

GP Connect

Keeping GPs informed in the changing primary health landscape



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Protracted bacterial bronchitis in children

By Prof. Andre Schultz, Paediatric Respiratory Physician at Perth Children's Hospital, Honorary Research Fellow at Telethon Kids Institute, and Clinical Professor, Division of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine at UWA

**First published in September 2019 this 2023 edition includes new information and resources.*

Protracted bacterial bronchitis (PBB) is highly prevalent in Aboriginal children and yet under recognised and under treated. Clinicians often don't recognise that a wet sounding cough in a child for more than four weeks likely reflects a serious problem, even in the absence of any other clinical symptoms or signs such as vomiting or fever. Australian research suggests a substantial proportion of children with chronic wet cough will have PBB. If left untreated, it can reduce quality of life and lead to permanent lung damage/bronchiectasis.

How is PBB diagnosed? If children are old enough to expectorate (typically after six or seven years of age), a sputum sample can be sent for microscopy and culture. The typical culprit in PBB is non-typeable haemophilus influenzae. However, in younger children who are unable to expectorate sputum, a pragmatic approach is required.

Firstly, exclude conditions that are not PBB (i.e. asthma, recurrent milk aspiration, foreign body aspiration and tuberculosis). Asthma causes chronic wet cough in approximately five per cent of cases but is usually associated with recurrent episodes of wheeze and shortness of breath.



Recurrent milk aspiration typically presents as coughing and/or choking with feeds from early infancy. Aspiration can be caused by dysphagia, laryngeal clefts or trachea-oesophageal fistulas. Think of foreign body aspiration in children if respiratory symptoms clearly started after a choking episode. Remember, parents are unlikely to volunteer information about a choking episode that occurred in the past unless specifically asked about it.

Physical examination is important. Normal examination does not rule out PBB. Check weight and height to rule out failure to thrive. Look for digital clubbing that would suggest serious underlying disease. Chest asymmetry or asymmetrical breath sounds (like crepitations) can also indicate chronic disease, particularly if the asymmetry does not resolve.

Most children with chronic wet cough will not have any pointers to alternative causes. In these cases, the [Persistent Cough in Children](#) HealthPathway recommends two weeks of oral antibiotics followed by a check-up. If the chronic wet cough responds to oral antibiotics, the condition is most likely PBB. [Continued page 2](#)

Protracted bacterial bronchitis in children (cont)

However, sometimes more than two weeks are required to fight infection that has become entrenched. If the child still has a chronic wet cough at their two-week check-up, unless they have experienced unacceptable side effects, they should be prescribed two more weeks of the same antibiotics followed by a check-up. In the rare instance that a child still has an ongoing wet cough after four weeks of antibiotics, they should be referred to a general or respiratory paediatrician. The specialist will revisit the history and examination and may want to rule out conditions such as cystic fibrosis, primary ciliary dyskinesia, immune deficiencies etc.

Important points:

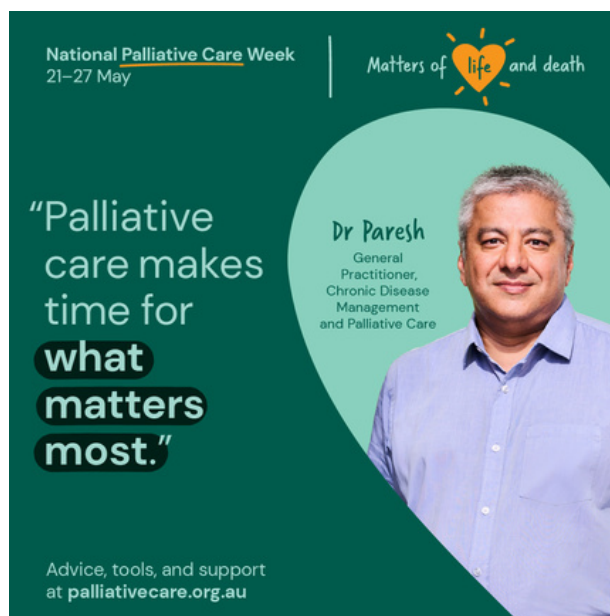
- Chronic wet cough should only be considered in cases where wet cough is present every day for four weeks or more. Young children often contract viral respiratory infections that cause wet cough. Such infections can occur in rapid succession. However, viral infections should clear up after a week or two.
- Children who have two or more episodes of PBB should be referred to a specialist.
- Children who have had a hospital admission for respiratory tract infection should be followed up at four weeks post discharge and any persistent wet cough identified and managed.
- Parents may not volunteer an accurate history about wet cough if they are not approached in a culturally appropriate way. Culturally appropriate information flip charts and videos, developed for coastal communities in northern WA, are available from the [Telethon Kids Institute](#). Lung Foundation Australia also has [online training](#) for health professionals on providing culturally appropriate care to Aboriginal families.

