Representatives handbook

This handbook provides GPs with essential information on the role and responsibilities of being an RACGP representative. It provides advice on how to perform those services, where to go for support and an overview of key RACGP resources and processes. For more information, contact 03 8699 0334 or email repsandendorsements@racgp.org.au
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Background

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia’s largest professional general practice organisation. The RACGP has more than 33,000 members working in or toward a career in general practice across metropolitan, regional and rural areas of the country.

The RACGP’s mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of all people in Australia by supporting GPs, general practice registrars and medical students through its principal activities of:

- providing education, training and research, and assessing GPs’ skills and knowledge
- supplying ongoing professional development activities and developing resources and guidelines
- helping GPs with issues that affect their practice
- developing standards for general practices to ensure the delivery of high-quality healthcare.

The RACGP has a strategic focus on:

- leadership and advocacy for the profession
- Fellowship in general practice
- quality and standards
- academic excellence.

Through representation, the RACGP ensures experienced GPs provide a professional voice for general practice and the RACGP in health policy, guideline development and health service strategy.

Benefits of being an RACGP representative

The benefits of being an RACGP representative include:

- the responsibility of representing the profession of general practice
- the opportunity to meet like-minded people from within and outside the profession
- the ability to contribute to interesting and intellectual discussions within your area of clinical interest
- the involvement in national issues and gaining a different perspective of the profession
- the collegial recognition of your skills, experience and education
- the chance to make a difference.
1. Services and responsibilities

1.1 Services
As a representative, you are a spokesperson for the RACGP and, as such, represent the views of the RACGP and the profession. You will:

- actively contribute to discussion and the decision-making process on behalf of GPs
- present the views and needs of GPs
- provide expert opinion and information relevant to general practice
- be familiar and mindful of core RACGP policies and publications
- be aware of the RACGP guideline endorsement process (refer to Section 3).

As an RACGP representative you should expect to have your contribution valued and:

- be provided with an agenda which should include relevant information – at least a week prior to the meeting
- be treated equally, heard and listened to by the committee
- be provided with enough time to consult with the RACGP before committee decisions are made
- feel comfortable enough to ask for clarification on any issues at the committee meeting, and/or seek advice and assistance from the RACGP
- familiarise yourself with the key messages from core RACGP policies and guidelines (refer to Section 6 and Section 9)
- always confirm with the RACGP before making any commitment – you should not make a commitment on behalf of the RACGP
- provide feedback to the RACGP after each meeting.

Contact the RACGP if you have any questions or problems (refer to Section 2).

1.2 Code of conduct
At all times, representatives must comply with the RACGP Member Code of Conduct. In summary, you must:

- act with integrity and in the best interests of the RACGP at all times
- comply with all applicable Australian laws
- disclose any conflict of interest
- strive to be responsive to the needs of RACGP members and other stakeholders
- do not make improper use of inside information and keep confidential such information received in the course of your relevant duties.

1.3 Meeting preparation and planning

The RACGP will provide you with information regarding the committee to which you have been appointed. If you require any additional information, you can seek this from:

- the committee secretariat
- committee/government website.

To prepare for committee meetings:

- ensure you understand the committee, including the scope, purpose, method of operation and desired outcomes
- become reasonably familiar with the committee’s governing legislation
- read the agenda and any accompanying material before the meeting
- seek clarification from the RACGP if there are any contentious issues, ideally some days in advance so that appropriate expertise can be provided
- ensure you can meet committee demands, for example, if the committee requires a monthly face-to-face meeting, confirm this does not clash with your practice or study demands.

Proxies

- If you cannot attend a meeting and require a proxy to attend in your absence, please contact the RACGP as soon as possible to discuss alternative arrangements.
- If you are acting as a proxy, get a briefing on any issues, topics of interest, previous positions and discussions from the person you are representing.

