

17 May 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Inquiry into excess mortality

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Inquiry into excess mortality. Our comments on Terms of Reference (ToR) b and c are outlined below:

ToR b) Factors contributing to excess mortality in 2021, 2022 and 2023

The RACGP proposes further investigation be conducted to provide clarity for the factors contributing to the high number of excess mortalities reported. What has increased and decreased in terms of expected mortality needs to be established. As an example, excess mortality from non-COVID conditions might have been masked by fewer influenza deaths.

ToR c) Recommendations on how to address any identified preventable drivers of excess mortality

Preventive healthcare is an important activity in Australian general practice¹. The leading causes of death and disability in Australia are preventable or able to be delayed by early treatment and intervention. Prevention is relevant across all stages of a patient's life and improving preventive care for individuals and communities will lead to better health. General practice is central to key delivery of preventive healthcare and the most accessible service across Australia's healthcare system. The RACGP recommends general practice be supported through appropriate funding mechanisms to achieve its full potential in delivering comprehensive preventive health services.

The RACGP's [Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice \(Red Book\)](#), is internationally recognised and utilised, and has provided guidance on evidence-based preventive activities in primary care for over 25 years. As seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, primary care is the main channel for delivery of public health care services. General practice should be supported to deliver the activities in the Red Book, as well as to deliver social prescribing, self-care advice and age-appropriate coordinated preventative interventions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to feedback to provide feedback on the Inquiry into excess mortality. For any enquiries regarding this letter, please contact Stephan Groombridge, National Manager, Practice management, Standards and Quality Care on _____ or _____

Yours sincerely

Dr Nicole Higgins
RACGP President

References

1. Margolis S. Preventative Healthcare: A Core Component of Australian General Practice. AJGP 2018. doi: 10.31128/AJGP-11-18-4751.