Other resources:

- Visit the [Lung Foundation Australia website](#) to view the clinical algorithm for diagnosis and assessment of chronic cough in children in primary care.
- Listen to the [“Wet Cough” podcast](#) featuring Dr. Schultz from the BREATH team at the Wal-yan Respiratory Research Centre at the Telethon Kids Institute.

Clinical Updates

Palliative care resources for GPs



It's National Palliative Care Week (21-27 May), a time for acknowledging and celebrating the commitment and dedication of all those working and volunteering in the palliative care sector and encouraging important conversations about the benefits of quality palliative care.

It also presents a timely opportunity to highlight the clinical support available for general practice on [HealthPathways WA](#) and the [Palliative Care Australia website](#).

Interested GPs may also like to register for the WA Health End of Life Care Program Collaborative Forum 13 June. Visit [WAPHA's event calendar](#) to find out more and register. Patients can be directed to resources to support people with an advanced chronic condition through [WA Health](#) and [Palliative Care WA](#).

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Direct referral to MindSpot GP available in regional WA

GPs based in regional WA can now refer patients directly to the MindSpot GP digital mental health service, formerly known as PORTS.

GPs no longer need to refer via a regional provider, meaning patients can now more easily access the care they need, when they need it.

This service remains free with no mental health treatment plan required. A referral to MindSpot GP provides a convenient psychological treatment option for patients who cannot afford a gap payment or are unable to access another service.

In addition to the PORTS treatment options, MindSpot GP offers an increased range of services including clinician-guided specialist treatment courses for your patients presenting with mild - moderate:

- Anxiety and depression
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Problems managing chronic health conditions including pain; and
- Problematic substance use.

For service criteria, inclusions, and referrer information see HealthPathways WA [Online Mental Health Therapy for Adults](#)

Visit mindspot.org.au for more information, phone 1800 61 44 34 or email contact@mindspot.org.au

New RACGP summary of useful links on MBS and Medicare compliance

The RACGP has developed a [new online resource](#) summarising useful links to information about the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Medicare compliance. Includes links to a range of resources such as MBS explanatory notes, education guides, fact sheets, eLearning programs and infographics from the Department of Health and Aged Care, Services Australia and the RACGP. To find out more, visit the [RACGP website](#).

Resources to support implementation of low back pain standard

The [Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard](#) has been developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (Commission) with a focus on early management.

The standard provides GPs with a road map to help patients manage low back pain episodes early and reduce their chance of ongoing problems. It aims to improve the assessment, management and appropriate referral of people with low back pain and reduce the use of unnecessary and ineffective treatments and investigations.

Comprising eight evidence-based quality statements describing best practice care, the standard emphasises the importance of addressing physical and psychosocial barriers to recovery for people with low back pain, providing patient education and advice, and promoting active self-management and physical activity. It highlights the limited role of imaging, bed rest, pain medicines and surgery in managing most people presenting to primary care with low back pain.

To learn more about the standard, and access resources including a series of brief educational videos for clinicians, fact sheets for consumers and clinicians, and a brief [educational module for GPs](#) developed in partnership with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), visit the [Commission website](#).

[Check out the GP education events from page 8 or visit \[wapha.org.au/events\]\(http://wapha.org.au/events\)](#)

WHO reports no reduction in preterm birth rates over the past decade

A recent report by the World Health Organization has found that for the past 10 years, no region in the world has been able to improve the rate of preterm birth.

[Born too soon: decade of action on preterm birth](#)

has found that 152 million babies were born too soon from 2010-2020, and preterm birth is still the being the leading cause of death in children under five, worldwide.

In Australia, The Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance indicates 1 in every 12 pregnancies end too early – leading to more than 36,000 preterm births every year. Read more about their preterm birth prevention interventions [here](#).

2023 Federal Budget resources

Following the release of the Federal Budget (9 May 2023), the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care has developed a series of fact sheets and other documents highlighting proposed key measures relating to primary care including:

- [Building a stronger Medicare](#)
- [Investing in a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#)
- [Laying the groundwork for mental health and suicide prevention system reform](#)

Visit budget.gov.au

New HIV campaign

The WA Aids Council (WAAC) have released a new 'HIV in 2023' campaign that recognises how the landscape of HIV has changed drastically in the last 40+ years. HIV medication, education, and research has come a long way, making prevention, treatment and testing now widely available. To find out more or get involved, visit the [WACC website](#).

Meeting the health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal people



This [National Reconciliation Week](#), WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) would like to highlight the [Aboriginal Health Strategy](#) and [Cultural Competency and Capability Framework](#). The development of these strategies along with [WAPHA's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan](#) demonstrate WAPHA's commitment to prioritising the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people and some of the ways WAPHA can support general practice to meet the health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal people and communities.

