

RE: PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH.  
The information in the following article NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INQUIRY.

As part of this inquiry the current system of using drugs to treat mental illness also **needs to be thoroughly researched to determine the extent of the failure of drug treatments to actually resolve the problem.** However, it appears that the medical profession has themselves become addicted to prescribing drugs as a quick fix for mental health issues. The fact is GPs are not qualified to be diagnosing mental health issues, but Big Pharma is reported as having spent \$30,000,000 on promoting drugs to GPs. THIS MUST BE INVESTIGATED BY THE COMMISSION.

The following article gives a positive drug-free solution and GPs are not dieticians and therefore are not qualified to be dealing with people with mental health problems. There is research (which I'm sure the Commission could find) that concluded that the nutritional value of McDonalds, Dominoes Pizza, etc. 'fast food' outlets has less than 50% of the nutritional daily requirements, these businesses are only there to make money and not provide real edible food, they should carry health warnings!

**The information in the following article NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INQUIRY:**

## **A healthy diet can treat major depression: New study findings**

- “We have confirmed a relationship between the quality of people’s diets and their risk for depression and anxiety disorders.” (AAP)

- **The proof is in the (healthy) pudding: what we eat affects our mental health, perhaps even more than we realise.**

**By**  
Megan Blandford

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**In a world-first study, researchers from Victoria’ Deakin University have shown that improvements in diet quality can treat cases of major depression.**

The new study, released this week, proves a distinct link between the food we eat and our mental wellness, and finally clarifies the mystery around whether our diet and gut health influences our mood.

“This was the first randomised controlled trial to directly test whether improving diet quality can actually treat clinical depression,” says Professor Felice Jacka, Director of Deakin’s Food and Mood Centre.

“...We have confirmed a relationship between the quality of people’s diets and their risk for depression and anxiety disorders.”

The research, published in the international journal *BMC Medicine*, shows that study participants who made improvements to their diet experienced a reduction in their depressive symptoms.

## **“We have confirmed a relationship between the quality of people’s diets and their risk for depression and anxiety disorders.”**

The 12-week study split participants – who all had depression – into two groups: 25 received social support (with formalised conversation and activities that engaged participants), while 31 people changed their diets. Those in the diet support group were given personalised dietary advice and counselling from an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

The results were surprising: one-third of those in the dietary support group met the criteria for remission of major depression, compared to just eight per cent of those in the social support group.

“There’s a very strong relationship between physical and mental health,” says Professor Jacka, adding that many mental and physical illnesses (including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity) have the same underlying factors.

“It’s about the immune system and likely the gut microbiota ... and diet is the most important factor influencing the health of the gut.”

## **Good health doesn’t discriminate**

The link between diet and mental health is true for people of all ages, the study states – from babies in utero who are affected by their mother’s diet, through to adolescents and into adulthood.

This fact also holds true for people across all cultures, with no differences in diet outcomes according to background.

“In any country – whether they have a Mediterranean, Norwegian, Japanese, American or Australian diet – there’s a spectrum of diet quality,” says Professor Jacka.

“We see again and again, in every country where these studies are done, that this association (between a healthy diet and mental health) exists.”

However, she says, what's most important to mental wellbeing is that people with mental health issues receive intervention and support. The study suggests the possibility of making dietitian support available to those experiencing depression.

**“It's about the immune system and likely the gut micro**