

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I wish to voice my concern in regard to the impending loss of the two tier system and cuts to session numbers for clinical psychologists.

I am a Clinical Psychologist and gained my registration to become a clinical psychologist after returning to university to complete further studies in Advanced Clinical Assessment, Adult Clinical Psychopathology, Child and Adolescent Clinical and Psychopharmacology. These subjects were not easy and were very costly, however were completed because of the guidelines that were stipulated through Medicare. What I realised was that the course of a Clinical Psychologist is far more stringent and difficult than my previous studies in becoming a specialist psychologist. Most of my non-clinical psychologist peers would not consider embarking on with the further studies due to the great demand and commitment both academically and financially in becoming a clinical psychologist specialist.

Nonetheless, I gained extensive knowledge in clinical assessment that I had not received when I first returned to do undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the late 80s and 2000s. I acquired a vast knowledge and skills base in assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders and psychopathology that had been lacking in my previous work as a Counselling Psychologist. My diagnostic skills and assessment in the area of psychopathology is far more superior to any generalist psychologist due to the extensive study in the field of lifespan and advanced evidence-based and scientifically-informed psychopathology, assessment, diagnosis, case formulation and psychotherapy.

On a personal level I have noted how many of my non-clinical psychologists peers contact me inquiring as to a possible diagnosis of an individual with a possible mental disorder, as my non-clinical peers are not trained in psychopathology thus lack the knowledge and skills in the assessment of mental disorder diagnosis. This is indeed is a major concern for me that those with clinical psychologist registration will be placed into the same category as psychologists who cannot diagnose and treat mental illness.

Moreover, the treatment of moderate to severe range on those who have complex and severe presentations will be disadvantaged due the cuts to session numbers. And, indeed the moderate to severe range presentation is unique to the specialised training of the Clinical Psychologist, and these cases can sometimes take up to twenty to thirty sessions per annum with their comprehensive treatment which is very similar to a Psychiatrist without the inclusion of medication.

I certainly remain concerned for the future mental health of our great nation should the two tier system and the cuts to rebated session numbers go ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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