

22nd June 2021

Darren J Bracken, Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
Southbank Victoria 3006 | DX 212560
Email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Coroner,

Re: Response to the Coroner's recommendations regarding the death of Catherin D'Rozario

We are responding to the Coroners Court of Victoria, on behalf of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA), the peak professional body for clinical immunology/allergy specialists in Australia and New Zealand.

This letter is sent in response to recent communications from the Coroners Court of Victoria regarding the death of Catherin D'Rozario on 25th August 2019. We note that the Coroner's Findings states that her death was caused by complications of acute asthma in the setting of an allergic response.

After reviewing the Coroner's Findings, we suggest that this wording is revised if possible, to state that the cause of her death was 'A severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), in the setting of acute asthma.'

Whilst asthma is a known risk factor for fatalities from anaphylaxis due to food allergy, it is important that the death is reported as being caused by anaphylaxis, not asthma.

It is extremely sad to read about deaths caused by anaphylaxis, that may have been prevented with an appropriate emergency response, including immediate treatment with adrenaline (epinephrine).

We advise that ASCIA fully supports implementation of the Coroner's recommendations in the [Findings into the death of Catherin D'Rozario](#) published on 31st December 2020.

However, we note that successful implementation of the Coroner's recommendations will require funding support, to achieve the best outcomes.

Since 2003 ASCIA has been committed to improving the management of food allergy and anaphylaxis by providing online resources that are accessible, consistent and evidence-based, to educate and train health professionals and the community about food allergy and anaphylaxis.

Work had already commenced on updating and developing ASCIA online resources that address the Coroner's recommended interventions, prior to receipt of the Coroner's findings. This work by ASCIA commenced in October 2020 and is expected to be completed by August 2021.

ASCIA is the lead organisation that continues to develop and update online food allergy and anaphylaxis training resources for health professionals and education providers.

Once the updated and new resources are completed, ASCIA will work collaboratively with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), the Victorian Department of Education and the Victorian Department of Health to accredit and promote the ASCIA online resources.

ASCIA currently provides online resources and training courses free of charge for all users. There is no funding provided by Government, its agencies or other organisations to offset the costs associated with accreditation or promotion of ASCIA online resources and training courses. Therefore, ASCIA will require funding from relevant organisations and waiving of fees for accreditation (e.g. those charged by the RACGP) and promotion of the ASCIA online resources and training courses to complete the implementation of the recommendations.

The following information outlines how the updating and development of ASCIA online resources will address the Coroner's recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

In order to reduce the risk of harm associated with food allergies and anaphylaxis that the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and in consultation with the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) work collaboratively towards educating their members and fellows of the dangers and that they consider referring all patients (especially children and young persons) who present with food allergies to a specialist immunologist or immunology clinic such as that at the Royal Children's Hospital for assessment and management of such allergies.

In response to recommendation 1, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) is committed to upskilling health professionals in food allergy and anaphylaxis.

ASCIA suggests that the scope of Recommendation 1 should include the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), in addition to the RACGP, to ensure both Colleges responsible for general practice training in Australia are involved in reducing the risk of harm associated with food allergies and anaphylaxis. The involvement of ACRRM is particularly important as people in rural and remote areas may have limited access to clinical immunology/allergy specialists.

ASCIA is in the process of updating the following courses and resources:

- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training for health professionals
- ASCIA Food Allergy e-training for health professionals

ASCIA Guidelines for the Acute Management of Anaphylaxis are also currently being updated

The main aim of the updated ASCIA courses is to educate ASCIA members and other health professionals (including members of the RACGP, ACRRM and RACP) about food allergy and anaphylaxis, including:

- The potentially fatal consequences of food allergies and anaphylaxis.
- How to prevent allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- How to follow the updated ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis (2021 versions), to provide guidance on recognition and treatment of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- How to treat anaphylaxis to prevent death and disability.
- When to refer patients (particularly children) with food allergies to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist (and when to also refer to a dietitian) for assessment and management of food allergies.

Once the updated ASCIA e-training courses are available online in August 2021, ASCIA will liaise with the RACGP, ACRRM and RACP about accreditation and promotion of the courses to their members.

Waiving of fees by the Colleges for accreditation and promotion of the ASCIA courses to GPs, as well as links to the courses on the RACP and ACRRM websites, would assist in this process.

Recommendation 2:

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA), the Victoria Department of Education and the Victorian Department of Health consult widely and work collaboratively towards establishing an educational program directed to parents, teacher and students of school and universities alerting them to the potentially fatal consequences of food allergies and anaphylaxis.

In response to recommendation 2, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) is committed to upskilling the community, including Schools and Children's Education and Care (CEC) in food allergy and anaphylaxis.

ASCIA is in the process of updating the following courses:

- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training for Australasian Schools
- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training for Schools (with specific modules for VIC, NSW, QLD and WA – subject to funding from state education or health departments)
- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training for Australasian Children's Education and Care (CEC)
- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training for Community/First Aid

A new ASCIA Anaphylaxis refresher e-training course for Australasian Schools and CEC is also being developed. All of these courses except for the state specific versions are for use throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The main aim of ASCIA courses is to educate the community (including teachers, students, parents and carers at schools, CEC and universities) about food allergy and anaphylaxis, including:

- The potentially fatal consequences of food allergies and anaphylaxis.
- How to prevent allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- How to follow the updated ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis (2021 versions), to provide guidance on recognition and treatment of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- How to treat anaphylaxis to prevent death and disability.

In the process of updating these courses, ASCIA will liaise with representatives from the Victorian Department of Education and the Victorian Department of Health.

Once the updated ASCIA e-training courses are available online in August 2021, ASCIA will also liaise with these departments about promoting the courses.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the concerns outlined in this letter. Please contact us by emailing jill@allergy.org.au or phoning 25216402 if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Katie Frith
Chair, ASCIA Anaphylaxis Committee



Jill Smith
ASCIA CEO

Copy:

ASCIA Directors - Prof Michaela Lucas, Dr Theresa Cole, A/Prof Jane Peake, Dr Michael O'Sullivan.