

# CONNECTIONS

DOKOTELA DOCTORS' NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 3



## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM DOKOTELA

Dokotela sincerely wishes to thank all referring GPs and clinics for their support. Solving the regional mental health crisis is not just about telehealth - it is about developing relationships and ongoing collaboration between primary care physicians and Specialists. We believe that the shared care model is clinically very beneficial for patients - it provides the benefit of your unique knowledge regarding the patient's history, family and community as well as the local mental health resources. Together we can provide an integrated care plan with better communication between us than occurs between metropolitan psychiatrists who do not have the benefit of input from the patient's primary care physician.

The support provided by all of our referring GPs, nurse practitioners, practice managers and other practice staff in making themselves and their practices available to facilitate appointments has allowed us to treat thousands of patients over 2018, many of whom would have otherwise struggled to access treatment. If you have colleagues whose patients may benefit from Dokotela, please pass on their details.

Over the Christmas period high expectations, money woes, time spent with extended family and other holiday hazards can be problematic for those prone to mental illness. There are several tools you can suggest to your patients:

- Domestic violence, distress and emotional disturbance are caused by people demanding that festivities meet an impossibly high hurdle. It is important to accept the inevitable frustrations and disappointments that everyone feels at such an emotional time
- Don't drink and drug. Avoid being emotionally disturbed and disturbing loved ones and friends by being intoxicated. Alcohol does not improve mood, social skills or pleasure except in very small amounts
- Focus on the little pleasures of the day, such as truly looking into someone's eyes and attempting to understand their wishes, fears and foibles. Accept what can't be changed

Dokotela Psychiatrists are available throughout the holiday season, however for appointments between 21 Dec-7 Jan please book in advance of these dates because our operations team will be enjoying a well-deserved break.

From all the Dokotela Team, we wish you a safe and holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2019.

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# BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTION

BY DR ZELKO MUSTAC, DOKOTELA MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Until recently, addiction was restricted to chemical use disorders. However, there has been a recognition that some behaviour addictions, might be more accurately classified as addictive disorder rather than obsessive-compulsive or impulsive disorders due to their similarity to substance use disorders. Gambling disorder became the first and only behavioural addiction to be added to addictive behaviours in DSM-5.

## DEFINITION OF ADDICTION - DO BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS EXIST?

In order to understand behavioural addictions it is useful to consider the proposed restrictive definition for behavioural addictions from authors concerned at the extension of behavioural addictions into everyday passionate activities such as professional dancers or athletes (Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2017): “A repeated behaviour leading to significant harm or distress. The behaviour is not reduced by the person and persists over a significant period of time. The harm or distress is of a functionally impairing nature. “

There is a growing body of evidence that addiction is not restricted to chemicals that are ingested but can involve behaviours that are compulsively driven and difficult to resist, despite the evidence for ongoing harm. The natural history, functional brain changes and genetic risks of behavioural addictions is the same as that of chemical addictions.

The first behavioural addiction that was placed in the addictive behaviours group was gambling disorder. Internet Gaming Disorder was added in the draft ICD-11 in early 2018 as a condition warranting further research in the addictive behaviours category, despite the objections of the video gaming industry. This is unsurprising and many other behavioural disorders including compulsive shopping, hypersexual disorder and others all have the hallmark of addiction.

Behavioural addictions expand our knowledge of addiction by demonstrating that the brain mechanisms for pleasure can be equally well be hijacked by repetitive behaviours as repetitive ingestion of chemicals. This serves to expand our understanding of the importance of social, developmental, regulatory and technological influences on the development of both types of addiction.



# DEMETIA versus DELIRIUM

The early signs of dementia are very subtle and may not be immediately obvious. Early symptoms also vary a great deal. Usually though, people first seem to notice that there is a problem with memory, particularly in recalling recent events.