1.4 Tips and traps

Participation

- Represent the RACGP and put forward the views and position of the RACGP, not your personal views. Try not to fall into the trap of voicing your personal opinion.
- Be mindful not to use jargon or medical terminology, unless specific specialist expertise is requested. Listen to all speakers and be receptive to all ideas and opinions.
- Stick to the agenda. Avoid side conversations, distractions and getting off topic.
- Actively participate in discussions. Silence can often be interpreted as assent or agreement.
- Review message content before responding. Ask whether it is factual, opinion or judgement.
- Clarify positions and actions to be taken. Ask questions and repeat and paraphrase any action you are meant to undertake to reduce the possibility of ambiguity or confusion.

Persuasion

- Be aware of your own persuasion style and pay attention to group dynamics. See how others work on the committee and how you can add, personally and professionally, to the group dynamic.
- Explain the GP context in a manner that aids understanding and increases likelihood of success. Your fellow committee members are all highly experienced, qualified and respected professionals, however they may not understand the issues from a GP perspective. As a result, discussions can sometimes lead to proposed changes without due consideration of the GP perspective.
- Critique the evidence supporting recommendations to be applied to the GP environment. Ask yourself whether the evidence is appropriate.
- Provide relevant ‘real world’ examples to provide critique and raise questions in a non-confrontational manner.
- Question the issues, not the person.
• Summarise and incorporate others’ views into your own whenever possible.

• Know your audience. A one-sided message is best if your target audience already agrees with the message. A two-sided message (presenting the opposing view before offering a counter-argument) is better for an audience that initially disagrees with you.

• Be aware that not everything needs to be resolved in the meeting. If you feel that the RACGP has further input to provide before a final decision is made, say so.

Dealing with difficulties

• If you are experiencing difficulties or need to clarify the RACGP standpoint on a specific clinical issue, please contact the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator.

• The RACGP Expert Committee (REC) – Quality Care representatives mentor is also available to provide advice. The Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator will facilitate this.

Conflict of interest

• If you believe you have a conflict of interest, or one arises, you must advise the RACGP and your committee.

Confidentiality

• Some committees may have a confidentiality clause as part of your nomination.

• Clarify the issue of confidentiality before you commence your appointment. Only some issues and discussions may be confidential.

• If you find that confidential information is hindering consultation, seek advice from the organisation.

• Confidentiality agreements should not restrict you from reporting or consulting with the RACGP. If you have been appointed as an RACGP representative, be proactive in clarifying this early in the meeting process.

1.5 Post-meeting

• Collate your notes.

• Escalate any issues that require any further consideration and action.

• Provide feedback from each of your meetings. This helps the RACGP act on the decisions of the meeting and support you, should there be any follow-up required. This also allows the RACGP to clarify any issues or problems you may be facing as a representative. You will be sent a reminder email after each meeting for feedback to be completed and returned as soon as possible.
2. Where to go for support and information

2.1 Contact

- **Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator** – if you require any additional support for your representative role, contact the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator in the first instance. Email repsandendorsements@racgp.org.au or phone 03 8699 0334.

- **Clinical lead** – Should you require any specialist clinical feedback, the REC – Quality Care representatives mentor will be able to assist you. Please contact the Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator in the first instance who will organise for the REC – Quality Care representatives mentor to contact you at a mutually convenient time.

If you are a state based representative, please contact your local office.

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2.2 Essential RACGP resources

It is essential that you are familiar with the RACGP’s core values, policies and publications.

- RACGP vision and strategic business model (Section 4)
- RACGP Quality framework (Section 5)
- RACGP policies (Section 6)
- RACGP Standards for general practices (Section 7)
- RACGP eHealth resources (Section 8)
- RACGP practice tools (Section 9)
- RACGP clinical guidelines (Section 10).

Representatives need to be aware of the RACGP process for approving external clinical resources. Having an RACGP representative involved in the development process does not guarantee that a resource will receive RACGP approval or recognition. Please refer to Section 3.

2.3 Media enquiries

Any representative who receives a call from the media asking for comment on behalf of the RACGP should contact the RACGP Communications and Media team prior to commenting. The Communications and Media team need to know about any media queries that involve the RACGP to ensure messages are consistent, up-to-date, and correct information is provided. The Communications and Media team are happy to be contacted at any time and are available out-of-office hours on 0439 585 798.

