

**Embedding Dietetic Support
in a Clozapine Clinic to
Support Metabolic Health**

**Smonda Kok (APD)
Mental Health Dietitian**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Kaurana people and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.



Eastern Health 

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We celebrate the strength and resilience of people with lived experience and value their important contributions to mental health services.



Opportunity

Eastern Health – Introduced a new community
mental health service
CLOZAPINE CLINIC
APRIL 2024

For: People with lived experience of
Schizophrenia/Schizoaffective disorder
prescribed on Clozapine (stable and no need for
case management)

Developing the Service

- Benchmarking
- Referral Reason:
 - **Metabolic Syndrome** - Type 2 Diabetes, Increased CVD risks
 - **Increased appetite** – medication induced hunger
 - **GIT side effects-** Clozapine and Constipation
 - **Food security** – cooking skills, convenient meal prep, budget meal planning, grocery shopping

Every Wednesday – Dietetics service are offered to people managed under Clozapine Clinic
Cost: Free of Charge

Referral received from: Nursing Consultant and Psychiatrist (Clozapine Clinic/GP Shared Care)

Aims:

- By **June 2025**, Dietetics Services will be **established and evaluated** within Central East Eastern Health Clozapine Clinic
- Supporting approximately **20% of people prescribed Clozapine** for Schizophrenia/Schizoaffective Disorder with **metabolic syndrome or high risk**
- Aiming for **measurable improvements** in:
 - **Health measurements and overall wellbeing**
 - **Cardiometabolic and digestive health**

Why this matters?

The Equally Well Framework (2019)- currently under revision

Advocates for improved physical health care in mental health services, with a focus on:
“Improving Metabolic Health – Weight & Diet”

Why This Matters

- People with mental illness may face higher **cardiometabolic risk**.
- Dietitians play a key role in promoting **healthy lifestyle behaviours**.
- Integrating dietitians into mental health teams supports **holistic care** and **early intervention**.

What did we do?: Dietetic Interventions for Health Promotion

Psychoeducation & Skill Building

- Healthy eating on a budget
- Portion awareness and appetite management
- Eating for **heart health**
- Eating to **support blood sugar control**
- Choosing **healthier snacks**

Practical Activities

- **Supermarket tours** – applying skills in real settings
- **Exercise guidance** aligned with the *Australian Physical Activity and Exercise Guidelines*

What did we measure?

What?	How?
Clinical Outcomes (Metabolic and GI health)	Body weight, BMI, Waist circumference Lipid profile HbA1c Bowel actions- Bristol stool chart
Habits & Behavioural Outcomes (Wellbeing)	Nutrition education using teach-back Encouraging healthy eating patterns Promoting physical activity and complementary behaviours
Consumer Experience	Feedback from consumers Satisfaction with care Reports of improved well-being and quality of life

Outcomes - Nutrition and Physical Wellbeing

Health Measurements and Wellbeing (n=8)

- ~18 kg gain post-Clozapine (3–12 months)

With dietetic support:

- **1.4–16 kg weight reduction** (6–12 months)
- **3–6 cm reduced waist circumference**
- **Greater nutrition engagement and lifestyle change**

Cardiometabolic & Digestive Health

- **Cholesterol improved** to 3.7–4.7 mmol/L (n=3)
- **HbA1c stabilised or improved** (n=16)
- **Bowel health improved** — from weekly to every 1–2 days
- **Overall enhanced metabolic wellbeing**

Outcomes: Consumer and Staff Experiences

Consumer Experience (n=6)

Access & Affordability

- Access to a Dietitian within the Clozapine Clinic
- Free of charge:

“Dietitians I’ve seen in the past are expensive — I’m glad I don’t have to pay.”

Valued Support

- Improved bowel health, fitness, and quality of life
- Greater engagement with nutrition and wellbeing goals

Staff Experience (n=2)

Benefits of Onsite Dietitian

- Improved accessibility for consumers
- Streamlined referral processes
- Enhanced real-time care coordination

Reflections

“The familiar clinic setting and integrated approach were beneficial, especially for Clozapine-related cardiometabolic health.”

“The dietitian was approachable, flexible, and well-received — the integrated model is working well.”



What Worked Well?

- **Improved access and engagement (16%)** for a **high-risk population**, supporting equity in care.
- **Integrated model** well received by consumers and staff, fostering collaboration and trust.
- **Aligned** with [Royal Commission into Vic Mental Health System](#) & [Equally Well Framework Priorities](#), **reinforcing state standards.**
- Improved **access to and the consumption of a healthy diet**, promoting **physical and mental well-being.**

Future directions

- Demonstrates a **scalable and sustainable approach** to integrated care
- Potential for **adaptation across other community mental health settings**
- Aligns with the **Equally Well Framework (new version)** and national priorities
- Supports **holistic collaborative physical and mental health care** for diverse populations

THANK YOU & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Team from the Clozapine Clinic

Consumers seen at the Clozapine Clinic

AHMH Learning & Teaching Program

Mental Health & Wellbeing Program at Eastern Health

Contact: Smonda.kok@easternhealth.org.au