Driven by the Quintuple Aim for Healthcare Improvement, WAPHA's Cultural Competency Framework will inform future consultation with primary care providers to support the delivery of culturally safe and appropriate services that improve patient experience, engagement and health outcomes. Consultation is set to commence in 2025, however, WAPHA will engage with any practice who wish to investigate this area of quality improvement at any time.

The aligned Aboriginal Health Strategy recognises the role of general practice in the prevention, early intervention, management and treatment of health conditions and referral to specialist services including commissioned services. Underpinned by key principles that orient commissioned services around general practice, the Strategy recognises that Aboriginal health is holistic and includes the physical, social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of the whole community.

WAPHA is committed to enabling general practice to inform service design to ensure their role is elevated and integrated where possible. This includes both GPs and whole of general practice care team, including practice nurses and Aboriginal health workers. Interested practices can get involved with National Reconciliation Week [here](#).

Triple P – Positive Parenting Education and Support Program for patients

Delivered in partnership with Triple P International Pty Ltd (TPI), the Parenting Education and Support Program (Program) is providing free, universal access to evidence-based, online parenting education and support to all Australian parents and carers with a child under 12 years.

The suite of parenting resources offered by TPI will enable parents and carers to develop the confidence, skills, and strategies required to better support child mental health and wellbeing as children progress through the key development milestones and help them identify potential problem behaviours early.

Direct your patients their families to access the online Triple P-Positive Parenting Program suite [here](#).

Raising Healthy Minds App for parents and carers

The Australian Government funds the delivery of the [Raising Healthy Minds App](#). Developed by the Raising Children Network, the app is aimed at parents and carers of children aged 0-12 years, is free to download, and is filled with tips and practical ideas to help families support a child's social and emotional health and wellbeing and raise confident, resilient kids.

The Raising Children Network is currently expanding app functionality and content to enable use by GPs and health care workers as a tool to assist with navigating discussions with parents and families in respect to parenting, child development, and mental health and wellbeing.

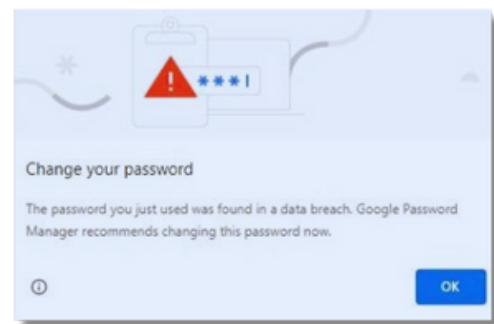
More information is available on [healthdirect](#)

HealthPathways WA – 'Change your password' notification

What this means and what to do -

HealthPathways users may receive an error message from Google Password Manager, advising that the password they have used was found in a data breach. The message has been appearing intermittently, but a data breach is unlikely to be the cause.

As many clinicians share the same username/password combinations to access HealthPathways WA, Google Password Manager sometimes presents this error message:



In this instance the message is no cause for concern, as no personal or patient data has been compromised. It does not mean that the HealthPathways WA is at risk, only that the username and password combination you use for access has been stored by a search engine.

When the username and password for the HealthPathways WA site is shared with other clinicians, search engines can store these usernames and passwords, causing browsers to then display an alert advising that a user's credentials have been compromised.

We use usernames and passwords to ensure clinician-only access to HealthPathways, not to protect private or sensitive content.

In the event of a genuine data breach directly involving the servers or technology that supports HealthPathways, an established protocol would be followed and affected HealthPathways users advised as appropriate. Contact health.pathways@wapha.org.au for more information or if you have concerns.

Inform the development of a new aftercare model for people who have experienced a suicidal crisis

The Mental Health Commission of Western Australia has engaged Telethon Kids Institute to assist in the development of an evidence informed universal aftercare model in Western Australia. They are seeking input from GPs in a series of online focus groups for GPs that will occur throughout June this year.

The experiences and perspectives of GPs are essential to inform what a best-practice aftercare program should look like in WA, to support individuals who have presented to the emergency department for a suicidal crisis.

Evidence shows that GPs are a critical gatekeeper for people who are experiencing suicidal distress. They are also often one of the first health professionals to be involved in a person's care following discharge from the ED following a suicide attempt.

The online focus group will run for approximately 60 minutes and prompt GPs to leverage their professional experience to identify the core components of a universal aftercare model in WA.

All information collected will be used exclusively for the preparation of a report to the Commission. The report is being prepared by Telethon Kids Institute and the University of Western Australia.

To share your knowledge, please register to participate in an online focus group [here](#).

