answered on a 4-

point scale as to how much it applied in the previous week. There is a template provided to calculate the scores for each of the 3 axes. Suggested interpretation of these scores is not in the public domain but available by permission in the PTK or further information can be sought via www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass/

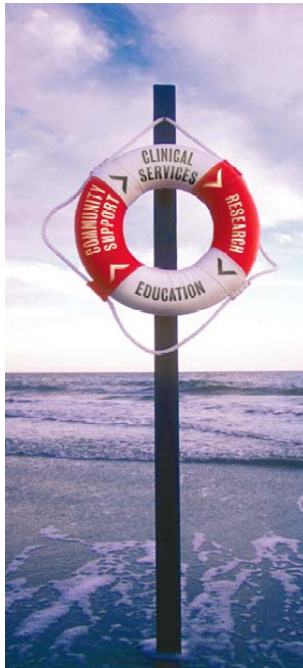
The PTK also contains:

The **CORE** measure which can

be used to assess the likelihood of **melancholic depression** features, and the **Bipolar Disorder Self-assessment Test** which can be administered to depressed patients who also report possible 'highs' to determine likelihood of a bipolar I or II diagnosis.

The 'Psychological Toolkit' (PTK) is available on our website in the section 'For Health Professionals'.

blackdoginstitute.org.au



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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 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

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!



Missed our first Newsletter?

Our first edition of the newsletter, published in November 2006, is available online at our website:

<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinicians/depressiongp/index.cfm>