All media enquiries can be sent directly to media@racgp.org.au.
2.4 Stay involved

• Subscribe to In Practice – this weekly newsletter is sent to all RACGP members and includes relevant news and the ‘extra national news’.

• Complete the representative end of year survey – this survey is sent to all RACGP representatives and allows you to provide feedback on your experience as a representative and any suggestions you may have for the representative process. Your response helps the RACGP to continue to improve the process and support we provide to you.

2.5 Further reading

• Harnessing the science of persuasion by Robert B Cialdini. Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdGzN7RYbw


• Putting evidence into context: some advice for guideline writers by Jonathan Dartnell, Mary Hemming, Joe Collier, Guenter Ollenschlaeger. Available at http://ebn.bmj.com/content/11/1/6.full.pdf+html
3. The endorsement/approval process

Representatives should be aware of the RACGP process for approving external resources.

- All requests for approval must be forwarded to the RACGP Representatives and Endorsements Coordinator at repsandendorsements@racgp.org.au.
- Having an RACGP representative involved in the development process does not guarantee that a resource will receive RACGP approval or recognition.

3.1 Accepted resources and endorsed guidelines

The RACGP evaluates applications against its criteria to ensure the resource is relevant to general practice. We recognise that our approval is an important marker of quality for GPs.

There are two levels of RACGP approval:

1. Endorsement of guidelines

The RACGP only provides endorsement for clinical guidelines that are produced to National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) standards.

We only provide endorsement as a clinical practice guideline when the guideline is rigorously and transparently evidence informed. It must be free of conflicts of interest and appropriate for general practice. The guideline recommendations should help guide clinical management and be considered in the context of the patient setting. This includes comorbidities and preferences. Only resources that meet our criteria and are produced to NHMRC guideline standard will be applicable for RACGP endorsement.

Resources that are endorsed by the RACGP are entitled to use the RACGP crest (see above).

2. Approval as an ‘accepted clinical resource’

The RACGP provides approval as an accepted clinical resource when the resource is considered to make a useful contribution to general practice, but it is not produced to NHMRC guideline standards.

For example, if the guideline has no recommendations or evidence grading, it requires a degree of clinical interpretation and caution when using it to guide practice. This is often because the evidence base in support of the content is either limited or not clearly described.

Resources that are recognised as an accepted clinical resource can use the words ‘RACGP accepted clinical resource’.
3.2 Review process

The RACGP reviews resources to ensure they are of the highest quality and appropriate for use by GPs. The following questions inform the review criteria:

- Will it improve the quality of care provided by GPs?
- Will it help improve the professional lives of GPs?
- Is it clear and current, based on the best available evidence and clinical relevance?
- Will it improve health of our practice population?

Members of the REC – Quality Care, or other relevant committees, coordinate the review of resources. Resources are evaluated against our criteria, using a modified guideline assessment tool. You can find this guideline assessment tool in Appendix 1.

After the review is completed, a final recommendation is made to the RACGP Council for endorsement. When the Council has approved the resource, an Intellectual Property (IP) Licence Agreement is signed by the requesting organisation. This outlines the terms and conditions for RACGP approval of the resource.

3.3 Fees and time frame

The RACGP charges an application fee for endorsement/approval of clinical resources. The fee depends on the size and complexity of the resource. The fee is applied on a sliding scale from $1000 to approximately $20,000 or above.

The application fee covers the cost of the review process and does not guarantee endorsement or approval.

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**Processing of requests for RACGP endorsement**

1. Resource submitted to RACGP for assessment
2. Organisation agree to proceed with process
3. Resource evaluated
4. Approved resource submitted to RACGP Council for endorsement
5. Feedback and outcome provided to requesting organisation
6. IP Agreement signed outlining terms and conditions for use of RACGP logo
4. RACGP vision and strategic business model

Representatives should become familiar with the RACGP vision and strategic overview, illustrated below.

