



The Royal Australian College of
General Practitioners

The place of General Practice in Australian health care

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General Practitioners



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Primary Care is the Answer

- To the epidemics of communicable diseases– HIV, TB, Malaria, SARS
- To the epidemics of non-communicable diseases – cardiovascular disease, Cancers
- To the rise in mental health problems
- To meeting the health care needs of our ageing populations
- To containing health care costs – preventive care, health promotion, chronic disease management



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Primary Care is the Answer

- And a strong system of Primary Medical Care is an essential component
- This includes strong family medicine / general practice
- Our national societies and colleges need to work together
- Wonca has a key role to play in bringing our colleges and societies together and sharing our experiences and resources



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Australian general practice

- 20,000,000 people
- 22,000 general practitioners
- 45,000 medical practitioners

- 100,000,000 consultations / year
- 85% population see a GP / year

- 25,000,000 consultations with those aged over 65 years
- 1,000,000 home visits to those aged over 75 years



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Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

- Australia's largest medical college
- > 17,000 members
- > 4,500 rural members
- 100% all doctors training to be general practitioners



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Attract and train the 'brightest and the best'

- An attractive profession
 - being valued by our patients, the community, our peers and the profession
 - being stretched/challenged, not stressed
 - being recognised and rewarded for quality
- Exposure to general practice
 - exposure before leaving university
 - exposure in early postgraduate years



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Our Commitment to Education and Training

- RACGP Standards for Education and Training of general practitioners
- Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice
- RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice

- Continuing Professional Development program for all 22,000 GPs in Australia



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Providing excellent practices

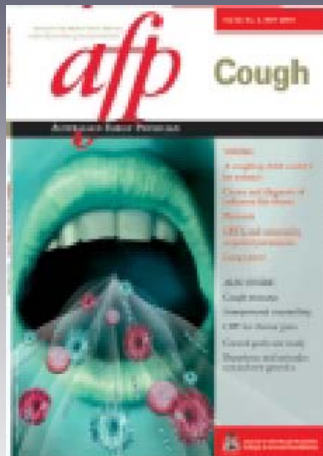
- *RACGP Standards for General Practices*
 - Standards for the processes, structures and outcomes for general practices
 - Standards for other primary medical care services
 - Includes standards for use of information technology in general practice, infection control, staff training, access, after hours



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Providing access to the best available evidence

- RACGP resources
 - Australian Family Physician
 - Red Book (Guidelines for Preventive Care)
 - SNAP guide (Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol, Physical Activity)
 - Silver Book (Care for the aged)
 - Guidelines on care of indigenous Australians
 - RACGP Research Foundation
 - RACGP Library and Resource Centre





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Valuing the generalist tradition



- Generalist care includes
 - universal unreferral access
 - whole person medical care for individuals, families and communities
 - comprehensive, coordinated and continuing medical care
 - drawing on biomedical, psychological, social and environmental understandings of health
- Both the funding structures and workforce arrangements need to support the generalist approach



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Maintaining morale and a yearning for excellence

- We need to keep our doctors if we want to maintain high quality
- Happy doctors are better doctors
 - Our communities cannot afford to lose doctors who would otherwise continue in general practice
- The context of general practice, rather than its content, is the key issue in reduced morale
- Peer support for medical practitioners



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- We are privileged to family doctors and general practitioners
- Each of us makes a positive difference to the lives of our patients