

# THE 45 AND UP E – NEWS



Research to improve health and wellbeing

August 2009

[www.45andup.org.au](http://www.45andup.org.au)

## Welcome and Thank You!

Welcome to the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of **The 45 and Up Study e-News**, a bulletin for members of the 45 and Up Study Research Network, researchers, policy makers and others with a professional interest in Australia's largest cohort study. In this e-News we have included information about the Study's progress, upcoming events and use of study data for research projects.

Best wishes

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The 45 and Up Study

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## Study progress

Recruitment to the 45 and Up Study is complete. Over 250,000 men and women aged 45 and over across NSW have joined the 45 and Up Study, making it the largest study of its kind in the southern hemisphere. This has been made possible by the remarkable level of community support for the Study and the generous support of our partner organisations.

## Early research outputs

To date, four scientific papers using data from the 45 and Up Study have been published. In 2008 the 45 and Up Study Collaborators published a paper in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* that described our methods and progress to date.

Publications from the year to date are:

Weber M, Banks E, Ward R, Sitas F. Population characteristics related to colorectal cancer testing in New South Wales, Australia: results from the 45 and Up Study cohort. *J Med Screen* 2008;15:137-142.

Weber M, Banks E, Smith D.P, O'Connell D, Sitas F. Cancer screening among migrants in an Australian cohort: cross-sectional analyses from the 45 and Up Study. *BMC Public Health* 2009; 9: 144

Banks E, Jorm L, Lujic S, Rogers K. Health, ageing and private health insurance: baseline results from the 45 and Up Study cohort. *ANZ Health Policy* 2009;6:16.

These articles are available to download on our website.

## Additional research underway

There are now 28 projects underway using information from the 45 and Up Study to look at a very wide range of health issues. All of these projects have met our criteria for research quality and ethics and are in the public interest.

Our newest projects are looking at:

- The association between **cardiovascular risk factors** and psychological distress and depression (Professor Ian Hickie and colleagues)
- The effect of **overweight and obesity** on hospitalisation (Associate Professor Emily Banks and colleagues)
- The factors that increase the likelihood that older people 'age in place', and stay **living independently** for as long as possible (Professor Julie Byles and colleagues)
- Who are **high users of health services** and what illnesses they have (Professor Louisa Jorm and colleagues)
- The health of people from **non English speaking backgrounds** (Dr Magnolia Cardona and colleagues)
- The lifestyle and other factors associated with **asthma and hay fever** (Dr Hassan Vally and Dr Neil Misso)

More detail on these projects as well as all of the projects that are underway can be found on our website.

## Spotlight on bowel cancer screening

Screening for bowel cancer is known to save lives. However, screening rates are low and little is known about why some people have screening for bowel cancer and others do not.

Dr Marianne Weber and colleagues at Cancer Council NSW have used information provided by participants in the 45 and Up Study to look at who does and does not have screening for bowel cancer. "We found that only about a third of people aged 50 and over had used a bowel cancer test in the past 5 years. Screening was even less likely for smokers, those with lower incomes, those with a disability and those who reported not eating fruit and vegetables. Migrants from Asia and Western Europe were also less likely to have screening," said Dr Weber. These findings suggest that the community as a whole needs more encouragement to take up bowel cancer screening. Certain groups may need extra encouragement and accessibility by people from different ethnic backgrounds and levels of disability is important.

## Sub-studies within the 45 and Up Study framework

One of the most interesting aspects of the 45 and Up Study are the projects that are asking for more detailed information from small groups of our participants. These are our sub-studies. We will only ask participants to join these sub-studies from time to time – as we do not want to over burden them with mail. Participation in a sub-study is always completely voluntary. There are five of these sub-studies happening over the rest of this year:

### • Link-Up Project

This project will invite approximately 2,000 45 and Up participants living in either Wagga Wagga or Parramatta to give a small blood sample. This is a randomised pilot study of biospecimen collection within the Study, to provide information on the most appropriate ways of collection blood samples from Study participants.

- **SEEF** (Social, Economic and Environmental Factors of healthy ageing)

Over the next few months 100,000 participants in the 45 and Up Study will be invited to complete a questionnaire for the SEEF Project to help better understand the impact of social, environmental and economic factors on health and health services use. Areas to be examined include income, carer status, work and retirement, social networks, geography and housing.

- **The Lifestyle, Infection and Skin Cancer Study**

Approximately 3,000 45 and Up participants will be involved in this project aiming to investigate the roles of sun exposure, infections, hormones and other factors in the development of non-melanoma skin cancer. This will involve completing a questionnaire and providing blood samples and skin swabs.

- **Retirement Transition and Health**

This project will collect detailed information from 2,000 45 and Up participants related to their retirement plans and then moving to retirement. Participation will involve completing a brief survey every year for 5 years to help gain a better understanding of retirement and the factors that help retirees better adjust.

- **Cardiovascular Risk and Psychological Distress**

This project will invite 5,000 45 and Up participants who report high psychological distress as well as comorbid cardiovascular disease to participate in a web based intervention over a period of six weeks. The project will examine the effect of an established e-health depression and cardiovascular intervention ('e-couch', plus exercise module) on depression, cognition and cardiovascular outcomes.

All of these sub-studies are examples of the how the 45 and Up Study can serve as a framework for more detailed studies of health. After a period of exclusive access by the researchers responsible for these sub-studies, the data collected by these projects will be added to the 45 and Up Study resource and available for use in approved projects by other researchers. This means we will be constantly adding to the value and scope of the information available on participants in the 45 and Up Study.

## **2009 Annual Collaborators' meeting**

Collaborators and other interested people are welcome to attend the **2009 Collaborators' Meeting**. **Professor John Powles** from Cambridge University will be delivering the day's keynote address. Professor Powles is recognised for his wide ranging work in epidemiology and public health, including health risk transitions in middle and high income countries, public health assessment and public health policy. Professor Powles will present on **how scientific evidence changes population behaviour and risk**.

**Date** Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

**Time** 10.00am to 3.00pm

**Venue** Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh

Further details of the program are available from the 45 and Up Study [website](#) and invitations will be posted out shortly. The **Report** from last year's Collaborators' Meeting is also available at our website.

## Partnerships in healthy ageing

The 45 and Up Study is managed by the Sax Institute in partnership with our major partner Cancer Council NSW. Further partners in the Study are: the National Heart Foundation of Australia (NSW Division); *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*; NSW Health; the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care; and most recently, UnitingCare Ageing.

The Study is also supported by Macquarie Bank Foundation, Freehills, the Baxter Charitable Foundation and Alma Hazel Eddy Trust (both managed by Perpetual Ltd), and TRUST. The MBF Foundation has also funded a three-year 'Policy in Action Roundtable' Project to encourage the early use of the 45 and Up Study for policy-relevant research.

## Questions and information

If you would like more information about the 45 and Up Study, please contact the Study team by:

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