

DIAMOND IS LAUNCHED

diamond (**D**iagnostics, **M**anagement and **O**utcomes of **D**epression in **P**rimary), is the first ever large study of the way depression is actually managed in Australian general practice. The study was officially launched in February 2005 by Professor Christopher Dowrick from the University of Liverpool who visited Australia earlier this year to share his views on depression and to encourage general practitioners (GPs) to participate in the University of Melbourne's *diamond* Study. As the author of *Beyond Depression: A New Approach to Understanding and Management*, he challenges the prevailing views on depression as a medical condition and calls for investigation into the diagnosis and management of depression in primary care from a GP/ family doctor and patient perspective.

"The research you are undertaking is of fundamental importance, not just in Victoria but also internationally. You are mapping care pathways from two neglected perspectives, those of primary care practitioners (including GPs / family doctors) and people with experience of depression. You are demonstrating the need to be aware of the whole process of care, and are not falling into the simplistic assumption that findings drawn primarily from psychiatric settings are appropriate for Victorian primary care. We really do not yet know enough about the natural history of depression in primary care settings, how long symptoms may persist, or what are the key factors associated with recovery or recurrence."



Left to right; Dr H Rowe (Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne), A/Professor K Hegarty (Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne), A/Professor J Gunn (Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne), Dr D Pierce (Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne), The Hon Bronwyn Pike (Minister for Health), Ms L Young (CEO beyondblue), D J Fisher (Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne), Professor M Kyrios (Department of Psychology, Swinburne University), D G Blashki (Department of General Practice, Monash University)



Left: Prof Christopher Dowrick giving a lecture earlier this year

Right (above) Victoria's Minister for Health, Ms Bronwyn Pike, awarding funding to the *diamond* Consortium on 18 May 2004.

....and the research gets underway

The *diamond* Study is the first of its kind in Australia and is an opportunity for patients to share their experiences and voice their feelings about the way GPs care for their emotional well-being. Through this study we will learn about how emotional issues are currently managed and to recommend changes to the system where necessary. Leading the group is Associate Professor Jane Gunn, working with colleagues. (See above) Following a very successful pilot in regional Victoria, the next phase of *diamond* is now underway across rural and metropolitan Victoria. The response to *diamond* from patients has been extremely positive and GPs and patients alike have really valued their chance to have a say. By the end of 2005, around 18,000 patients who have attended their GP in the previous 12 months for ANY reason will be sent a postal survey. Now that's a lot of mail!



So where has diamond been...?

Everywhere! Since January this year, the *diamond* Study team have travelled over 4500km visiting clinics and medical centres in every corner of the state assisting general practitioners (GPs) / family doctors with recruiting patients into *diamond*. Recruitment of patients into the *diamond* Study will continue throughout 2005.

24 GPs / family doctors across Victoria are participating in the *diamond* Study

Over 14,000 patients from 24 GPs / family doctors have been sent a *diamond* survey

Thousands of patients have completed and returned the *diamond* survey



Have you received a diamond survey...?

You have been randomly selected to receive a *diamond* survey through your GP / family doctor. We would like to hear your views about the health care you receive from your doctor.

- 1 *diamond* is building a better picture of how general practitioners (GPs) / family doctors provide care for the emotional well being of all their patients. A random selection of patients will be invited to take part.
- 2 We ask that you take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the prepaid envelope (no stamp is required). We expect this to take about 15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and surveys are anonymous.
- 3 If you would like to hear more about participating further in *diamond*...fill in your details on the back page of the survey. If not, your participation in *diamond* is complete! You will receive no further correspondence regarding *diamond*.

Here is what some people had to say about participating in *diamond*...

"It was good to be able to express views that may be difficult to put in writing, and know that what you say is validated."

"I enjoyed being a participant and hope that it has helped in some way"

"...knowing this survey could help people and doctors having a better understanding"

"(the positive aspect to taking part was) the thought that I was doing something good for the community"

"(the experience was) overall a positive one, I felt validated and that my view is important!"

