

Senate Enquiry into Mental Health Services and Funding.

As an experienced practitioner of some 20 years I am about to apply for Clinical specialty status so as to better be known as a provider of higher calibre psychological services, I have gone through all the requirements for this and believe me they have been extensive, exhausting and personally expensive. I have had the misfortune to practice alongside and inherit clients from poorly trained psychologists who just want to make a quick dollar from the unsuspecting public. This is an intolerable situation and the sooner we can educate the public as to the difference the better.

Please consider that Clinical Psychology is one of nine equal specialisations within Psychology. These areas of specialisation are internationally recognised, enshrined within Australian legislation, and are the basis for all industrial awards. They have been recognised since Western Australia commenced its Specialist Title Registration in 1965, and it is the West Australian model which formed the basis for the 2010 National Registration and Accreditation Scheme recognition of specialised Areas of Endorsement. All specialisations require a minimum of eight years training including a further ACPAC accredited postgraduate training in the specialisation leading to an advanced body of psychological competency in that field. No specialisation should be referred to in a manner that creates the appearance of the same level of skill and knowledge as the basic APAC accredited four year training of a generalist psychologist.

As is the case with Clinical Psychology currently, each area of specialisation deserves a specialist rebate with its own item number which is the specialist domain of that area of psychology.

Regarding Clinical Psychology specialisation, I wish to re-state the fact that Clinical Psychology requires a minimum of eight years' training and is the only profession, apart from Psychiatry, whose entire accredited and integrated postgraduate training is specifically in the field of lifespan and advanced evidence-based and scientifically-informed psychopathology, assessment, diagnosis, case formulation, psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, clinical evaluation and research across the full range of severity and complexity. We are well represented in high proportion amongst the innovators of evidence-based therapies, NH&MRC Panels, other mental health research bodies and within mental health clinical leadership positions.

Would you send your son or daughter to a lesser trained psychologist?