



## Australian Government

### Department of Health

Associate Professor Vinay Lakra  
President  
Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists  
309 La Trobe Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

By email to: [ranzcp@ranzcp.org.au](mailto:ranzcp@ranzcp.org.au)

Dear Associate Professor Lakra

#### **RE: Revised clinical guidance to support safe and effective prescribing of antidepressants to paediatric and adolescent patients**

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your new role as President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP). I look forward to working closely with you throughout your time as President.

As you may be aware, on 18 December 2020 former President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), Associate Professor Allan, wrote to the Department acknowledging a letter from the Department in relation to the review and provision of updated prescribing guidelines for antidepressants in children and adolescents.

The Department's letter from 7 October 2020 advised the findings from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) review of antidepressant prescribing practices in paediatric and adolescent people and requested the RANZCP to work with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP) to review 2005 clinical guidance (guidelines) on the use of antidepressant medications in children and adolescents. In addition, it is expected the updated guidelines will reflect current evidence and best practice and provide additional guidance on dosage and dose titration, for use particularly in the primary care setting.

Since February 2021, Departmental representatives have met several times with representatives from the RANZCP to support the development of a proposal from the College.

The Department welcomes a proposal from the College for the review and updating of the guidelines for the department's consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Anthea Raven  
Assistant Secretary  
Mental Health Access Branch

November 2021

Ref: D21-5735474

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



4 February 2022

Ms Anthea Raven  
Assistant Secretary, Mental Health Division

By email to: [anthea.raven@health.gov.au](mailto:anthea.raven@health.gov.au)

Dear Ms Raven

**Re: Clinical guidance for prescribing antidepressants in young people and children**

Thank you for meeting with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) on 22 December 2021 to discuss options in relation to the development of new prescribing guidelines for appropriate and safe use of antidepressants in young people and children, as recommended in the 2021-22 Federal Budget.

The RANZCP has significant experience, expertise and strong interest in this topic area and supports the need for clear guidance given that almost 1 in 7 children and adolescents have a mental disorder in a 12-month period. The majority of prescribing is undertaken in primary care and there is a significant variation in the dispensation rates of antidepressant medications in children and adolescents as identified by the Atlas of Health Care Variation (2015 and 2018). Antidepressants are also prescribed off-label in this population given that none of the antidepressants for major depression list use in for people less than 18 years old as an indication.

As discussed at our meeting, the RANZCP preference is for the Department of Health to commission development of such guidance from an appropriate organisation, with the specification that the RANZCP is formally engaged in the process and supported to participate, together with other relevant Medical Colleges, to contribute topic expertise. This would ensure that the evidence-based guidance can be developed in the most timely and effective manner. We offer our assistance in nominating psychiatrists with specific expertise for the guideline development group - Chair and membership.

For the next steps, I can be contacted via [s47F](#)  
and Partnerships Department, via [s47F](#)

Executive Manager, Practice, Policy  
or by phone on [s47F](#)

Yours sincerely  
[s47F](#)

Associate Professor Vinay Lakra  
**President**

Ref: 2720

cc: [s47F](#)