



31 August 2023

Hayley Burgess
Senior Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Support Services
65 Kavanagh Street
Southbank VIC 3006

cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner's Registrar Burgess

Re: Court ref: COR 2017 001923

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) thanks the Coroners Court of Victoria for the original letter 24 June regarding the Investigation into the death of Ora Holt. Please also refer to attached email communication received from Melissa Lancuba dated 31 May 2023 confirming an extension for a response to 31 August 2023.

Requested responses to the following recommendations:

96. *Most GPs would never see a patient with delusional disorder so the focus of this recommendation is on the index of suspicion for violence, so that GP's may notice a trigger that makes them think of potential family violence, for example, indications of surveillance.*
97. *The Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) 2008 Abuse and violence, Working with our patients in general practice advises GPs about an index of suspicion on which to clinically assess the reports of a person who may or may not be a perpetrator of family violence. However, there are no examples of what a GP would include or exclude in making such a clinical judgement. There is also an assumption that all GP's are equally knowledgeable and skilled in understanding the concept and application of an index of suspicion. An example of such a tool provided as part of the document is the Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI), but there is no equivalent or comparable tool available for GPs specific to family violence perpetrators.*
98. *I therefore **recommend** that the RACGP should review the currency of the 2008 Abuse and violence, Working with our patients in general practice guiding document and documents that reference it. After development of the above document, the RACGP should work with Primary Health Networks and local family violence hubs to provide awareness and education for members.*
99. *The RACGP should also develop guidance and examples of an index of suspicion for general practitioners who are working with potential perpetrators of family violence.*

RACGP Response pursuant to section 72(2) of the Act:

The RACGP White Book was updated in November 2021. Updated information on current services and risk assessment tools are available within the relevant chapters. This release of the updated [White Book](#), has been [communicated to all RACGP members](#).

Specific guidance on [identifying, risk assessment and responding to victim survivors of intimate partner violence](#) is discussed in Chapters 2–4 of *The White Book*, and on [child abuse and neglect](#) and [men who use intimate partner abuse and violence](#) is also included in the update.

A supplementary chapter for primary care providers in Victoria has also been developed <https://www.racgp.org.au/the-racgp/faculties/victorian-white-book-chapter/introduction> which incorporates the following new information sharing schemes and framework that GPs are now included in:

- Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)
- Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).
- The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework, provides a system-wide approach to support services to effectively identify, assess and manage family violence risk.

The RACGP has long recognised that training in family violence is an important component of general practice. An effective general practice family violence response requires a complex mixture of communication and diagnostic skills, combined with a knowledge of legal, public health and support services and a focus on the safety of the patient across a diverse range of practice settings. General practice education and training is therefore an outcomes-focused, competency-based model, rather than one of compliance.

All of these areas of competencies are embedded within the core skills of the [RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice](#). This can be affirmed by a review of our curriculum and using the search term 'family violence'. Also, part of the RACGP Curriculum is a specific unit on abuse and violence.

In Victoria the RACGP's commitment to addressing domestic and family violence is demonstrated through the successful delivery of the Victorian Department of Health funded [Family Violence GP Education Program](#) since March 2022 with 170 practitioners successfully completing the program, with another 29 in progress.

The program's e-Learning modules include Identifying and responding to family violence, Multiagency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and Information Sharing Schemes and Assessment. Through a Peer Group Learning modality additional education is delivered that includes Safety and Risk Management, People who use family violence, Legislation and GP Self-Care. Through this program RACGP Victoria has developed a range of [supporting resources for GPs](#) including a series of [Family and Domestic Abuse on-demand webinars](#) for members.

RACGP Victoria has recently worked collaboratively with the Safer Families Centre, The University of Melbourne, through the recent MARAM and Information Sharing project working together to develop the online Victorian resource on risk assessment and information sharing located on the RACGP Victoria website including the Victorian-specific chapter of the RACGP Abuse and Violence - Working with our patients in general practice (the White Book). This was a coordinated effort in developing and promoting training and resources for GPs to better navigate information sharing and MARAM for addressing domestic and family violence.

The RACGP is running a series of webinars to educate GPs and promote the use of the [Abuse and violence - Working with our patients in general practice](#) guideline in partnership with the Safer Families Centre. We have run 7 webinars to date and are planning run 5 more before the end of June 2024.



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We hope that this information is useful. If you have any further questions about the above, please contact RACGP Victoria State Manager Kon Kakris via kon.kakris@racgp.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anita Muñoz
Chair, Victoria Faculty