

8 April 2022

ADHD guideline development team,
Australian ADHD Professionals Association

Via email: guidelines@aadpa.com.au

Dear Guideline development team,

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) welcomes the opportunity to review the *Draft Australian evidenced-based clinical practice guideline for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)*. We provide the following comments for consideration.

Role of general practice

General practitioners (GPs) are the first point of contact and provide care for patients of all ages, genders, and cultures across all disease categories through all stages of life. 85% of the population see a GP at least once a year.¹ This holistic, patient-centred, and relationship-based approach places GPs in an excellent position to aid in the diagnosis and management of patients with ADHD, and connect patients and their families with other specialists and support as necessary.²

The long waiting times for people diagnosed, or with a suspected diagnosis, to be seen by a paediatrician or psychiatrist point to a significant need for GPs to be better supported to play a greater role in this area. The development of this guideline is a welcome and essential step to enable that to happen.

In addition to evidence-based guidance, there is a need for GPs to be able to access appropriate education and training. Regulatory barriers also need to be addressed as there are limitations in different states and territories regarding stimulant prescribing. Shared care arrangements should also be supported, in the form of clinical protocols and funding systems, so GPs can access timely assistance from paediatricians and psychiatrists to support diagnosis and management and mitigate risk of both over and under treatment.

General feedback

The majority of recommendations provided in this guideline are consensus recommendations or clinical practice points that are not supported by strong evidence. The RACGP recommends the evidence-based recommendations be more clearly highlighted.

The asterisks used to denote the GRADE strength of the recommendation makes the summary table difficult to follow. Since there are few recommendations that have a GRADE strength, the RACGP recommends stating the strength in words.

It would be helpful to highlight links to assessment tools that would be useful to clinicians, as well as links to prescribing information about the recommended medications (for example to the NPS MedicineWise or the Australian Medicines Handbook monographs).

Recommendations under section 4.3 Children and young people aged 5 to 17 years

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is a key non-pharmacological therapy that has been shown to benefit ADHD patients. There are other promising non-pharmacological therapies that currently do not have a robust evidence base. Hopefully this guideline will encourage research investment into these areas.

Recommendation under 5.2.1 Medication choice – young children aged under 6 years

As this age range is a common presentation period in general practice, including guidance for GPs on management options in addition to that for medication choice would be useful. This is especially important for GPs in rural and remote area where access to other specialists is limited.

Recommendations under section 6.1 – People in the correctional system

Access to diagnosis and treatment is poor in custodial populations and made worse by concerns over diversion of medications prescribed for ADHD to substance misuse. Use of long-acting formulations of stimulants, eg Concerta, Ritalin, LA and Vyvanse reduce the risks of diversion significantly. This could be addressed under section 5.9.1 as part of the medication review/progress review to mitigate any concerns.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft guideline. For any enquiries regarding this letter, please contact Stephan Groombridge, National Manager, eHealth and Quality Care on 03 8699 0544 or stephan.groombridge@racgp.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Karen Price
President

References

1. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. General Practice: Health of the Nation. East Melbourne: RACGP; 2021.
2. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. The Vision for general practice and a sustainable healthcare system. East Melbourne: RACGP; 2019.