

APS PSYCHOLOGY & SUBSTANCE USE INTEREST GROUP BULLETIN –JUNE 2017



Greetings PSU members—welcome to our 2nd Bulletin.

We would like to express our thanks to those who took the time to respond to our survey, and we have included the results as a separate attachment for your interest.

Along with links to a variety of articles and other items of AOD interest, this bulletin includes a media release in response to the Federal Budget by our committee member Lynne Magor-Blatch.

Professional Development:

<https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/content/2017-ndarc-annual-research-symposium>

Ask the Doctor – Alcohol: <http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/ask-the-doctor/DO1625V006S00>

You Can't Ask That – Ice Users: <http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/you-cant-ask-that/LE1617H007S00>

To varying degrees parts of our AOD sector could be better connected to needle and syringe programs and vice versa. Does everyone know about this very practical website?

Please share with colleagues and clients- such a handy way for people to stay on top of using clean equipment- should they be travelling around the country.

<http://www.aivl.org.au/nsp/>

Research Articles:

Is addiction a disease of the brain? Several weigh in here. Get in touch with Jackie (email- policy@atdc.org.au) if you can't and want to know how to access the articles. <https://link.springer.com/journal/12152/10/1/page/1>

[https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s12529-017-9664-1?](https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s12529-017-9664-1?author_access_token=ghEcErF2CeJ2NccaJNfyzve4RwiQNchNByi7wbcMAY7m-xuYLgsuhjY7gONwSuyXH8htVhcya3svxWIGLonWAVqraHXHbSbTBMQo1CAiLO8AVHDuNaMr7E8fLKsbhh56EESpNrF_pb0iy97Hu37qzA==)

[author_access_token=ghEcErF2CeJ2NccaJNfyzve4RwiQNchNByi7wbcMAY7m-](https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s12529-017-9664-1?author_access_token=ghEcErF2CeJ2NccaJNfyzve4RwiQNchNByi7wbcMAY7m-xuYLgsuhjY7gONwSuyXH8htVhcya3svxWIGLonWAVqraHXHbSbTBMQo1CAiLO8AVHDuNaMr7E8fLKsbhh56EESpNrF_pb0iy97Hu37qzA==)

[xuYLgsuhjY7gONwSuyXH8htVhcya3svxWIGLonWAVqraHXHbSbTBMQo1CAiLO8AVHDuNaMr7E8fLKsbhh56](https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s12529-017-9664-1?author_access_token=ghEcErF2CeJ2NccaJNfyzve4RwiQNchNByi7wbcMAY7m-xuYLgsuhjY7gONwSuyXH8htVhcya3svxWIGLonWAVqraHXHbSbTBMQo1CAiLO8AVHDuNaMr7E8fLKsbhh56EESpNrF_pb0iy97Hu37qzA==)

[EESpNrF_pb0iy97Hu37qzA==](https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s12529-017-9664-1?author_access_token=ghEcErF2CeJ2NccaJNfyzve4RwiQNchNByi7wbcMAY7m-xuYLgsuhjY7gONwSuyXH8htVhcya3svxWIGLonWAVqraHXHbSbTBMQo1CAiLO8AVHDuNaMr7E8fLKsbhh56EESpNrF_pb0iy97Hu37qzA==)

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/sb/sb003.html>

[https://theconversation.com/helping-drug-users-get-back-to-work-not-random-drug-testing-should-be-our-priority-](https://theconversation.com/helping-drug-users-get-back-to-work-not-random-drug-testing-should-be-our-priority-77468?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=facebookbutton)

[77468?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=facebookbutton](https://theconversation.com/helping-drug-users-get-back-to-work-not-random-drug-testing-should-be-our-priority-77468?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=facebookbutton)

News articles:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-23/opioid-based-painkiller-addiction-surgin-in-australia/8638980>

<https://theconversation.com/research-check-can-even-moderate-drinking-cause-brain-damage-79036>

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/support-users-dont-punish-them-exafp-boss-radical-ideas-to-beat-the-drug-trade-20170612-gwpt3i.html>

<https://theconversation.com/factcheck-qanda-are-rates-of-drug-use-2-5-times-higher-among-unemployed-people-than-employed-people-78993>

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/four-personality-traits-that-predict-teen-drug-and-alcohol-problems-20170605-gwl4m1.html>

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https://www.statnews.com/2017/05/31/mental-health-medicine/?s_campaign=sciamp&utm_content=buffer6e5e0&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

