

Appendix 10 Process used in the development of the guidelines

For each of the past three years the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability has identified mental health services as one of the top priorities for new funding and development. In its annual report, '1995/96 Core Services' (published in September 1994) the Committee noted that developments to date had focused on the 3% of the population with the most serious mental health disorders, especially those receiving treatment under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act, 1992. The Committee considered that further work should be directed at an additional 5% of the population who have chronic mental health disorders but who are unlikely to gain access to the existing specialist mental health services. The Committee identified Major Depressive Disorder as the most prevalent mental health disorder and one that could appropriately be treated by primary health workers given adequate information and some changes to funding/purchasing arrangements.

These guidelines were developed using the following process:

- identification of existing best practice guidelines for the treatment of Major Depressive Disorder.
- a search of the international literature for the period 1993 to present (the assumption was made that the clinical practice guidelines produced by the United States Agency for Health Care Policy and Research had adequately reviewed the literature up to 1993). The New Zealand literature of Major Depressive Disorder was also identified.
- selection of a working party (members listed in Appendix 11) that would represent the various sectors: consumers, treatment agencies, professional groups and Maori. The working party then used the following process to draft the guidelines:
 - identified the audience for the guidelines (all health workers in the primary sector)
 - selected assessment tools and criteria for access to certain treatments
 - determined the outline of the guidelines
 - invited contributors for sections where the working party considered it did not have specific expertise
- circulation of draft guidelines to 200 - 300 individuals and groups requesting comment
- annotation of comments from the submissions into the document
- consulting mental health professionals in the form of an open hearing (ie members of the public were invited to observe) on the issue of which groups of therapists are able to provide appropriate interventions for the treatment of depression. The hearing was held before three members of the National Health Committee, and Professor Andrew Hornblow, who acted as an independent adviser. Representatives of six professional therapeutic bodies gave presentations at the hearing. Following this, a group of discussants (including GPs, a social worker, two practice nurses, a consumer advocate and community representative) were invited to debate the issues with the presenters. The working party was available to give comment on the guidelines and the reasoning for the recommendations made
- review and update of the guidelines to reflect feedback from the submissions and the hearing process.

The finalised guidelines were submitted to the National Health Committee for approval on 27 February 1996. The Committee endorsed the guidelines and recommended that the Minister of Health adopt them as the basis for purchasing treatment for depression in the primary health sector.