RACGP vision

![RACGP Core strategic objectives](image)

**Core strategic objectives**
- Our members and staff strive to improve the health of all people in Australia through:
  - quality general practice – appropriately resourced, sustainable and vibrant, at the heart of an effective and efficient Australian healthcare system
  - equitable access throughout Australia to quality general practice
  - forward thinking College, leading and advocating continuous improvement through clinical, education and e-health advances
  - welcoming, collegiate environment delivering exceptional value to all members.

**College principles**
- As guiding principles, our members and staff strive to:
  - value our patients, their communities and the general practitioners who care for them
  - achieve quality and excellence
  - promote a unified voice for general practice
  - be evidence based, forward thinking and innovative
  - collaborate widely
  - support fairness and equity
  - work with integrity; ensuring we are ethical, honest and transparent.

STRANDS QUALITY EDUCATION RESEARCH ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP COLLEGIALITY

Healthy Profession. Healthy Australia.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia’s largest professional general practice organisation and represents urban and rural general practitioners.

We represent over 26,500 members working or committed to career in general practice in Australia who have chosen to be a member of the College.

There are over 125 million general practice consultations taking place in Australia annually.

Strategic overview

![Strategic overview Diagram](image)

**Strategic context**
The College addresses the areas of strategic focus within the context of general practice – person centred, continuing, comprehensive and coordinated whole-person healthcare to individuals and families in their communities.

The College, in all areas of its strategic focus, determines the unique nature and critical importance of:
- general practice at national, state and territory levels
- rural general practice
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- specific interests in general practice.

**Areas of strategic focus**
- Education and training for general practice
- Fellowships – FRACGP and FARGP, standards, quality, curriculum, assessment, continuing professional development.
- Innovation and policy for general practice
- Quality care, clinical, professional standards and accreditation, knowledge and evidence, research, RACGP Foundation, policy and practice support, advocacy.
- Collegiality
- Member engagement, student to mentor, opportunities and united professionals.

**Enablers**
- Strategy, people and operations
- Marketing and business development

Available at www.racgp.org.au/yourracgp/organisation/visionstatement
5. RACGP Quality framework

The RACGP developed the Quality framework to conceptualise solutions to quality problems in general practice. Committees without a strong GP focus often forget aspects of this diagram, which are crucial to achieving change in the general practice setting.

For more information, please read this article published in *Australian Family Physician (AFP)* at www.racgp.org.au/afpbackissues/2007/200701/20070129booth1.pdf
6. **RACGP policies**

The RACGP has a range of policies that representatives need to be familiar with. Please note that all RACGP policies are being reviewed as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. Although great care has been taken to ensure the most recent policies have been included in this handbook, please check the RACGP website regularly for the most up-to-date policies.

6.1 **Clinical and practice management policies**

The RACGP has a range of policies to support clinical and practice management in the five domains of general practice:

- communication skills and the doctor–patient relationship
- applied professional knowledge and skills
- population health and the context of general practice
- professional and ethical role
- organisational and legal dimensions.


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6.2 Health systems and environmental policies

The RACGP advocates on issues relating to quality primary healthcare and general practice, and has a range of policies that cover:

• defining our discipline
• promoting quality general practice
• supporting excellence
• advocating for general practice
• enhancing quality and access
• facilitating capability and lifelong learning
• working together.

The RACGP policies on health systems and environmental issues are listed below.

7. RACGP Standards for general practices

Standards for general practices (4th edition)

The RACGP Standards for general practices (the Standards) provides a framework for quality care and risk management in Australian general practice. The current fourth edition of the Standards was developed by the profession in collaboration with other stakeholders and aims to promote quality improvement within the practice. For more information, please visit www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards4thedition

8. RACGP eHealth resources

eHealth is the electronic collection, management, use, storage and sharing of healthcare information. This information can include individual items such as referrals, test results, discharge summaries, vaccination history, medication history and diagnoses, to comprehensive medical records.

eHealth systems that can securely and efficiently exchange data can significantly improve how clinical and administrative information is communicated between healthcare providers. As a result, eHealth systems have the potential to unlock substantially greater quality, safety and efficiency benefits. eHealth has the capacity to benefit all Australians – individual consumers, healthcare providers and organisations.

