



July 2008

**Submission from the Dietitians Association of Australia
The Draft Guidelines on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) commends the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) on preparing evidence based guidelines to aid health professionals to improve assessment, treatment and care of people with ADHD in Australia.

DAA is the National Association of the nutrition and dietetic profession and is a leader in nutrition and advocates for better food, better health, and better living for all. DAA represents over 3500 members. DAA members working in the area of food allergy and intolerance contributed to the development of this submission.

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Recommendation

To include a recommendation in the RACP guidelines regarding the importance of Accredited Practising Dietitians in the dietary treatment of ADHD. For example, on page 154 (and xxii) replacing “ If a special diet is instituted, it should be under the careful supervision of a health professional. “ with “Diet can play a role in ADHD and referral to an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) will assist families who have decided to evaluate the role of diet in their child’s behaviour.”

Background

There is a lack of well designed studies looking at dietary management of ADHD. However, diet can play a role in ADHD and referral to an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) will assist families who have decided to evaluate the role of diet in their child’s behaviour.

Many families do attempt dietary modification for the treatment of ADHD and some of the common dietary approaches to diet and ADHD suggest limiting core foods. This approach is a risk without adequate supervision. An APD is well placed to supervise families with dietary changes.

DAA supports the recent editorial¹ in the British Medical Journal, May 2008 issue, volume 336, of by Professor Andrew Kemp, entitled *Food additives and hyperactivity: Evidence supports a trial period of eliminating colourings and preservatives from the diet*. This editorial discusses the recent evidence provided by McCann et al², and meta-analysis by Schabb and Trinh³.

Who are APDs?

APDs are recognised professionals with the qualifications and skills to provide expert nutrition and dietary advice. APDs are qualified to advise individuals and groups on nutrition related matters. They also have clinical training to modify diets to treat conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancers, gastro-intestinal diseases, food allergies and intolerances and overweight and obesity. APDs have sound university qualifications accredited by DAA, undertake ongoing training and education and comply with the Associations guidelines for best practice. They are committed to the DAA Code of Professional Conduct and Statement of Ethical Practice, and to providing quality service.

APD is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. It is a recognised trademark protected by law.

Consumers can find APDs in their area by using the 'Find an APD' search function on the DAA website, www.daa.asn.au or calling 1800 812 942

References

1. Kemp, A. 'Food additives and hyperactivity: Evidence supports a trial period of eliminating colourings and preservatives from the diet' *British Medical Journal*, May 2008; 336:1144.
2. McCann, D., Barrett, C., Cooper, A., Dalen, L. and Grimshaw, K. et al Food additives and hyperactive behaviour in 3-year-old and 8/9-year-old children in the community; a randomised, double blinded, placebo controlled trial. *Lancet* 2007; 370:1560-7.
3. Schabb, D.W. and Trinh, N.T. Do Artificial Food Colors Promote Hyperactivity in Children with Hyperactive Syndromes? A Meta-Analysis of Double Blind Placebo-Controlled Trials. *Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics*, 2004; 25:423-434.