Working with the Department of Veterans Affairs and GPs to develop an Australian Defence Force Post-discharge GP Health Assessment

Funded by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs
Background

- From 1 July 2014, a new target group that includes former ADF members has been added to the Medicare Benefits Schedule for use by GPs for Health Assessments.
- The Discipline of General Practice at Flinders University has worked closely with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) to develop and trial a screening instrument.
Health assessments in general practice

There are four levels of reimbursement for health assessments:

✓ MBS item 701 (brief) = 15-30 mins
✓ MBS item 703 (standard) = 30-45 mins
✓ MBS item 705 (long) = 45-60 mins
✓ MBS item 707 (prolonged) = 60+ mins
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Frequency of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A health assessment for people aged 45-49 years (inclusive) who are at risk of developing chronic disease</td>
<td>Once only to an eligible patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A health assessment for people aged 75 years and older</td>
<td>Provided annually to an eligible patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people aged 55 years and over</td>
<td>Provided annually to an eligible patient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A health assessment for a former serving member of the Australian Defence Force is an assessment of:

(a) a patient's physical and psychological health and social function; and

(b) whether health care, education and other assistance should be offered to the patient to improve their physical, psychological health or social function.
Purpose of the health assessment

1. Identify risk of disease or disorder associated with prior military service for contemporary veteran cohort
2. Provide general “health check-up” for this group
3. Promote establishment of care with a GP and discussion of health issues
4. Enable GPs to refer former ADF members to specialist services, if required, in a timely manner
Steps in Development

1. Literature Review
2. Consultation
3. Develop Draft Tool
4. Test In General Practice
5. Integrate into GP Software Vendors
Literature Review

Consultation

Develop Draft Tool

Test In General Practice

Integrate into GP Software Vendors
• 2010 ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study
• The Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) Health Study: Census Study
• Longitudinal studies – Millennium Cohort Study (US) and cohort studies by King’s College (UK)
• Validated measures, including those used in military screens
Literature Review

• Mental Health Advice Book for treating veterans with common mental health problems
• RACGP Guidelines for Preventive Activities in General Practice (“Red Book”)
• Evidence syntheses, including US Preventive Services Task Force
• US Veterans’ Affairs Clinical Practice Guidelines
Stakeholders

• Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
• DVA personnel
• Joint Health Command, Department of Defence
• Ex-service organisations (e.g. Legacy)
• Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
• Australian Medical Association
• GPs and practice nurses
• ‘Best Practice’ and ‘Medical Director’ software firms
Stakeholder Feedback - Competing Priorities

Validated tools / different time frames

Face-to-face / self-completion

Open / closed questions

Acceptable to former ADF

Acceptable to GPs

Opportunistic / planned

Brief / comprehensive
Health Domains

• ADF history
• Social history
• Medical conditions and medications
• Post-military physical and mental health
• Behavioural risk factors
• Basic physical examination
Developing a ‘letter writer’ template

• We chose to include information from the clinical database, where it exists.
• This changes the flow of the consultation.
• Drop-down responses save time
• Wording of questions required truncation
• More complex than initially anticipated
• Settled on a combination of start-up prompts and word document
Literature Review → Consultation → Develop Draft Tool → Test In General Practice → Integrate into GP Software
Testing in 4 General Practices

• Observation of the screen being administered by GPs and practice nurses using simulated patient case scenarios
• Testing included 6 GPs
• Semi-structured interviews with GPs and practice nurses post-assessment
## Time to administer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case scenario</th>
<th>No. of trials</th>
<th>Delivery model</th>
<th>PN minutes</th>
<th>GP minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>GP</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>GP</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Practice Nurse/GP</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across the 6 trials, the average consultation time was 38.8 minutes.
Feedback from general practice

• Content
  – Generally very satisfied
  – Add depth to mental health assessment
  – More about relationships and wellbeing

• Ease of use
  – Consider ‘drop down lists’ for problems, recommendations and referrals
Modifications to template

• Sequencing
• GP preference to have everything in ‘start-up’ (data entry) fields
• Ability to write notes
• Include problem list / recommendations / referrals in template
Integrate into GP Software

Test In General Practice

Develop Draft Tool

Consultation

Literature Review
The health assessment process

1. Post-ADF Person Seeks Assessment
2. GP Determines Eligibility and Completes Assessment
3. Follow up as needed

Lead. Inspire.
The health assessment process

Post-ADF Person Seeks Assessment

GP Determines Eligibility and Completes Assessment

Follow up as needed

Lead. Inspire.
Record ADF Service in the Family/Social History tab
ADF service options and eligibility

- Never served
- Current ADF – Permanent Member
- Current ADF – Reserves
- Past ADF – Permanent OR Reserves
- Unknown
ADF Service is reflected in the Occupation field on the Clinical Window.
The following preventive health suggestions have been identified for this patient:

- A weight has not been recorded in MD for over a year!
- A Blood Pressure reading has not been recorded in MD for over a year!
- A pap smear has not been recorded in MD for over 2 years!

