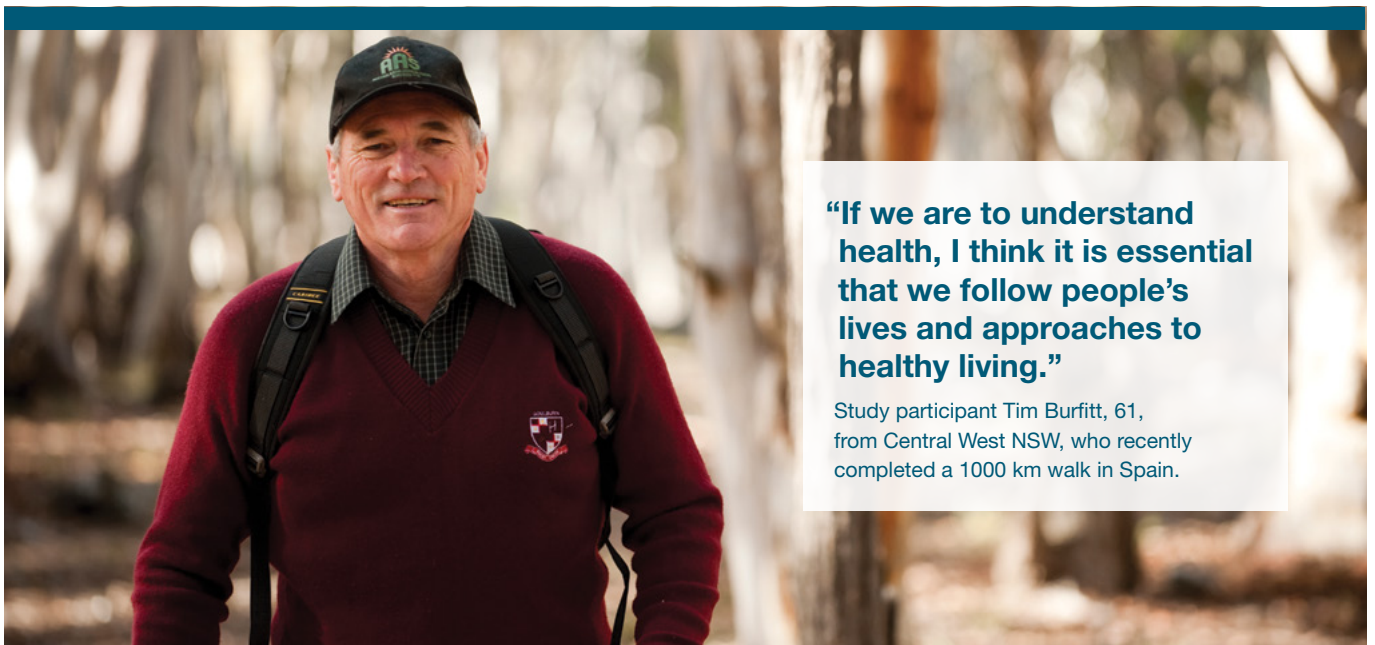


CatchUp

A newsletter for participants in the 45 and Up Study



“If we are to understand health, I think it is essential that we follow people’s lives and approaches to healthy living.”

Study participant Tim Burfitt, 61, from Central West NSW, who recently completed a 1000 km walk in Spain.

Big Study numbers make a big impact

Did you know that chronic lung disease affects one in every 20 Australians over 45? That’s nearly half a million people. Long-term lung conditions are the fifth biggest killer of Australians, and because of this huge disease burden, researchers and policy makers are looking closely at what they can do to reduce its impact.

The information you and your fellow 45 and Up Study participants have provided us is an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to better understanding lung and other chronic airways diseases. Your data, along with Medicare and prescription data, has been used by

the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to better understand how the common conditions of both asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (or COPD) are managed and treated.

The AIHW’s research revealed that many people aren’t having the recommended lung function tests before or after they are prescribed medications to treat these two conditions. This means they may be given the wrong diagnoses, or be prescribed medications that won’t help their condition.

Not only can these new findings lead to better strategies to improve

health outcomes for the many Australians living with chronic airways diseases, but they show how big studies like the 45 and Up Study can be linked with other data to give us insights into many other chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and cancer.

The AIHW says these new findings could provide valuable evidence for health policy and the quality use of medicines.

► Read inside about more ways your 45 and Up Study data is making a difference.

What are we learning from Australia's largest study?

If you struggle with being overweight, can being physically active offset your risk of developing diabetes? What effect does your education have on your risk of heart disease? And is retirement good for your health?

