



# PRACTICE NEWSLETTER NO.2

## Mental Health:

We are extremely concerned to read the front page headlines in the ChCh Press of February 28th "Antidepressants don't work". Although the article made some valid points, and quoted sound scientific sources, it was unbalanced to the point of being dangerous, in our opinion.

We are concerned patients may discontinue antidepressants and antipsychotics on the basis of it, without any discussion with their GP, psychiatrist or mental health team.

We encourage all patients to talk to us directly if they have any concerns about the safety or effectiveness of a medication. If patients are fully informed and want to discontinue medication, we can provide safe withdrawal plans.

We also have written resources such as "A guide to reducing or stopping mental health medication" produced by the organisation Matua Raki. A useful electronic resource is an app. for smartphone or computer called "Thinkladder". The idea behind the name is a tool to climb your way back to mental health with cognitive behavioural therapy.

At a total cost of \$5 this is very affordable therapy. It also works preventively which, given the current state of New Zealand's mental health and suicide rate, is clearly important.



## Medical Staff changes:

Dr Alannah Stockwell is taking six months maternity leave from Mid-April. Locum cover will be provided by Dr Ed Johnson, who is already working for us. Ed is an experienced doctor, now living in Nelson with his wife and two boys. Patients who have seen Ed have been very positive about his approach to their problems.

## Shingles Vaccine:

From 1st April any patient aged between 65 and 80 inclusive is eligible for a fully-funded shingles vaccine. This can be administered at the same time as the flu vaccine, but a longer appointment is required (15 minutes rather than 5 minutes). The wait time following injection remains the same.

## Home Insulation:

Autumn is a good time to start thinking about winter warmth and healthy homes especially as there are grants available until the end of June 2018.

There are grants of 50% and 80% of the total cost of insulation.

To qualify for the 50% grant the home has to be built before 2000 and the named tenant or homeowner must have a community services card. To qualify for the 80% grant there are additional criteria. These are: having a chronic medical condition worsened by cold or having one or one or more children under the age of five living in the house.

Referrals can be made through the practice. If you think you are eligible contact [sharon@nelsonfamilymedicine.co.nz](mailto:sharon@nelsonfamilymedicine.co.nz) to arrange this. Also contact Sharon if you have any other questions or comments on the content of this newsletter.