**Patient served in Australian Defence Force: consider ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment.**

Influenza vaccination is recommended!
Current Status

• Post ADF GP Health Assessment able to performed now and be reimbursed
• The template provided will assure all criteria for this assessment has been met
• Discussions ongoing about module or wizard development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Template name</th>
<th>All us...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aclasta Infusion Management Service</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health Referral - Chronic &amp; Complex</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asthma Action Plan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSI Health Assessment, 15-54</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI Health Assessment, 55+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI Health Assessment, Child</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS GOV Hearing Services Medical Certificate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Hearing - Medical Certificate Referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Hearing referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowel Cancer Screening Program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Plan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Conference</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CentreLink Medical Certificate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Medical Assessment 712</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Hearing Referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing care referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS Sleep Services referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTG - Patient withdraw consent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTG Registration and Consent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS Referral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment:![ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment](image)

Lead. Inspire.
All former serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) can access a comprehensive health assessment from their GP.

This assessment is available to all former serving members of either the permanent or reserve forces. It is funded under the health assessment items 701, 703, 705 and 707 on the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

A key objective is to help GPs identify and diagnose the early onset of physical and/or mental health problems among former serving ADF members. In supporting this, DVA has funded the development of a specifically designed screening tool.

This tool includes screening tools for alcohol use, substance use, posttraumatic stress disorder and psychological distress, as well as information on how to access other DVA services that their patient may be eligible for.

The following PDF version of the tool can be downloaded. Alternatively, GPs who have access to Best Practice or Medical Director practice management software can access the tool from within the those packages.
What we learned

• Stakeholder consultation has led to a better health assessment instrument
• Field testing has led to a better template
• There have been compromises at each stage
• Biggest challenge – getting former ADF members to request and GPs to do assessment
Acknowledgements

• GPs and practice nurses who assisted with testing
• Stakeholders who gave us their feedback
• Software vendors who assisted us
• The Department of Veterans Affairs
Questions?
ADF History

• What service? When did you serve?
• What field of work were you in during your time in the ADF?
• How many times have you deployed?
• Was your decision to leave the ADF voluntary or non-voluntary?
• Are you receiving any support or treatment relating to your military service?
Pain / hearing

- How much bodily pain have you had during the PAST MONTH (‘usual’ pain)?
- Do you have difficulty with your hearing or ringing in your ears?
Sleep

- Do you have difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep?
• Are you married, or in a relationship?
• Do you have children?
• Are you currently working? If yes, what is your occupation?
Medical conditions/medications

- What are your current medical conditions?
- Do you take any prescribed or over the counter medications?
Smoking

• How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

• Are you interested in quitting?
Alcohol use

• How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

• How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

• How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?
Other substances

• In the past year, how often have you used illicit drugs? If yes, which drugs?

• Does the use of alcohol or drugs cause any problems in your life? (friends, family, money, other)

• If yes, would you like some assistance in managing this issue?
Physical activity / examination

- How many times a week do you usually do
  - 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity?
- BMI, waist circumference, BP
- Has your weight changed (loss or gain) in the last year?
Psychological distress (K10)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel:

- tired out for no good reason?
- nervous?
- so nervous that nothing could calm you down?
- hopeless?
- restless or fidgety?
- so restless you could not sit still?
- depressed?
- that everything was an effort?
- so sad that nothing could cheer you up?
- worthless
In your life, have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that, in the PAST MONTH, you:

- Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?
- Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that remind you of it?
- Were constantly on guard, watchful or easily startled?
- Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?
Sexual health / anger

• Are you concerned about your sexual health?

• Over the PAST MONTH have you had thoughts or concerns that you might hurt or lose control with someone?
Risk of harm to self or others

• Are there times when things seem so hopeless that you have thought about:
  – Killing yourself or harming yourself in some way?
  – Ending the lives of others around you?

{added PAST MONTH}