RACGP Health of the Nation deadline extended

The RACGP [Health of the Nation survey](#) will now close at 11.59 pm (AEST) on Wednesday 31 May. This year's theme is attracting and retaining the general practice workforce, which remains a significant issue despite [recent positive developments](#) in this year's Federal Budget. The survey takes approximately 12 minutes to complete [here](#)

Research project offering cash incentive to people living with hepatitis C



Despite most people being able to be cured of hepatitis C in as little as eight weeks of treatment, many Australians with hepatitis C are yet to undertake the treatment. The Motivate C project is studying whether the offer of a cash incentive will encourage people to take up hepatitis C treatment in primary care and is looking for people living with hepatitis C to take part. This is a nationwide project with extensive GP consultation and input and is led by the University of Sydney.

GPs are critical to the success of the Motivate C project by identifying eligible participants. For more information, please see the [project website](#) or contact the project team on motivatec.project@sydney.edu.au

Participate in a new project exploring Auslan interpreting services in primary care

Australian Healthcare Associates (AHA), on behalf of the Department of Health and Aged Care, are exploring how Auslan interpreting services are arranged and delivered in primary care settings.

GPs are invited to share their perspectives regardless of their experience working with Auslan interpreters). Complete the short [online survey](#) or arrange a phone or video call at auslan.review@ahaconsulting.com.au to arrange a phone or video call. All participants will have the option of entering a gift card draw.

Contact the Chief Allied Health Office CAHO@health.gov.au if you have any questions regarding the project. Survey closes 30 June 2023 (11.59pm AEST).

Join the conversation on GP workforce needs in your region



As the provider of the [Australian General Practice Training \(AGPT\) Workforce Planning and Prioritisation activity](#) across Western Australia, WA Primary Health Alliance invites you to be a part of the conversation about the workforce needs and training capacity for GP registrars* in your region.

WAPHA's role is to provide independent, regionally based data and analysis to drive college distribution of registrars to support current and future GP workforce needs. Colleges will be responsible for the individual placement of registrars.

Find out more and register one of the networking and consultation events we are hosting across the State (RSVP is essential to attend) :

[Perth Metro consultation](#)

[WA regional consultation](#)

Email mikayla.rosewarne@wapha.org.au for metropolitan enquiries or nicole.campbell@wapha.org.au for regional enquiries.

*This event is in relation to AGPT GP registrars only.

GP Education and events

Healthy Weight masterclass series

Following the recent launch of our SHAPE (Supporting Holistic And Person centred weight Education) website and Conversations About Weight online training, WA Primary Health Alliance, in partnership with local WA healthcare professionals and lived experience voices, is pleased to present a six-part masterclass series on supporting patients with weight concerns to improve their health and wellbeing.

These sessions are open to all healthcare professionals, including GPs, practice nurses, allied health practitioners, and hospital based medical practitioners.

Session 2: The role of general practice in supporting people with weight concerns

- The role of general practice in supporting patients with weight concerns.
- How GPs, practice nurses (and other healthcare professionals) can overcome the risk of providing unsolicited advice when initiating conversations about weight.
- How to incorporate a behaviour change and motivational approach to chronic disease care planning.

Date: Wednesday 14 June 2023

Time: 6pm - 7.30pm

Venue: Online

More information and register [here](#)



Supporting the sexual and reproductive health needs of women from culturally diverse backgrounds

WA Primary Health Alliance and Women and Newborn Health Service invite GPs to attend this multi-format educational event targeted at GPs. With the rising number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from countries where female genital cutting/mutilation (FGC/M) is customary, it is important for GPs to be equipped with a good understanding of this practice, along with its cultural and health implications.



GP
FORUM

Presentation topics include:

- Latest evidence and clinical guidelines, health implications, referral pathways and resources about (FGC/M)
- Self-collection cervical screening tests and antenatal testing for syphilis
- Family and domestic violence in CaLD communities – resources and referral pathways

Date: Saturday 24 June 2023

Time: 8.30am -2.30pm (registration from 8am)

Venue: KEMH

More information and register [here](#)



Presented by Rural Health West in partnership with WA Primary Health Alliance, the Peel GP Forum is a one day forum aimed to meet the learning and health needs of the individual GP and the Peel community they serve.

The forum will include lectures, interactive discussion and sessions delivered and facilitated by experienced specialists. Following the forum will be an opportunity to network with fellow colleagues. This forum has been provided through a collaboration between WAPHA and Rural Health West to support the medical workforce in the Peel region.

Topics/presenters include:

- Preventing burnout - Dr Sarah Newman
- Palliative care – Dr Hildah Locke
- Concussion in general practice – Dr Gillian Cowen
- Pelvic organs prolapse – Dr Katie Drage
- Chronic pain – Dr Vyhunthan Ganeshanathan

The event will be followed by a networking sundowner from 3pm.

Date: Sunday 11 June 2023

Time: 8:30am -3pm (registration from 8am)

Venue: The Sebel Mandurah

Cost: \$150 (includes sundowner)

More information and register [here](#)

You may be eligible for funding support to attend this forum. For further information, please contact nicole.jacobs@ruralhw.com.au

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