

The patient's care journey in health care presents numerous opportunities for the health system, or provider, to add value to the patient's care, turning the experience from a reactive one, to a proactive one.

A new Perspectives Brief released today by the Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, explores the experience of patients with musculoskeletal (MSK) pain as they journey through the Australian primary care system.

The Brief '[Describing the Primary Care Journey for People with Musculoskeletal Pain](#)' is authored by researchers from Queensland Health, highlights the variation in patient care pathways and experiences in primary care for the management of MSK pain and disorders, including discordance with best-practice guidelines and the contribution of a health system that does not currently support the provision of multidisciplinary VBHC. The Brief also provides some commentary on how these pathways could be optimised to improve patient outcomes.

In Australia, as many as one in three people have some form of MSK condition, and three in ten people report experiencing a chronic MSK condition, of which back problems are the most common.

This Brief examines reported experiences from a small group of consumers, who had MSK pain and were referred for specialist orthopaedic opinion, and then triaged to a musculoskeletal physiotherapy screening clinic (MPSC).

'For most people with an MSK condition, their first point of contact with the health system is their GP, and this accounts for almost 20% of all GP consultations,' says AHHA Chief Executive Kylie Woolcock.

'However, it is important that people with MSK conditions have access to other MBS subsidised services, in addition to primary care, such as community-based and private allied health, as well as hospital-based care.'

'The findings indicate that from the interviews conducted, there is a discrepancy between patients' experiences and care journeys in primary health care and current evidence-based guidelines for MSK pain and disorders.

'By using a consumer-focussed lens and a VBHC approach, we can take a more comprehensive and solutions-orientated view to consider and address the challenges to the provision of guideline-concordant management of MSK pain and disorders.

'This includes addressing the lack of integration of allied health services into primary care, poorly defined consumer pathways, and inequitable access to primary health and allied health care across a consumer's entire health care journey.

'This issue has also been impacted by the widespread use of activity-based funding and limited access to subsidised allied health services through the MBS.'

The online version of this [media release](#) and the Brief '[Describing the Primary Care Journey for People with Musculoskeletal Pain](#)' can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

Media enquiries: Kylie Woolcock, Chief Executive, AHHA, 0410 625 830