

## Foreword

These guidelines were developed by the Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) in collaboration with the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA). The CPA Special Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines prioritized this topic area, based on need, and created the framework for their development. Administrative support was provided by the central office of the CPA, Ms Beata Eisfeld at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), and McCleery McCann Healthcare. Printing and publication support was facilitated by the staff of the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. A 2-stage approval process occurred within the administrative structure of the CPA prior to the dissemination of these guidelines.

The laborious task of developing the guidelines was undertaken by a national work group under the aegis of CANMAT. The group, led by Dr Sidney Kennedy and Dr Raymond Lam, met twice in the spring of 2000 to define the parameters for each section and develop a skeleton document. This was followed by an exhaustive review of the literature on the treatment of depression. Next, a hierarchical categorization of the quality of scientific evidence for various treatments was developed, based on clearly defined criteria. This led to graduation of recommendations, based on the quality of evidence.

As part of the development process, 2 workshops were held on October 4th and 5th, 2000, at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychiatric Association. The purpose of these workshops was to receive feedback from the psychiatric

profession and foster a collaboration with the CPA Practice Research Network.

The second draft of the guideline document was circulated to a panel of national and international experts for their review and comments. The final draft was then reviewed and approved, with minor revisions, by the CPA Special Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines. The document received final assent from the Board of the CPA in May 2001.

The publication of these guidelines represents the first stage in the dissemination process. Implementation will be achieved through workshop presentations across the Canada by the members of the Work Group. Within a year, an evaluation of the outcome of these guidelines will be conducted by the CPA Practice Research Network.

The utility of these guidelines will be determined largely by the motivation of clinicians to follow the recommendations made in the document. The intent is to provide evidence-based guidance rather than to set new standards for practice. The ultimate aim is to provide the best possible quality of care to our patients, in a cost-effective manner.

The CPA is grateful to the CANMAT Depression Work Group for their dedication in the development of these guidelines. Dr Sidney Kennedy and Dr Raymond Lam deserve special credit for their wise and able leadership in the creation of this masterful document.

Praful Chandarana, MBChB, FRCPC, ABPN  
*Chair, Special Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines  
Canadian Psychiatric Association*