Digital Business Kit

New technologies are pivotal to continual improvement in healthcare for all Australians. The digital economy has the potential to support the delivery of evidence-based care by informed and educated clinicians and the sharing of critical business and clinical information that is accurate and timely. The RACGP Digital Business Kit aims to promote the adoption and meaningful use of technologies in general practice.


Telehealth

If you are ready to make the move into telehealth then this is the place to start. The RACGP, with support from the Australian Government Department of Health, has developed a number of resources to help GPs and practices get started with video consultations.

Further information is available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/ehealth/telehealth/gettingstarted

Protecting your practice information

The use of clinical desktop systems and the electronic management of information are vital to the delivery of safe and high-quality care for patients. General practice is at the forefront of eHealth and has specific requirements in computer and information security. Information security is not about the maximum security possible, it is about the balance between reasonable action and protection.

The RACGP understands that general practice staff require resources that are practical and applicable to achieving robust information security in general practice.

Further information is available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/ehealth/protecting-information

eHealth webinars

The RACGP eHealth webinar series provides QI&CPD accredited opportunities to learn more about eHealth technologies in general practice. Webinars are an efficient and convenient way for RACGP members and their practice teams to keep up-to-date with the latest eHealth technology and information.

Further information is available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/ehealth/additional-resources/ehealth-webinars

Social media in general practice

To support safe and professional social media usage by GPs and general practice staff, the RACGP has developed the Guide for the use of social media in general practice (the Guide). It provides information on social media advantages and disadvantages, risks and benefits, online conduct, security, privacy requirements, advertising and testimonials, and the use of disclaimers. More specifically, the Guide includes tips for using social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs within a general practice context. The Guide contains a social media policy template, which can be adapted to your practice.

Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/ehealth/social-media
9. **RACGP practice tools**

**General practice management toolkit**

The General practice management toolkit recognises that GPs work in a diverse range of locations and situations. The toolkit assists GPs and practice managers as they develop and apply their management knowledge and skills to their careers. It contains 13 modules that are being updated and released online at [www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/business/managementtoolkit](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/business/managementtoolkit)

- Module 1: Professional career management (2014)
- Module 3: Business structures (2014)
- Module 4: Starting a medical practice (2012)
- Module 5: Business plans (2015)
- Module 6: Practice teams and leadership (2014)
- Module 7: Managing financial resources (2014)
- Module 8: Managing staff (2014)
- Module 9: Managing information (2007)
- Module 11: Managing the wellbeing of staff and self (2014)
- Module 12: Clinical governance (2014)
- Module 13: Closing a medical practice (2012)

**Employment guides**

The RACGP has developed individual guides for both employers and employees working in the general practice setting. These resources aim to provide RACGP members with practical information regarding some of the key issues to consider when seeking employment or recruiting practice staff.

**Employer guide**

The RACGP Employer guide (Third edition) has been developed for GP employers and other members of the practice leadership team, to assist in adopting effective human resources processes. It covers a range of human resource management issues including the development of position descriptions, interview processes, selection, negotiation, employment legislation and staff management.

**Employee guide**

The RACGP Employee guide (Third edition) has been developed for GP employees and independent contractors working in general practice. It presents ideas and issues to consider when seeking employment in general practice. This includes career management, employment conditions, resume preparation, interview tips, negotiation and income potential.
10. Clinical guidelines

Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice (the Red book)

The Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice (Eighth edition) (the Red book) is a synthesis of evidence-based guidelines from Australian and international sources and provides recommendations for everyday use in general practice. It provides a single entry point to common conditions seen in Australian general practice and offers practical advice on the screening and services that should be provided to the general population.

