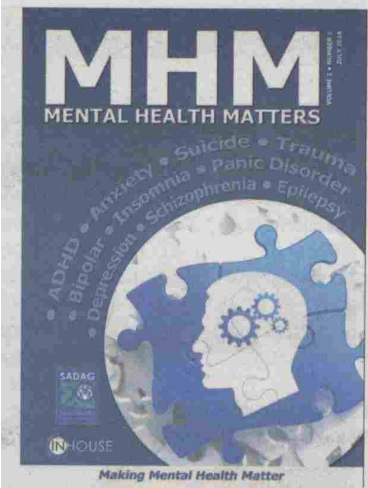


A helping handbook

SADAG JOURNAL: NEW TOOL FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS



Sadag facts

- ▶ Sadag is South Africa's leading mental health NGO and works to create awareness and education about mental health issues in all sectors across the country.
- ▶ Celebrating its 20th year, Sadag takes responsibility for helping all South Africans – patients, loved ones and their caregivers.
- ▶ Sadag is open seven days a week from 8am to 8pm and can be contacted free of charge on 0800-212-223. Alternatively, SMS 31393 or contact Sadag 24 hours a day on 0800-121-314.

► **The Mental Health Matters Journal features articles by psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors and specialists.**

Michelle Loewenstein

The SA Depression and Anxiety Group (Sadag) has launched a brand-new journal specifically for GPs. Launched in August, the *Mental Health Matters Journal* aims to assist them in the work they do with patients who may be suffer-

ing from a mental health issue. Here Zane Wilson, Sadag's founder, discusses how the publication will be distributed and why the organisation has decided to release it. **Why has Sadag decided to release the *Mental Health Matters Journal*?** Zane Wilson (ZW): Many doctors are in areas where there is very limited help for patients and a lack of therapists and psychiatrists. It will come out quarterly and will keep them updated by psychiatrists and psychologists on topics that will help them when they deal with for their patients. **What is in the journal?** ZW: It is a magazine, and topics are varied. It covers subjects such as depression and helping men get treatment, fear of flying,

We are sending the first three editions out to 3 000 general practitioners

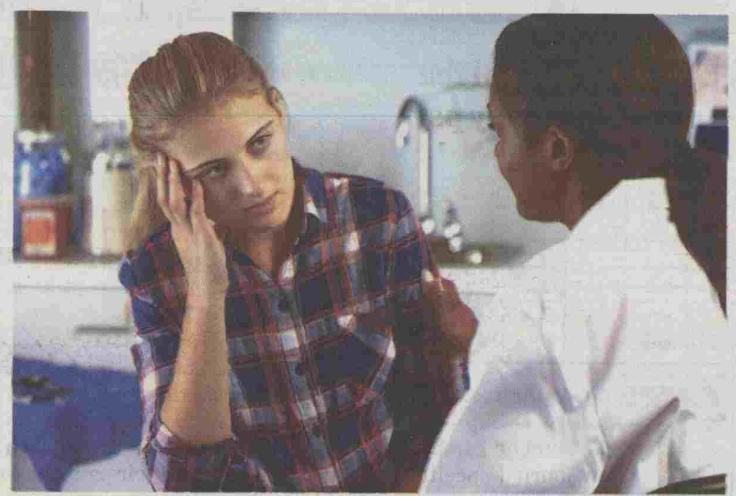
Zane Wilson
Sadag founder

postnatal depression, coping with bipolar patients, anorexia, how to get patients into government hospitals, bullying in youth and schizophrenia. **What will it cost and how can practitioners get hold of it?** ZW: It is being delivered free of charge until the end of the year. Thereafter it will be sold on a subscription. For healthcare providers to get their own copy to assess, please email your request to

info@anxiety.org.za. We are sending the first three editions out to 3 000 general practitioners (GPs). **Will the journal be available to free clinics where there might not be someone on hand who can help a patient with a mental health problem?** ZW: It can be sent to government and private clinics free on request to the above email, providing it is requested by a registered mental health specialist, GP or psychiatrist. **Does Sadag often come across cases where a GP has misdiagnosed a patient owing to lack of knowledge?**

ZW: The current research by Mediscor indicates 11.6 % of patients receive antidepressant medication, so when you consider one in three people in South Africa have or will suffer from a mental health problem, this figure is far too low. **Do you believe untrained medical professionals are too quick to prescribe medication for patients who have some form of mental health problem?** ZW: Not usually, particularly in government clinics and facilities. Very often patients are not prescribed antidepressants they may need or the pharmacy has run out of stock. Often psychiatrists only visit clinics once or twice a month. **Are depression and anxiety becoming more prevalent? If so, do you think this is due to the fast-paced lifestyle adopted by most people?**

ZW: To a certain extent, yes, but in South Africa to a greater extent job loss is playing a larger



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role as well as increasing poverty. Trauma is also a major problem, whether it's caused by a hijacking, rape, or robbery – all of these contribute to stress and limited coping skills.

Aside from GPs, who do you think could benefit from owning the journal? ZW: Any mental health professional who is working in this field who would like to read more on South African situations and issues. They will be able to learn from psychiatrists and psychologists who spend their whole day with people with mental health issues. **What is your advice to someone who thinks they might be suffering from some form of mental disorder?** ZW: Discuss it with their GP first or contact Sadag to speak to a counsellor over the phone if they are feeling stigmatised. On the front panel of Sadag's website there is a selection of questionnaires they can do privately at home and videos on various topics.