These are among hundreds of questions about the health of older Australians that researchers have used the 45 and Up Study to address.

Researchers from Sydney University found that being active, while it's important, doesn't protect you from developing type 2 diabetes if you're overweight. Active obese people still have five times the risk of developing type 2 diabetes as those who are a healthy weight, but don't do a lot of exercise.

Other researchers have found some good news for retirees, who they discovered have healthier lifestyles than their peers who are still at work. Retirees are less likely to smoke, more likely to be physically active, spend less time sitting during the day and have healthier sleep patterns than people of the same age who are still in the workforce.

Another new piece of research showed that people who have a university degree are much less likely to have a heart attack or stroke than those who left school without a school certificate.

Researcher Dr Rosemary Korda, from Australian National University, said the difference in disease rates between more and less disadvantaged groups showed how much cardiovascular disease could be prevented.

We can't do it without you

The contributions made by each and every one of you, our 265,000 participants in the 45 and Up Study, are the key to the Study's growing value in driving better health for all Australians.

As you can see from the stories in this newsletter, by sharing your health and lifestyle information, you are helping to answer some of the big questions being

asked about healthy ageing in Australia and globally.

Hundreds of researchers have now used the information you have given us, and health planners are drawing on this knowledge to make improvements to our health systems and services.

So thank you for your continued involvement in the Study - it is truly valuable and valued.

- Professor Emily Banks

"Contributions are the key to the Study's growing value in driving better health for all Australians."

Professor Emily Banks,
45 and Up Study Scientific Director



5
times

The increased risk of type 2 diabetes if you are obese but still exercise

93
minutes

Weekly increase in physical activity among retirees over the three-year study

Participant voices

I'm keen to contribute to the Study having as broad a cross section of our community as possible.

Mrs Gina Francis, 66,
Mid North Coast, NSW

Diabetes devastated my family and I hope that my small contribution, as part of the Study, will protect many families in the future.

Ms Jenna Price, 60,
Sydney, NSW

I wish to encourage and facilitate research that will benefit both the broader community and myself in the long term.

Mr Kevin Gregory, 66,
Central Coast, NSW.

“The tool was excellent at predicting future lung cancer diagnoses.”

Dr Marianne Weber,
Cancer Council NSW Research Fellow



Study shows way ahead for lung cancer screening programs

Researchers from major Study partner the Cancer Council NSW have helped with the development of a new tool that can predict which people are at the highest risk of developing lung cancer. They used the 45 and Up Study to test the tool's effectiveness in almost 100,000 participants who are current or ex-smokers.

“We compared the tool's predictions with how many smokers in the 45 and Up Study went on to develop lung cancer – and found that it was excellent at predicting future lung cancer diagnoses in the Australian population,” says Cancer Council NSW Research Fellow Dr Marianne Weber.

This is important, because we know that screening for lung cancer is only effective in long-term current and ex-smokers at the highest risk of the disease. So targeting the right group is essential but until now, it has been very difficult to identify which people are at the highest risk.

The new tool uses a mathematical formula to combine factors such as age, smoking intensity, duration and years since quitting – as well as additional factors like body mass index and family history of lung cancer – to predict someone's risk of being diagnosed with lung cancer in the next six years.

The tool predicted nearly 70 per cent of subsequent lung cancer diagnoses among those aged 55-74 years, and was better at identifying people at high risk than using smoking criteria alone. It also suggests that nearly 30% of people who have ever smoked may be eligible for screening by the time they are 55 years old.

While Australia currently does not have plans for a lung cancer screening program (there is insufficient evidence about the benefits and harms), Dr Weber said the research had major implications for any future program. A trial is now underway to further test the tool as a way to target people for screening.

Coming up

We have many new research projects planned and may ask you for help as they progress. Valuable new areas being looked at include:



Ways to improve the way people with both type 2 diabetes and depression function at work and in their daily lives



How complementary and alternative medicines are being used



New models of healthcare such as clinics that offer integrated specialist care and personalised health and wellbeing programs for men and women who have reached midlife.

Partner voices



We have been able to achieve important awareness of key health issues, in particular the impact of key risk factors in raising an individual's risk of heart disease.

Ms Kerry Doyle, CEO,
Heart Foundation NSW



The Study improves our understanding of those we want to assist and offers an evidence base to better support the design and implementation of public policy.

Mr Jason Kara, Executive
Director, Participation and
Inclusion, Department of Family
and Community Services

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.

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 2017. 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:

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

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

