

# CatchUp

A newsletter for participants in the 45 and Up Study

**“Being part of the Study is one of the ways I stay active in the community”**

Julie Plant, 75, Study participant,  
mum of five, grandmother of nine.



## Finding answers to big health questions

Thank you for being one of the 265,000 people helping Australia to unlock the answers to healthy ageing. By participating in the 45 and Up Study you are doing nation-building work. You're helping create a knowledge bank about health and disease that is shaping better decisions about care and services for people as they age.

The contribution you've made by continuing to share your health and lifestyle information is becoming increasingly valuable. Hundreds

of researchers have used the data you and other participants have given us to uncover new knowledge and more and more decision makers are using this knowledge to build better health systems and services.

For example, we now know that reducing overweight and obesity by just a little could ease pressure on hospitals, which spend nearly \$4 billion a year on related complications. Knowledge that one in every

six days spent in hospital is related to overweight or obesity is guiding government planning in NSW.

New evidence on the longevity benefits of vigorous exercise is being built into Australian physical activity guidelines and other policies and programs in this area.

And important new findings about the burden of smoking on the community are guiding the direction of government tobacco prevention and quit programs.

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**“These findings are a huge wake-up call for Australia”**



Professor Emily Banks, Scientific Director, 45 and Up Study

## Smoking findings change the game

**In 2015, the 45 and Up Study provided the first direct evidence on the effect of smoking on death rates in Australia.**

A research team led by 45 and Up Study Scientific Director Professor Emily Banks found that up to two in every three smokers will die from their habit if they don't quit.

This is a major shift from the previous estimate of one in every two and it has changed thinking on the impact of Australia's smoking

burden, which we now know is much worse than previously thought.

These findings have been used by leading organisations such as Quitline, Cancer Council NSW and the Heart Foundation to advise smokers of the greater than previously recognised hazards of smoking, and the greater benefits of quitting.

Federal and state health departments are also using the findings in their tobacco control initiatives.

**10**  
**cigarettes**

All you need to smoke each day to double your risk of dying early

**1.8**  
**million**

The number of Australians who will die from smoking if they don't quit

**33%**

The proportion of 45 and Up participants who quit smoking aged 45 or over

## Spread the word

The life stories of Study participants are of great value and interest to the community. Julie Plant, pictured on our cover, has shared her experiences to help others understand the value of the Study and how it can improve health. If you'd like to help us promote the Study by sharing your story through the media, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us on 1300 45 11 45.

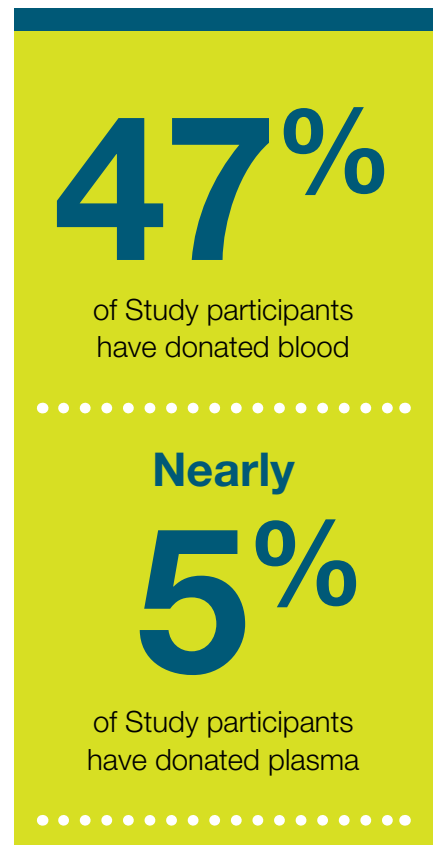
## Coming up

More than 600 researchers have already used the Study and interest continues to grow. This means there are many new research projects being planned and we may ask you for help with some of them as they progress. Exciting new areas being looked at include:

- Whether Internet-based therapies can delay the onset of dementia
- How health and community services being used in NSW can be better coordinated

- How to help people with chronic obstructive airways disease to get the most from their medicines and treatment.

**Turn to the back page for more information on how you can keep your details up-to-date and continue to participate in the Study.**



## Study to shed light on blood donor health

**New research drawing on the 45 and Up Study will shed light on the impact that giving blood regularly might have on the health of donors.**

Study partner the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, has begun a new research project linking information about Study participants' health and lifestyles with its own data on blood donors.

The Service's Director of Research and Development, Professor David Irving, says there has been a lot of research focusing on the health of

blood donors immediately before, during and after they give blood. But there are very few studies about the long-term effects on people who donate blood as often as every three months, or who donate blood plasma as often as every fortnight – as they can in Australia.

“There is some anecdotal evidence that blood donation tends to be beneficial to donor health, but we don't really know if that is the case,” Professor Irving says.

This Australian-first research will determine if donating blood regularly has any positive or negative effects

on people's health. It will look at the impact on diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease, as well as people's use of health services and their life expectancy.

“The 45 and Up Study is an extremely rich and powerful repository of health information,” Professor Irving says. “Hopefully, if it does show positive effects, this research can be used to reassure people who are considering whether to donate blood that it is definitely safe and beneficial.”



**“We're using the Study to better target our efforts to prevent cancer”**

Mr Jim L'Estrange, CEO,  
Cancer Council NSW



**“The Study is helping create the world's largest public genome database to identify genetic causes of conditions like heart disease, diabetes and cancer”**

Associate Professor Marcel Dinger, Head of the Garvan  
Institute's Kinghorn Centre for Clinical Genomics



**“We're using the Study to identify what might predict a person's risk of going to hospital”**

Dr Peter Lewis, Director, NSW  
Central Coast Public Health Unit

## Look out for your questionnaire

Every five years we will send you a new questionnaire so we can follow your health and lifestyle details over time. Some of you will receive a questionnaire in 2016. You can fill in your questionnaire online, or receive and return your survey by mail. Just let us know what you'd prefer via the contact details outlined below.



## Update your details

It's important to tell us about any change in your contact details so the Study can succeed in creating a "moving picture" of how Australia is ageing. It's also important we don't lose track of you so we can keep you updated about the Study's progress. So if you have new contact details we need to know – and providing your email address will make it easier for us to get information to you.

You can update your details in a number of ways:

 Call our infoline on <b>1300 45 11 45</b>	 Email us at 45andUp @saxinstitute.org.au
 Select "Update your details" in the 45 and Up section of our website: <a href="http://www.saxinstitute.org.au/our-work/45-up-study/for-participants/">www.saxinstitute.org.au/our-work/45-up-study/for-participants/</a>	 Complete a Change of Details Form (sent when we contact you via email or post) and send it to <b>The 45 and Up Study, GPO Box 5289, Sydney NSW 2001</b>

## Contact us

**Infoline: 1300 45 11 45**

**Email: 45andUp@saxinstitute.org.au**

**Mail: GPO Box 5289, Sydney NSW 2001**

## Your privacy

All the information you give us remains confidential and is used for health research only. We have comprehensive policies and procedures in place to keep your data secure. You can withdraw from the Study at any time and this will not disadvantage you in any way.

## 45 and Up Study partners:



Visit the 45 and Up Study section of our website  
**saxinstitute.org.au**

for more 45 and Up Study news.

