



5th October 2018

Submission to the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport. Inquiry into and report on sleep health awareness in Australia.

1. The potential and known causes, impacts and costs (economic and social) of inadequate sleep and sleep disorders on the community;

There is a great need to educate Australians on sleep disorder risks, the negative impact of poor lifestyle choices, the positive impact of lifestyle changes, mental health and chronic illness risks associated with poor sleep and sleep disorders. Education on what sleep deprivation is, what it does to the body (and mind), the dangers of drowsy driving. Also, what excessive daytime sleepiness is what causes it and what can be done to safely improve daytime alertness. Sleep Disorders Australia and Hypersomnolence Australia have been working on programs to increase public awareness and education and would like to be considered for Government funding to expand and continue these projects.

2. Access to, support and treatment available for individuals experiencing inadequate sleep and sleep disorders, including those who are: children and adolescents, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, living in rural, regional and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;

Access to appropriate support and treatment is lacking across Australia. This is a State and Federal issue. For example, South Australia's new Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) does not have any inpatient sleep diagnostic facility. Whilst less complex cases could be managed in private facilities, having the expertise and resources to manage complex patients is essential for a hospital such as RAH. The lack of private facilities is also an issue. Every state in Australia has a lack of public sleep diagnostic facilities particularly outside of major cities. This naturally makes it difficult for people living in rural, regional and remote areas. Support post diagnosis is also difficult across Australia. Sleep Disorders Australia is Australia's only sleep disorder organisation. The expectations placed on us and Hypersomnolence Australia by our members and also the general public to provide support for people diagnosed with sleep disorders is enormous. We are a not for profit charity that relies on membership and simple fundraising activities to help fund our programs. We would like to do more however without government funding we are restricted in what we can achieve. We would like to expand our reach particularly in Queensland where the majority of people actually live outside the capital city of Brisbane and the Northern Territory where at present we struggle to provide any services.

3. Education, training and professional development available to healthcare workers in the diagnosis, treatment and management of individuals experiencing inadequate sleep and sleep disorders;

Very little time is dedicated to sleep in general during medical training much less sleep disorders. On average, the amount of time spent on sleep education (sleep in general, not sleep disorders) is just under 2.5 hrs during an entire 4 year medical degree. Even during sleep specialty training, hours in non-respiratory sleep disorders are limited. The Royal Australasian College of Physicians acknowledges the limitations in their training in the 'Sleep Medicine Advanced Training Curriculum', "There are too few training posts in Australia and New Zealand that can provide broad exposure to and quality training in, the whole range of sleep disorders, particularly non-respiratory sleep disorders'. This contributes significantly to the misdiagnosis of sleep disorders of hypersomnolence and narcolepsy and sorely needs attention.

4. Workplace awareness, practices and assistance available to those who may be impacted by inadequate sleep or sleep disorders, with a focus on: rostering practices for shift workers, heavy-work requirements, and the transport industry as compared to international best practice; and

Education and awareness programs need to be established. We would like to work with the Australasian Sleep Association, the Alertness, Safety and Productivity CRC and other stakeholders to develop and implement education and awareness programs that will address these issues.

5. Current national research and investment into sleep health and sleeping disorders.

We request the Federal Government to provide funds to the NHMRC for a Targeted Call for Research (TCR) into improving sleep health and improving diagnosis, treatment and understanding of sleep disorders (similar to recent dementia funding).

Sleep Disorders Australia (SDA) and Hypersomnolence Australia (HA) have been working within our budget to address some of the issues raised above however with limited funding we are heavily restricted in what we can achieve. We would like to be considered for funding to continue our programs and to also extend them, particularly with regards to patient and community education and awareness. SDA is Australia's only sleep disorder organisation and HA is Australia's leading organisation that represents disorders of hypersomnolence. We are in an ideal position to develop and implement programs that will result in positive outcomes for the many Australian's that are affected by sleep disorders and poor sleep health.

Kind regards

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