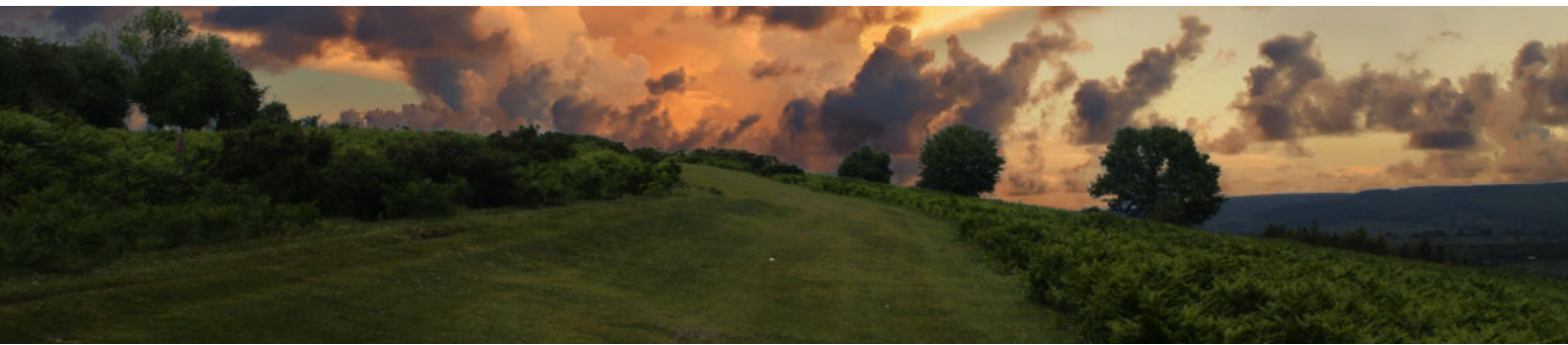


CONNECTIONS

DOKOTELA DOCTORS' NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM DOKOTELA MEDICAL DIRECTOR, DR ZELKO MUSTAC

Welcome to the very first Dokotela Newsletter. Dokotela is the telehealth platform providing patients in regional and rural areas of Australia with fast access to Psychiatrists via video conferencing.

As one of the first doctors to adopt our technology, I wanted to personally thank you for your support and encouragement. We now have an extensive network of GPs across Australia and have now held over 1500 appointments via our video conferencing platform.

Solving the mental health crisis across regional Australia is not just about telehealth - for us it's about developing relationships and ongoing collaboration between GPs and our Psychiatrists. We encourage you to ask as many questions from the Dokotela Psychiatrists as you need to foster this relationship.

I hope you find the material interesting and please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions.

IN THIS ISSUE

**MEDICAL
DIRECTOR'S
MESSAGE - P.1**

**COMBINED MENTAL
HEALTH &
ADDICTION
PROBLEMS - P.2**

**EFFICACY OF
TELEHEALTH - P.3**

**MEET OUR
SPECIALISTS - P.4**



“The rule is that mental illness and substance abuse co-occur. The ultimate treatment is an integrated approach”

DR ZELKO MUSTAC

COMBINED PROBLEMS OF ADDICTION AND MENTAL ILLNESS ARE THE EXPECTATION NOT THE EXCEPTION

BY DR ZELKO MUSTAC

Co-occurring mental disorder and addiction are so common that you should enquire in every patient for the other disorder.

In drug and alcohol services, 75% of drug use patients and 85% of alcohol patients reported the presence of mental illness in the past 12 months (Weaver et al., 2003). They most commonly suffered from anxiety and depression, followed by personality disorders (Weaver et al., 2003).

By way of an example, I recently saw a 45 year old lady who had repeatedly failed treatment for her alcohol use disorder. She had attended alcohol services which had detoxified her and provided counselling but failed to notice the pattern of excessive spending, promiscuity and irritability since adolescence. With careful review it emerged that she had a Bipolar 2 Disorder and treating her with mood stabilisers in addition to anti-craving medication for her alcohol use disorder resulted in prolonged sobriety.