All RACGP representatives should be familiar with the Red book and its content. An interactive HTML version is available online and an app is available for Apple Macintosh devices. The HTML and PDF file are available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/redbook.

National guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The National guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a practical resource intended for all health professionals delivering primary healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It provides GPs and other health professionals with an accessible, user-friendly guide to best practice in preventive healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/national-guide.

Medical care of older persons in residential aged care facilities (the Silver book)

Medical care of older persons in residential aged care facilities (the Silver book) provides GPs and other health professionals, including residential aged care nurses, with a resource for delivering quality healthcare in residential aged care facilities. This publication encourages collaborating between health professionals and provides suggestions for implementing systematic care involving residents, their GPs, residential aged care facility staff, families and other carers. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/silverbook.
Putting prevention into practice: guidelines for the implementation of prevention in the general practice setting (the Green book)

Putting prevention into practice: Guidelines for the implementation of prevention in the general practice setting (the Green book) is a practical guideline designed to strengthen prevention activities in general practice. It provides an up-to-date prevention approach and identifies effective prevention activities for general practice. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/greenbook

Abuse and violence: Working with our patients in general practice (the White book)

Abuse and violence: Working with our patients in general practice (the White book) is designed to assist GPs and their staff in recognising women, men and children who are survivors of abuse and violence, or who are currently involved in violent situations. This is a sensitive issue for patients and GPs, and this guideline may assist GPs to intervene in a positive and empowering manner. These guidelines encompass issues experienced by specific groups, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, same sex couples, people with a disability and those from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/whitebook

Clinical guidance for MRI referral

In July 2013, the Department of Health commissioned the RACGP to produce evidence-based clinical guidance in time for the introduction of the new MBS-supported MRI items in November 2013. This resource has been developed for GPs, in consultation with radiologists and other specialists. It supports evidence-based decision-making and aims to reduce inappropriate referral and improve patient outcomes. The Clinical guidance for MRI referral is available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/mri-referral
General practice management of type 2 diabetes 2014–15

This important guide provides a readable summary of current guidelines and recommendations for the management of type 2 diabetes in the general practice setting. GPs continue to provide most of the medical care to people with type 2 diabetes. The complexity of care for this common disease requires systematic care from the practice team and the timely referral to community and hospital-based specialists. GPs should consult these guidelines to ensure a high standard of care for their patients. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/diabetes

HANDI: Making non-drug interventions easier to find and use

The Handbook of Non-Drug Interventions (HANDI) is making effective non-drug treatments more visible and easier to use. HANDI aims to make ‘prescribing’ a non-drug therapy almost as easy as writing a prescription. The information in HANDI submitted by the HANDI Project team is supported by appropriate evidence. HANDI is available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/handi

Prescribing drugs of dependence in general practice

Witnessing the growing problem of prescription drug deaths in Australia is confronting for those dedicated to good health outcomes for patients. The RACGP is determined to take a proactive role in addressing this problem.

Part A: Clinical governance framework
Part A to the guide provides practices with key principles, strategies and tools for appropriately prescribing or not prescribing drugs of dependence. Complementing the Australian regulatory framework, Part A of the guide summarises the complex levels of formal and informal controls in this area. The guide describes how applying a clinical governance framework can improve patient care and reduce abuse, misuse and dependence.

Part B: Benzodiazepines
Part B to the guide aims to assist GPs in appropriate prescribing of benzodiazepines, to discourage inappropriate use and to reduce harm. Implementing principles from Part B of the guide will facilitate accountable prescribing of benzodiazepines, improve practice systems of care and support patient-focused care.

Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/drugs-landing
SNAP: A population health guide to behavioural risk factors in general practice

SNAP is designed to assist GPs and practice staff (the GP practice team) to work with patients on the lifestyle risk factors of smoking, nutrition, alcohol and physical activity (SNAP). The guide reminds GPs about the overwhelming evidence of harm associated with smoking, poor nutrition, excess alcohol consumption and a sedentary lifestyle. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/snap

Supporting smoking cessation: A guide for health professionals

This guide incorporates a number of significant new developments in the science and practice of smoking cessation support. It provides health professionals with a valuable resource to help patients keen to stop smoking. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/smoking-cessation

e-Mental health: A guide for GPs

The term ‘e-mental health’ refers to the use of the internet and related technologies to deliver mental health information, services and care. e-Mental health interventions are effective for use in the management of mild to moderate depression and anxiety, and can be disseminated in the primary care setting.

