



AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 23- 29 July 2017

Your Family Doctor: all about you

GPs PLAY KEY ROLE IN MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH

GPs play an important role in looking after the mental health of their patients.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that the established and trusting relationship that patients have with their GP allows patients to feel more at ease when discussing any mental health concerns.

“As the most accessible medical professional, the family GP is often the first contact point when a mental health issue emerges,” Dr Gannon said.

“GPs are highly trained to detect and manage mental health issues and refer patients to more specialised care and advice when required.

“The community is becoming more aware of the breadth and impact of mental illness, with one in five Australians experiencing a mental illness at some time in their lives.

“Mental illness comes in many forms, from mood disorders to psychosis.

“Greater awareness is vital in helping to break down stigmas around mental health, and open up the lines of communication to speak openly and share concerns.

“Our mental health is not something that can be ignored. Life has many challenges, and it is not uncommon that some of those challenges will affect our mental health.

“Discussing such issues with your GP is vital. Whatever is going on it can be managed, and the sooner help is sought the better the outcome.”

Background:

- Mental health accounts for a significant proportion of the fatal, non-fatal, and total burden of disease in Australia.
- Anxiety disorders dominate as the leading non-fatal and total burden of disease for young girls and women from ages 5 to 44.
- One in seven people will have suicidal thoughts at some point in their lives.
- Suicide in both males and females is the leading cause of fatal burden of disease in Australia for those aged 15-44.
- Mental health warning signs can include feeling anxious or overwhelmed, having difficulty in getting to or staying asleep, or feeling disengaged from family, work, and life.

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