

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Mentally healthy



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Mental health, psychiatry, call it what you will, this aspect of medicine is one that confronts every general practitioner daily. And the skills needed to cope with the hugely varied presentations of mental problems are seldom well taught at medical school. Patients often present with physical symptoms, fearing that simply saying how they are feeling will not get sufficient attention, with all the misunderstanding and often overinvestigation that results. However, family medicine is becoming a speciality and so this important aspect of family practice will receive more attention during training.

Bob Mash and his team have put together an issue that deals with the most common presentations of mental problems in the community. Bob Mash starts the journal with an approach to recognising and assessing mental problems in primary care. 'I'm tired all the time, doctor,' – a real heartsink phrase for many of us – and all too common in the community, chronic tiredness, is ably dealt with by Bruce Sparks in an extremely readable article, which also covers chronic fatigue syndrome. Sleep problems are another heartsink presentation and seldom well understood. Alison Bentley's excellent article gives a rational approach to the problem and some practical advice on how to help patients with sleeping problems without using drugs. Medically unexplained symptoms are covered by Bev Schweitzer and mental health and HIV by Jane Saunders. Alcohol and substance abuse, with all its distressing effects on the individual and the family, is covered by Lize Weich. Narrative therapy and mind-body medicine, both little understood topics by most of us, are explained by Hugo Theron and Anil Ramjee respectively, while Cathlene Seller discusses appropriate laboratory investigations in mental disorders in primary care.

The term sinus headache implies a headache that originates in the paranasal sinuses or the nasal cavity itself. However, according to the excellent review article by Wakisa Mulwafu and his colleagues, a true sinus headache is relatively rare. The article goes on to discuss assessment, diagnosis and management of acute rhinosinusitis, which is widely recognised as a cause of headache and facial pain.

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