



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**

**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL**

**ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS**

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

30 November 2009

**DRAFT ADHD GUIDELINES RELEASED**

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) today made available updated draft Australian Guidelines on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other useful information to assist parents and medical professionals to recognise and appropriately treat ADHD..

More than 350,000 Australian children and adolescents are estimated to have ADHD<sup>1</sup>. The Rudd Government, medical professionals and parents have been concerned for some time about the lack of clear, evidence based information to assist the many people affected by this condition.

“I am pleased that we can finally provide this more up to date information on ways to identify and care for those in our community who may be suffering from ADHD,” said the Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon.

The NHMRC and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) have agreed to make available the draft Australian Guidelines prior to formal consideration by the Council of the NHMRC.

Professor David Forbes, Chair of the RACP’s Guidelines Working Group, said a multimodal approach is recommended for treatment of ADHD.

“These draft Guidelines will help improve the assessment, treatment and care of people with ADHD in Australia,” he said.

“Treatment may include education, psychosocial strategies, behavioral management and changes in nutrition and medication.

“If the draft Guidelines are followed by practitioners, children with ADHD will be carefully assessed, families will be informed of risks, benefits and options and children will receive individualised therapy.

“What’s important is that it is likely fewer children will be prescribed medication, and that more children will have school and home based programs that assist their parents in managing their symptoms,” said Professor Forbes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health of Young People in Australia, October 2000 – Child and Adolescent Component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to update the old Guidelines which were withdrawn in 2005.

The RACP has conducted a thorough and careful process to develop these draft Guidelines. They utilised a panel of independent experts to review the scientific evidence, and an independent scientific writer to prepare the draft document, with the work overseen by an expert working group. The panel produced an initial draft of the Guidelines in 2008, which was issued for public comment in July 2008.

The draft was amended to take into account feedback from this consultation period and submitted to the NHMRC, which provided feedback in early 2009. The Guidelines were amended as required and re-submitted to NHMRC for consideration.

The Council of the NHMRC will formally consider the draft Guidelines after an alleged conflict of interest investigation into a US-based researcher is completed. Whilst the work of this researcher is referenced in the Guidelines, the researcher has not been involved in any way in the production of the Guidelines.

The CEO of the NHMRC, Professor Warwick Anderson, said the NHMRC will continue to closely monitor the progress of the US investigation.

“We will remain in contact with those conducting the investigation in the United States. As soon as the outcome of the investigation is known, we will determine its significance or potential impact on the draft Guidelines,” said Professor Anderson.

The draft Guidelines have been released along with supplementary information prepared by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). This information summarises the process involved in developing the Guidelines and provides further references for people who want to seek additional information about the analysis and management of ADHD.

The Guidelines can be found at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au).

**Media inquiries:**

NHMRC – Carolyn Norrie 0422 008 512

RACP – RACP Media Unit 0408639697

Minister Roxon’s office – Laura Ryan 02 6277 7220