In the community, those with co-occurring substance use problems were more likely to use services and be more impaired (Andrews et al., 2001). Interestingly, half of the community sample did not use any service, and the majority did not regard themselves as needing help (Andrews et al., 2001). The principal caregivers for most patients with co-occurring disorders were their GP (Andrews et al., 2001).

If the opportunity for effective treatment is missed long enough the patient develops cognitive damage that makes the addiction much more resistant to treatment.

Examining patients for co-occurring disorders is time-consuming and requires expertise. A review of the entire patient's psychiatric, substance use and medical history with corroborative information from the friends and relatives will result in the best treatment outcome. Engaging the patient in treatment by techniques such as motivational interviewing is useful to increase engagement in treatment.



EFFICACY OF TELEHEALTH

Mental health is one of the most applied areas within telehealth, with a significant number of studies looking to measure the efficacy of telemental health.

IN-PERSON OR VIDEO CONSULTATIONS?

A study in Spain (De Las Cuevas et al., 2006) compared psychiatric consultations held in-person or through video conferencing. Results from the study were positive, with significant improvements in both groups (522 in-person consultations; 534 video consultations) demonstrating the equivalence of telemental health intervention to in-person consultations.

VIDEO CONSULTATIONS ARE EFFECTIVE

Data from the Veterans Affairs in the United States have also indicated that telehealth initiatives have been extremely effective in providing care for veterans, with bed days being reduced by 56%, readmissions reduced by 32%, and total psychiatric admissions being decreased by 35%. Users have also indicated high levels of satisfaction, at 89%.



A recent literature review in 2016 by Bashshur et al. concluded telemental health has been particularly effective in:

1. Giving greater access to patients with limited local mental health resources.
2. Assisting populations with special needs, including the young, elderly, and minority populations.
3. Improving mental healthcare in primary care settings.
4. Treatment, especially for depression and anxiety disorders.
5. Improving outcomes for patients with comorbid medical conditions.

“Video consultations are as effective as in-person consultations”



Dr Mustac, Psychiatrist
 30+ years experience
 Currently The Sydney Clinic

General adult Psychiatry (including clozapine prescribing)
 Addiction and substance abuse
 Pain management
 ADHD including psychostimulant prescribing



Dr Marshall, Psychiatrist
 30+ years experience
 Currently private practice

General adult Psychiatry
 Post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma
 ADHD including psychostimulant prescribing



Dr Seth, Psychiatrist
 10+ years experience
 Currently NSW Health

General adolescent and adult Psychiatry
 Forensic Psychiatry
 Social & Rehabilitation Psychiatry



Dr Hughes, Psychiatrist
 10+ years experience
 Currently private practice

General adult Psychiatry
 Consultant Liaison Psychiatry
 Psychosomatic Psychiatry



Dr Khanna, Psychiatrist
 20+ years experience
 Currently St John of God Perth

General adult Psychiatry
 Geriatric Psychiatry
 Addiction and substance abuse



Dr Baron, Psychiatrist
 20+ years experience
 Currently private practice

General adult Psychiatry
 Veteran and Defence force health
 Individual, couples and family therapy



Dr Jankowiak, Psychiatrist
 10+ years experience
 Currently SA Health

General adult Psychiatry
 Veteran and Defence force health
 Post-traumatic stress disorder



Dr Goodyear, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
 10+ years experience
 Currently private practice

Mood and anxiety disorders
 Gender diversity and gender dysphoria
 Emotional and behavioural issues



Dr Kasiannan, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
 20+ years experience
 Currently private practice

General child, adolescent and family psychiatry
 Depression and anxiety in adults
 Post-traumatic stress disorder
 Autism Spectrum Disorders and developmental issues



Dr Bharadwaj, Geriatrician
 5+ years experience
 Currently public and private practice

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