

Eat Sleep Move

By Kylie Nomchong SC & Cynthia Cochrane

In order to be healthier, more productive as barristers, more psychologically resilient, more engaged with our friends and family and more able to do the activities we want to do, it is a pretty easy equation – eat better, sleep better and move better.

Like everyone else, barristers think they know what they should do...but we wanted to test that out. Is it really a matter of less carbs, more time on the treadmill and chamomile tea before bed? So, the Wellbeing Committee began its Eat, Sleep, Move initiative by engaging with medical and academic experts to answer the questions.

Our first event was in 2019, with a presentation by Dr Peter Brukner, Professor of Sports Medicine at La Trobe University in Melbourne, in a small restaurant in Surry Hills (when you could do that sort of thing). Barristers met and listened to Dr Brukner and then ate food from a menu specially devised by him. The outcome was a really interesting night, information on eating made simple, good food and quite a few laughs at embarrassing confessions of our poor eating habits. It was a hit.

And so we approached other experts in the field of movement and sleep to set up seminars and other events. But then the COVID-19 pandemic was upon us, the Common Room was off limits and so, just as we have all had to do in our court room processes, we embraced AVL and redirected the Eat Sleep Move Initiative on to the small screen.

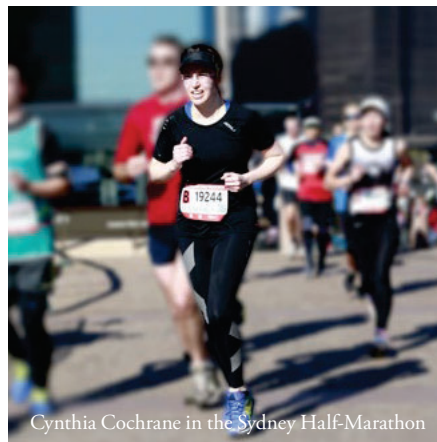
The Wellbeing Committee set up a series of webinars, each of which have had Kevin Connor SC and Cynthia Cochrane as facilitators. The experts have either appeared live from 'Studio 5 Wentworth' or have joined remotely via Zoom. Interactivity is achieved with barristers submitting questions using the Q&A function.

A Fat Lot of Good – how to eat better

Because Dr Brukner had been so engaging, and because we wanted the information to reach more of our members, we commenced the webinar series with him. Later, in this edition, is a short article by Dr Brukner about his journey and his best seller book 'A Fat Lot of Good'.



Kylie Nomchong SC
in an RSYS
off-shore race



Cynthia Cochrane in the Sydney Half-Marathon

In his webinar, Dr Brukner explained the political motivations behind the original USDA 'food pyramid' in 1992 which recommended 6-11 servings of bread, cereal, rice and pasta and sparing use of fats and oils. Dr Brukner then examined the trajectory of changes in nutrition advice since that time, varying as it has, and informed each year by new research. What was recommended in 1992 is certainly not what we are advised to do now.

Dr Brukner shared his personal journey of discovering the weight loss benefits of a diet that is low in carbohydrates, particularly sugars, and involves healthy fat, for example, from eggs, dairy products, avocado and meat.

More than 70 barristers logged in to watch the presentation live and, since then,

nearly 200 members have watched it on the wellbeing pages of the Bar Association's website: www.nswbar.asn.au/practice-support/wellbeing/eat-sleep-move. Many also purchased *A Fat Lot of Good* and following the recommendations, have said what a life-changing process it has been.

Resistance Training and Other Exercise for Optimal Ageing

Next in the series of webinars was Professor Maria Fiatarone Singh. At the University of Sydney, Professor Fiatarone Singh is a geriatrician whose research, clinical, and teaching career has focussed on the integration of medicine, exercise physiology, and nutrition as a means to improve health status and quality of life across the lifespan of individuals.

Professor Fiatarone Singh was a good fit for our demographic – Did you know that 33% of the Bar is over the age of 60 (and overwhelming men in that category)?

Professor Fiatarone Singh told us that 'movement' was not only about cardiovascular exercise but rather there is an acute need for everyone over the age of 40 years to lift heavy weights, three times per week. An optimal 'heavy weight' is one that is so heavy that the person can only undertake eight repetitions per exercise. Resistance training should be prescribed by GPs to their patients because of the overwhelmingly benefits it provides.

The Professor told us about the personal journeys of people who have aged optimally, concluding with the astonishing correlation that strong triceps are essential to avoiding a nursing home in old age.

More than 70 barristers logged in to watch the presentation and, since then, nearly 150 have watched it on the wellbeing pages of the Bar Association's website: www.nswbar.asn.au/practice-support/wellbeing/eat-sleep-move. Kylie Nomchong, the Chair of the Wellbeing Committee has been stopped in the street and contacted by phone by a dozen barristers saying that the presentation fundamentally changed their gym routine and how much better they feel for it.



Rocco Fazzari

It's all about how you sit

The next webinar was a presentation by Ms Josephine Key, a neuromuscular-skeletal physiotherapist specialising in the treatment of backpain. Included in this issue of *Bar News* is a short article by Ms Key titled 'Sit on Your Sit Bones'

Barristers spend an inordinate amount of time on their bottom. The importance of good posture when sitting (and standing or walking) was the feature of this presentation. Ms Key eschewed the use of standing desks, noting that they do not overcome poor posture, and abhorred deep couches – because they encourage poor posture.

Ms Key demonstrated the elements of correct posture by reference to a replica of a human pelvis. The 50 barristers who logged in to watch the presentation were left in

no doubt as to what 'sitting bones' are and where to find them. Evidently, word of the seminar spread and another 75 members have watched the video on the Wellbeing page of the Bar Association website www.nswbar.asn.au/practice-support/wellbeing/eat-sleep-move. Members have also purchased her book, *Freedom to Move*, which contains pelvic and other exercises.

The Significance of Sleep

In many of the wellbeing seminars over the years, one constant theme in question time was about sleep – how to fall asleep, how to stay asleep, how to stop intrusive thoughts in the middle of the night...

The Wellbeing Committee have approached Professor Sharon Naismith (University of Sydney) who is a Clinical

Neuropsychologist, NHMRC Dementia Leadership Fellow and holds the Leonard P Ullman Chair in Psychology at the Charles Perkins Centre (USyd). She also Heads the Healthy Brain Ageing Program at the Brain and Mind Centre. Professor Naismith will present by webinar later this year.

In the meantime, for this special edition of *Bar News*, Dr Kevin Connor SC has penned an article about the significance of sleep. It looks at issues such as why we need sleep, how much sleep do we need and the importance of early and deep non-REM cycle sleep.

More to Come

The Wellbeing Committee is planning further webinars in 2021, including on Sleep, the Path to Longevity and the Microbiome. Come join us. **BN**