

## The Drug and Clinical Advisory Service (DACAS): The Past Five Years

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### Introduction/Aims:

There are few specialist clinical AOD services in Australia to support the primary care sector. Telephone-based AOD clinical advisory services offer the potential to provide primary health care providers with immediate, accessible, specialist AOD advice that can serve large numbers of patients/clients over a distance. However, no evidence base currently exists for their performance, or necessary scale to meet demand and inform cost effectiveness.

The aim of this study was to examine call data from the 24/7 telephone-based *Drug and Clinical Advisory Service* (DACAS), to provide information on service use and performance, to better understand the AOD-related issues being encountered by health professionals for which specialist support is required.

### Design/Methods:

This study is a retrospective data audit of calls made to DACAS in Victoria, Australia, between 2013 and 2018. Caller characteristics, enquiry and consultation details were examined to provide information on service use and performance, and to identify trends in AOD-related issues being encountered by Victorian health professionals.

### Results:

From 2013 to date, DACAS consultants have responded to 8,821 AOD-related calls, with a rising trend in calls per year. Preliminary data from 2016/2017 show general (43.4%) and other (26.8%) medical practitioners, pharmacists (10.8%), and nurses (7.9%) to be the most frequent callers to this service. DACAS consultants advise on a broad range of AOD-related issues, with opioid pharmacotherapy (55.3%), alcohol (17.7%), benzodiazepines (9.7%), opioids (8.3%) and amphetamines (7.9%) forming the largest proportion of enquiries.

### Discussions/Conclusions:

Knowledge generated by this audit will inform service delivery improvements.

### Implications for Practice/Policy:

Given recent major changes in Australian policy (e.g. rescheduling of codeine, real time prescribing), this audit is expected to have significant implications for practice by providing a current, comprehensive understanding of gaps in knowledge, service delivery and workforce development needs.

### Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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