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## **NEW ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM TO TACKLE PAIN**

A new online educational program will be developed to help GPs treat chronic and acute pain, which is a growing problem affecting millions of Australians and costing the economy billions each year.

The Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) have partnered to address this need, and have been awarded a \$200,000 grant by the Bupa Health Foundation to develop an online learning program to help GPs treat people with chronic and acute pain.

FPM Vice Dean Dr Brendan Moore said the number of Australians experiencing chronic pain was estimated to grow to 5 million by 2050, up from 3.2 million Australians in 2007 when it was estimated to cost the economy \$34.4 billion a year. The most common conditions are osteoarthritis and low back pain.

“Chronic pain impacts patients not only physically, but psychologically and socially, leading to other debilitating aspects such as mental illness, relationship breakdowns and loss of employment,” Dr Moore said.

“By educating primary health care professionals to better treat patients at an acute stage of pain, the development of their illness into a chronic condition may be reduced.”

RACGP President Professor Claire Jackson said improved treatment of chronic pain patients by general practitioners and other primary health care professionals would reduce the burden on secondary and tertiary care facilities, allowing them to concentrate on patients requiring more acute treatment.

“Current pain management education for GPs is inconsistent, with differing approaches and messages that produce confusion both for care providers and patients,” Professor Jackson said.

“The synergy offered by the Faculty of Pain Medicine and the RACGP’s Pain Management Network is a unique axis in clinical knowledge in this part of the world, and internationally. We are excited by the possibilities.

“This online learning program will ensure consistent education and improve access to quality information for regional and rural health care professionals.”

The program will be ready by late next year and will be delivered by RACGP’s *gplearning* online learning platform, which can be accessed by metropolitan and rural GPs, registrars and medical students. It will be accredited to RACGP educational quality assurance standards, delivered in six training modules, and include interactive elements and animated images.

Dr Moore said FPM and the RACGP would maintain strict editorial control over all elements of the project.

“I would like to thank the Bupa Health Foundation for this generous grant which will help develop an innovative new tool that will improve outcomes for chronic pain patients and ensure best practice in pain management,” he said.

Dr Moore also acknowledged the assistance of Janssen Australia which helped coordinate the grant application. He emphasised Janssen Australia and the Bupa Health Foundation would have no influence on the educational content.

- **For further information, please contact ANZCA media manager, Meaghan Shaw, on +61 3 8517 5303, +61 408 259 369 or [mshaw@anzca.edu.au](mailto:mshaw@anzca.edu.au), or RACGP communications & media manager, Melanie Fontolliet, on +61 3 8699 0513, +61 424 461 622 or [melanie.fontolliet@racgp.org.au](mailto:melanie.fontolliet@racgp.org.au).**