



# Australian Prescriber



AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Alexander Building  
Furzer St, PHILLIP ACT  
Tel: 02 6282 6755; Fax 02 6282 6855

e-mail: [info@australianprescriber.com](mailto:info@australianprescriber.com)  
internet: [www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com)

Address correspondence to:  
The Editor, Australian Prescriber  
PO Box 100, WODEN ACT 2606

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## THERAPY CAN OVERCOME FEAR

Many Australians live with anxiety and fear. Some people may be too afraid even to visit the shops. Symptoms of anxiety include a dry mouth, shortness of breath or feelings of suffocation, chest discomfort and dizziness, according to an article in the current issue of ***Australian Prescriber***.

"Many people get tense because of their fears. This tension may result in headache or muscle aches and pains, particularly in the neck, shoulder and lower back," writes Associate Professor John Tiller, from the University of Melbourne.

"However, patients can learn to influence their symptoms by challenging them and changing their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and behaviour," Professor Tiller said.

Cognitive behaviour therapy is a psychological treatment that is suitable for many people whose fears prevent them from leading a normal life. It can be used on its own, or it can enhance the effects of medicine. It can also help manage reactions to other illnesses, not just to emotional disorders.

Professor Tiller says that, for example, the therapy can help people control their panic and other features of anxiety or depression. This enables them to overcome their fears. The first step towards overcoming fear, Professor Tiller said, is talking to their doctor.

Medical help is not restricted to giving medicines - doctors also use this psychological technique to help their patients recover.

For a copy of the complete article or information about ***Australian Prescriber***, visit the homepage [http://www.australianprescriber.com/public\\_html/default.htm](http://www.australianprescriber.com/public_html/default.htm) or phone 02 6289 7038.

**Contact:** Professor John W.G. Tiller, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Hospital, and Albert Road Clinic, Melbourne, phone 03 8344 6090.

***Australian Prescriber*** is a national independent review of therapeutic topics designed to assist health professionals in their duties. The journal provides independent comment - no advertising is accepted.

Among other articles the current issue of ***Australian Prescriber*** also looks at coeliac disease.