<https://www.statnews.com/2017/05/30/harm-reduction-health-care/>

<https://theconversation.com/three-charts-on-australias-changing-drug-and-alcohol-habits-78597>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/may/26/cocaine-more-addictive-than-first-thought-study-finds>

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/global-drug-survey-2017-finds-australians-are-the-biggest-bong-users-pay-most-for-cocaine-20170523-gwb2jd.html>

<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/does-our-shearing-industry-have-an-ice-problem/8552168>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/faces-of-addiction-recovery-canada-1.4131163>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/ativan-what-you-need-to-know-about-anxiety-pills-w483638>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-40000843>

An interesting article, but very important to employ your critical evaluation skills while reading. Although benzodiazepines may be efficacious used briefly (preferably no more than 2 weeks) in the early stages of addiction treatment, they easily take the place of the initial addiction and become a problem in their own right. It is hard to understand why prescribing doctors are not aware and in control of this. Furthermore, benzodiazepines are not anti-depressants... <http://thefreethoughtproject.com/chris-cornell-wife-fda-medication/>
<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/iceland-teen-substance-abuse/8208214>

This post from a medical blogger about chronic pain & addiction in response to a recent death of a patient from Rx opioids in the NT, acknowledges the role of psychologists ... <https://drjustincoleman.com/2017/05/11/pain-clinics/>
“It is difficult to find that small window of opportunity where the person struggling with addiction is stable and self-motivated to commence treatment. If a place is not found, this vital window is missed and the situation worsens.”
<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2017/05/social-sector-calls-drug-rehabilitation-punishment/>

MEDIA RELEASE

The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) joins other peak bodies and organisations in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) field calling on the Government to reconsider its decision regarding drug testing of welfare recipients, announced in this week’s budget.

Dr Lynne Magor-Blatch, Executive Officer of ATCA, said today, “The, “Don’t do drugs” response from the Prime Minister on Radio National on Wednesday, completely overlooks a number of vital issues. Many people who have become caught up in substance use are working hard to change their lives, and many are in this position because of a whole range of issues, some of which have been out of their control.”

Dr Magor-Blatch stated that, “Approximately 200,000 people receive AOD treatment annually in Australia, however it is estimated that as many as 200,000 – 500,000 more are seeking treatment and are unable to access it.”¹¹

The Minister for Social Services Hon Christian Porter, when questioned recently on the ABC RN Drive show, agreed that this would affect approximately 11,000 people annually – and that people would be expected to “take all reasonable steps” to address their drug problem. While he drew attention to the funds distributed through the Ice Taskforce and Primary Health Networks, he agreed that there may be a continuing shortage of residential rehabilitation beds. The scheme will therefore rely on counselling – suited for people who are at the less complex end of the spectrum, and services already in operation. There will be no new funding for AOD services – and particularly those that work with complex clients.”

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Members of ATCA provide quality evidence-based treatment programs through residential therapeutic communities, day programs, detoxification services and outclient services. However, while all ATCA members have received a guarantee of funding through to 2018, none have received indexation since 2013. This means, in real terms, that services have been reduced and services are at a point where they can no longer meet existing demand. This will be further impacted by drug testing welfare recipients who are unable to find a place in a treatment service.

Studies have clearly shown that for every \$1 invested in AOD treatment, society gains \$7 through reduced healthcare and legal costs – in fact ATCA has found that their services alone provide a savings to Governments of more than \$146,000 per person per annum.

“However, despite this evidence, this week’s budget represents the “big stick” approach without the “carrot” which would help people to get the help they need”, Dr Magor-Blatch stated.

While the drug testing measure announced in the Budget is purported to be accompanied by a suite of additional welfare reform measures aimed at coercing engagement with AOD treatment, including the “removal of exemptions due to drugs or alcohol abuse” and removal of eligibility for the Disability Support Pension, there is no increased funding in the budget for drug treatment.

“ATCA is working with families and individuals, and we see first-hand the stress these families are under, and the complete sense of helplessness often experienced when a family member cannot access the treatment they need. There is little point in identifying an AOD problem if there is no capacity to treat it. Drug testing welfare recipients will prove to be a costly but pointless exercise in this context if there is nowhere for people to go for treatment.

Instead of drug testing, this funding would have achieved a far better outcome for individuals and families if it had been put into treatment services”.

For further information: Dr Lynne Magor-Blatch, Executive Officer ATCA. Ph. 0422904040.



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