



# ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Enhancing the skills of General Practitioners in caring for young people  
from culturally diverse backgrounds

A RESOURCE KIT FOR GPs

**caah**  
the children's hospital at Westmead  
NSW Centre for the Advancement  
of Adolescent Health



**Transcultural Mental Health Centre**

In partnership with  
Northern Rivers Division of General Practice  
and  
Department of General Practice, The University of Sydney  
at Westmead Hospital

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David has devoted his career to the practice and promotion of *Adolescent Medicine*, both within Australia and internationally. Having pioneered comprehensive and creative models of care for adolescents and their families at both primary and secondary/tertiary levels, he now works actively to advance the health of young people via health professional training, applied research, networking and advocacy. David is the co-author, with Dr Leanne Rowe, of *What To Do When Your Children Turn Into Teenagers*.

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**This project was funded by the Transcultural  
Mental Health Centre.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the following whose contributions have been invaluable in writing this Kit:

**Jan Kang** – Coordinator, Policy and Program Development, Transcultural Mental Health Centre – for her overall support of this project and feedback on drafts of the Kit

**Dr Rob Trigger** – for his ongoing support and practical contributions to the Kit

**Ken Yap**, Administrative Officer, NSW CAAH – for her tireless administrative support

**Dr Leanne Rowe** – for her contribution to the section *Using the New Medicare Item Numbers* (Chapter 13)

**Verity Newnham**, National Coordinator, National Divisions Youth Alliance – for writing the section on *Using the New Medicare Item Numbers* (Chapter 13)

**Abd Malak**, Director, Transcultural Mental Health Centre, for his support of this project.

**Vanessa D’Souza**, Adolescent Mental Health Project Officer, Transcultural Mental Health Centre, for her feedback on drafts of the Kit

**Debbie Draybi**, School-Link Project Officer, for her feedback on drafts of the Kit

**Christine Senediak**, Senior Project Officer, NSW Institute of Psychiatry, for her feedback on drafts of the Kit, particularly case scenarios and their cross cultural content

**Marieline Perrine-Chown**, Project Officer, who conducted the preliminary research and writing for this project at Northern Rivers Division of General Practice

**Professor Tim Usherwood**, for support provided by his Department to this project

**Rebecca Kang**, Senior Legal Officer, NSW Law Reform Commission, for her feedback on the section on medicolegal issues (Chapter 6).

**Anita Mansfield**, Project Officer, Youth Health, Northern Rivers Division of General Practice – for conducting field testing of the Kit with GPs

**Kate Weston**, Youth Health Worker, Nepean Division of General Practice – for conducting field testing of the Kit with GPs

**Stan Adamson**, Genotropin Manager, Pfizer Australia – for kindly supplying copies of the Tanner growth charts for inclusion in each Kit

**The Board of Northern Rivers Division of General Practice** – for their ongoing support of this project.

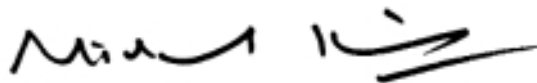
**GPs** from Nepean and Northern Rivers Divisions of General Practice – who participated in the field testing of the Kit.

**Soren Hjorth of Graphiti-design** – for his patience and creativity in the design of this manual.

*Peter Chown and Melissa Kang*

“Adolescent Health: A Resource Kit for General Practitioners” provides a comprehensive guide encompassing all aspects of this complex area of primary health care. The biological, psychological and social factors impacting upon adolescent health are outlined with a focus on those critical issues that arise in our clinical work as general practitioners. Practical approaches, such as creating a youth friendly practice, managing common health problems and developing productive therapeutic relationships with young people, are all explored within the context of the busy daily world of general practice.

Special sections on cultural issues for young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, substance use, sexuality, and chronic health problems, all within the context of general practice, make this comprehensive guide invaluable for general practitioners working with young people.



**Professor Michael Kidd**

President

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

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The National Division Youth Alliance (NDYA), managed under the auspice of the Australian Divisions of General Practice, works with a number of stakeholders to support Divisions of General Practice in improving access and health outcomes for young Australians.

Young people are reluctant consumers of general practice services, are often unaware of the availability and types of services, experience difficulties with paying and transport and often defer health seeking until they are in crisis.

Being youth-friendly is much more than having a few trendy posters on the surgery wall and smiling reception staff. A young person’s initial contact with general practice is critical in developing confidence and health management skills as well as establishing future patterns of health service utilisation.

Given all the evidence about the barriers faced by young people accessing primary care services and the learning needs expressed by GPs, this kit is a very welcome addition to support the work being carried out by NDYA and Divisions around the country.

The kit provides a comprehensive, quality and accessible training resource for GPs and Registrars covering indicator of ‘youth-friendly’ practice and the use of Medicare item numbers for young people, in addition to education on communication strategies and clinical issues.

The NDYA has been pleased to be involved with the development of this resource and endorses its use by GPs and the Divisions network.



**Dr George Cerchez**

Chair

National Division Youth Alliance – GPs Working with Young People Australian  
Divisions of General Practice.

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# GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH ADOLESCENTS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

This Kit is a practical guide to providing health care to adolescents in general practice. It identifies strategies and practical steps that GPs can take:

- for engaging and communicating effectively with adolescent patients
- for understanding the social and cultural diversity of adolescents
- for assessing young peoples' health risks
- for management and follow-up of adolescent health problems
- for making medical practices 'youth-friendly' and accessible to young people

Adolescent health problems are often complex and require a comprehensive, biopsychosocial approach. This Kit outlines the skills needed for working with the young person and their family, while addressing the developmental, cultural and environmental factors that influence their health status.

**The Kit is divided into four sections:**

### *Section One: Understanding Adolescents* –

provides an overview of:

- major health problems affecting young people
- adolescent developmental issues
- cultural diversity and the impact of culture on adolescent development
- barriers that young people face in obtaining appropriate health care

### *Section Two: Skills for Youth Friendly General Practice* –

provides strategies and skills for engaging and communicating with adolescents, with guidelines for:

- establishing a trusting relationship with young people
- conducting a psychosocial risk assessment
- understanding medicolegal issues
- cultural sensitivity in dealing with adolescent patients
- providing health education to reduce risk behaviours
- managing key adolescent health problems
- collaborative case management

### *Section Three: Creating a Youth Friendly General Practice* –

describes practical approaches for:

- creating a youth friendly and culturally sensitive practice
- improving young peoples' access to GPs.

### *Section Four: Youth Health Resources and Contacts* –

provides information on:

- youth health services
- resource and education materials
- useful websites and other contact information

**Each chapter in the Kit begins with a 'Flashcard' which summarises the key practice points for that particular chapter.**