The RACGP has developed the e-Mental health: a guide for GPs to assist you in using e-mental health interventions with your patients when it is safe to do so. The guide is designed to provide an introduction to the field of e-mental health, direct you to key online resources for you and your patients, and to help you to decide how to use e-mental health in your practice. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/e-mental-health
Prostate cancer screening

Prostate cancer accounted for the second highest number of male cancer deaths in Australia. Whilst the RACGP recommends against prostate cancer screening (as detailed in the Red book) we recognise many men will be asking their GPs about screening.

To help men have an informed discussion with their GP about the risks and potential benefits of prostate cancer screening, we have produced this patient information sheet. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/prostate-cancer

Female genital cosmetic surgery

Female genital cosmetic surgery (FGCS) refers to non-medically indicated cosmetic surgical procedures that change the structure and appearance of the healthy external or internal genitalia of women.

Female genital cosmetic surgery: A resource for general practitioners and other health professionals provides information on what FGCS is, the factors driving demand, and a set of practical recommendations on how to manage women requesting referral for FGCS or expressing concern about their genitalia. Available at www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/female-genital-cosmetic-surgery

Appropriate diagnostic testing

GPs occasionally receive requests from patients to order specific medical imaging or pathology tests that may or may not be appropriate in the management of the patient. Test requests arise from a variety of sources. Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners might advise patients that they can avoid paying for specific tests if they ask a GP to order them through Medicare. Requests also occur when patients research their symptoms and present at the clinic with a proposed course of action.

The REC – Quality Care has developed a set of resources to address requests for diagnostic tests. This includes the RACGP position on the issue, a patient information sheet to inform discussion between GPs and patients, and a template letter to CAM practitioners. Available at www.racgp.org.au/support/policies/clinical-and-practice-management/appropriate-diagnostic-testing
Appendix 1. RACGP guideline assessment tool

1. The guideline/resource aligns with current RACGP advice. Please visit www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines to view and assess relevant RACGP guidelines, to ensure there are no conflicts with RACGP resources on this topic.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments

2. The resource is clearly written in an understandable form and the key recommendations are easily identifiable.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments

3. The target users and the healthcare context addressed by the guideline include GPs.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments

4. The background and aims of the guidance/resource as well as the patients to whom the guideline is meant to apply are clearly described.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments

5. The members of the guideline/resource development group have stated their conflicts of interest and the financial independence has been documented and transparently managed.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments

6. The systematic approach for appropriate evidence and the criteria for selecting the studies are described.
   ☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No
   Comments
7. The recommendations are unambiguous and presented along with the grades of recommendation and supporting evidence.

☐ Yes  ☐ Partly  ☐ No

Comments

8. The different options for the management of the condition are clearly presented considering the health benefits, side effects and risks.

☐ Yes  ☐ Partly  ☐ No

Comments

9. Clear designations about the currency of the guidelines are provided.

☐ Yes  ☐ Partly  ☐ No

Comments

10. Assessment of guideline

Is this resource suitable for RACGP endorsement (ie resource produced to NHMRC guideline standards, with recommendations based on best scientific evidence)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Please note a resource is not suitable as an endorsed guideline if:

- one out of nine criteria has been answered with a ‘No’
- one of the following criteria has been answered with a ‘Partly’: 4, 6 or 7
- in total, more than three criteria have been answered with a ‘Partly’.

Comments

Or is this resource suitable as an RACGP Accepted Clinical Resource (ie the resource will be a useful contribution to general practice, but is not produced to NHMRC guideline standards)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Comments
Healthy Profession.
Healthy Australia.