

Australian and New Zealand Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Persistent Post Concussion Symptoms in adults and children

Public consultation paper

Project summary

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)/concussion is an important health care issue with an estimated 150,000-180,000 number of cases per year in Australia although clear data is not available as many people do not receive treatment¹. New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) estimates 33,000 cases of mTBI/concussion in NZ each year.

While many people recover quickly and uneventfully, a significant proportion of children and adults have ongoing symptoms that significantly impair function and quality of life.

Management of mTBI/concussion is highly variable. Assessment and treatment vary depending on the health professional, geographic region, and resources available.

The aim of the guideline is to standardise care for all mTBI/concussion patients across Australia and New Zealand. We anticipate this will improve outcomes, limit the impact of persisting symptoms and reduce inequality in healthcare of mTBI/concussion patients.

A multidisciplinary Guideline Development Group (GDG), led by Paediatric Neurologist, Professor Karen Barlow, have developed the first mTBI/concussion guideline that aims to meet the needs of all Australians and New Zealanders of any age who suffer a concussion in any setting.

The GDG included a range of healthcare professionals from across many states and territories of AUS and NZ who treat mTBI patients. A Consumer group was also consulted to advise on current practices and to highlight where improvements could be made.

Due to the vast scope of the project, a traditional guideline development approach was not feasible. Instead, a meta-analysis of current guidelines was taken. Current, relevant source guidelines were chosen, the literature reviewed, and recommendations were adopted or adapted from the source guidelines or new recommendations created.

146 Recommendations and Practice Points have been chosen to form the mTBI/concussion guideline which has been produced for healthcare practitioners involved in managing people of all ages with mTBI/concussion.

Consultation process and aims

Stakeholders from both Australia and New Zealand are welcome to review the guideline and provide feedback within a 30-day period. We welcome submissions from medical groups, relevant organisations, and individuals.

The GDG will consider feedback from this consultation process and may revise this document before publishing.

This is a focused consultation process, where we are asking you to respond to 8 questions. Some questions are designed for medical professionals, others are welcoming feedback from all respondents.

All survey information will be collected, assessed, and published.

We can accept submissions made in confidence.

Initial questions:

Are you making a submission as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

- Individual

Name:

Email:

- Organisation

Your name:

Your organisation:

Contact email:

If you are making a submission as an individual, are you a:

- Allied healthcare practitioner

What is your profession?

- Consumer/patient
- Other

Do you give permission for your details to be made available to the public?

- Yes, with my name or organisation.
- Yes, without my name or organisation.
- No, do not publish my submission.

Please provide responses to the following questions:

1. Do you think this guideline will improve the healthcare of people with mTBI/concussion? Why/why not?
2. Is the guideline easy and clear to read and understand?
3. Is the guideline practical and easy to navigate? Would you use the guideline?
4. Is it clear what the roles and responsibilities of each healthcare professional are?
5. Any comments regarding 'Return to work/school'.
6. Any comments regarding 'Return to sport' and the minimum time away from sport?
7. Any specific changes to wording of recommendations? Why?
8. Have and major topics been omitted?

Please send responses to:

Stephanie.macdonald@uq.edu.au by the 18th of May 2024

References

¹ A retrospective analysis of concussion and post-concussional syndrome diagnoses in Western Australian emergency departments; E Thomas, H Chih, J Thorne, M Fitzgerald, G Cowen; Injury Volume 55, Issue 3, March 2024, 111333
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S002013832400024X>