

Reviewer's report

Title: Utilisation of podiatry services in Australia under the Medicare Enhanced Primary Care program, 2004-2008

Version: 1 **Date:** 10 August 2009

Reviewer: Susan Nancarrow

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper, and raises a number of additional questions (for further research). It would be interesting to know whether other similar papers have been produced for other AHP audiences.

Minor essential revisions:

1. It is a little unclear in Figure One whether the amount of money paid to the AHP comes from the GP fee (ie as a sort of GP fundholding model), or is in addition to the GP money, and paid directly to the AHP. I suspect it's the latter, however people working within a GP fundholding model may get confused and it would be useful to clarify this point.

Discretionary revisions:

2. It would be valuable to see how the EPC fee compares with the 'average' or recommended podiatry fee or range of fees if this information is available (particularly for international audiences).

3. The results show overwhelming demand for podiatry services in comparison with other, possibly more common AHPs – it would be interesting to make some comparison about the size of pod demand vs the size of the profession – ie is it the 2nd largest AHP group after physio in Aus?

4. Could the differences in rates of useage in each state reflect the accessibility of public podiatry in those areas (as opposed to the size of the profession in each state, which is covered)? Is it possible that the public system absorbs some of the demand (eg in places like ACT). Are there also demographic differences in state / territory populations which would account for differences in state useage (age / ethnicity)?

5. Given the high demand for pod services is there a policy statement that could be made here about increasing access to these services outside the remit of the GP as gatekeeper – ie need for more public podiatry services, particularly as it seems that the case mgt function / team working aspects of the EPC model are not necessarily working well.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.