Signs may include-

- Memory loss that affects day-to-day function
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Confusion about time and place
- Problems with language and struggling to find the right word
- Problems with abstract thinking
- Poor or decreased judgment
- Problems misplacing things
- Changes in personality or behaviour
- A loss of initiative

A good quick assessment tool which is free and only involves paper and pencil is the Montreal Cognitive Assessment Scale, please see the **DOKOTELA** website (Blog/GP resources) to download the assessment. It only takes a few minutes to complete and a low score raises the possibility of cognitive impairment. Additional investigations include a metabolic profile, pO<sub>2</sub>, and corroborative information from a loved one.



## MENTAL HEALTH AND CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GP'S WITH DOKOTELA

Videoconferencing is used in a wide variety of medical settings. The advantages of videoconferencing and shared care for Continued Professional Development (CPD) include;

- A cost-effective method of accessing CPD (Dokotela provides complimentary CPD sessions – dates in 2019 TBC)
- Distribution of educational material in resource-poor settings and for GPs who find geographical factors problematic
- Knowledge acquisition that has been shown to be as effective as face-to-face or internet learning
- The opportunity for each videoconferences to be an educational resource – both for primary care clinicians and our Specialists via the feedback Dokotela seeks at the conclusion of each appointment

# MEET OUR SPECIALISTS



**Dr Mustac**  
Psychiatrist  
New South Wales

General Adult Psychiatry  
Assumption rights at the Sydney Clinic (Bronte)  
ADD, ADHD and Psychostimulant Prescribing (NSW)  
Clozapine prescribing for treatment resistant  
Schizophrenia



**Dr Marshall**  
Psychiatrist  
Western Australia

General Adult Psychiatry  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
ADD, ADHD and Psychostimulant prescribing (WA)



**Dr Seth**  
Psychiatrist  
New South Wales

General Adolescent and Adult Psychiatry  
ADD, ADHD and Psychostimulant prescribing (NSW)  
Forensic Psychiatry  
Social and Rehabilitation Psychiatry



**Dr Hughes**  
Psychiatrist  
Queensland

General Adult Psychiatry  
Consultant Liaison Psychiatry  
Psychosomatic Psychiatry



**Dr Sivaruban**  
Psychiatrist  
Queensland

General Adult Psychiatry  
Mental Health Assessment for Dementia, intellectual  
disability and related behavioural and psychological  
issues



**Dr Kasiannan**  
Psychiatrist  
Victoria

General child, adolescent and family psychiatry  
Depression and anxiety in adults  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
Autism spectrum disorders and developmental Issues



**Dr Baron**  
Psychiatrist  
Victoria

General Adult Psychiatry  
Veteran and Defence Force Health  
Individual, couples and family therapy



**Dr Kwasic**  
Psychiatrist  
Queensland

General Adult Psychiatry  
Culturally Sensitive Interviews  
Clozapine Prescribing for treatment resistant  
Psychoses



**Dr Jankowiak**  
Psychiatrist  
South Australia

General Adult Psychiatry  
Veteran and Defence Force Health  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



**Dr Patil**  
Psychiatrist  
New South Wales

General Adolescent and Adult Psychiatry  
Clozapine Prescribing for treatment of resistant  
Schizophrenia



**Dr Khanna**  
Psychiatrist  
Western Australia

General Adult Psychiatry  
ADD, ADHD and Psychostimulant prescribing (WA)  
Geriatric Psychiatry  
Addiction and Substance Abuse



**Dr Goodyear**  
Psychiatrist  
New South Wales

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
Mood and anxiety disorders  
Gender diversity and gender dysphoria  
Emotional and behavioural issues



**Dr Bharadwaj**  
Consultant Geriatrician  
Western Australia

General Geriatrics  
Cognitive decline, dementia syndromes, Parkinson's  
disease, bone health, rational prescribing and  
palliative care in the elderly



**Phil Botha**  
Psychologist  
New South Wales

Registered Psychologist for mood disorders,  
anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD),  
developmental disorders and attachment trauma,  
dissociation and somatization