



NICS FELLOW 2004-2007

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Implementation Project:

Improving management of depression in primary care

With depression affecting at least 750,000 Australians each year, this project aimed to assist general practitioners' (GPs) treatment of this condition. Commonly used treatments are medications (antidepressants) and counselling (psychological treatments), with many patients expressing a wish for the latter. This project aimed to support increased provision of an evidence-based psychological treatment – problem solving therapy – by GPs. The project aimed to develop GPs' competence in providing problem solving therapy (PST) as a depression treatment that is practical, effective and evidence-based, as well as being suitable for use in day-to-day practice.

The project involved developing and implementing a targeted training program. This program is the first Australian program dedicated to training GPs in PST; it is much shorter, and potentially more accessible, than previous programs; and it involves the use of actor patients to develop GPs' knowledge, skill and confidence in providing PST. The training was effective in improving GPs' PST competence, with most GPs' knowledge of PST, confidence in providing PST and skill in using PST in a simulated consultation increasing. In addition GPs expressed intention to use PST and measured use of PST in actual consultations increased.

Funding Partner:

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Project Mentor:

Professor Jane Gunn

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NICS Mentor:

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Key Publications:

Pierce D, Gunn J. GPs' use of problem solving therapy for depression: a qualitative study of barriers to and enablers of evidence based care. *BMC Family Practice*. 2007;8(24).

Pierce D, Gunn J. Using problem solving therapy in general practice. *Australian Family Physician*. 2007 April 2007;36(4):230-3.

Key Presentations:

- Pierce D. Cognitive behavioural skills - an evidence based approach. General Practice Conference & Exhibition. Melbourne; 2006.
- Pierce D. PS-GP. Problem solving approaches to depression for GPs. Australian General Practice Network Forum. Queensland; 2006
- Pierce D. Problem Solving for Depression in General Practice - Barriers and Facilitators. The Society for Academic Primary Care Annual Scientific Meeting. Keele, UK; 2006.
- Pierce D, Gunn J. Problem Solving for Depression in General Practice – Barriers and Facilitators. 2006 General Practice & Primary Health Care Research Conference. Perth, Australia; 2006.
- Schattner P, Austin D, Klein B, Shandley K, Pier C, Mitchell J, et al. Panic online: using the internet to help treat panic disorder in general practice. WONCA Conference. Florence; 2006.
- Pierce D, Gunn J. GPs' view of depression - characteristics and consequences. GP&PHC Conference. Adelaide; 2005.
- Arroll B, Hanson E, Pierce D. Research Journeys. General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference 2005. Adelaide; 2005.
- Pierce D, Gunn J. General practitioners' view of depression, a qualitative study. SAPC Conference. Glasgow; 2004.