

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### The side effect of sitting down: a greater risk of dying

Sitting down for long periods of time may increase your risk of dying, regardless of how physically active you are, according to a study of more than 200,000 NSW men and women.

New research to emerge from the 45 and Up Study, the largest ongoing study in the southern hemisphere, shows mortality risk increases with number of hours spent sitting.

Those reporting the highest amount of daily sitting had a 48% increased risk of death compared with those who sat for less than four hours a day. This was independent of how much time they spent on physical activity.

"These results have important implications for public health programs," said co-author Professor Adrian Bauman, from the University of Sydney's school of public health.

"They show that physical activity, while important, is no 'get out of jail free' card. Health programs in the future may need to focus specifically on reducing prolonged periods of sitting as well as boosting the amount of exercise people do."

Professor Bauman and colleagues have previously published data from the 45 and Up Study showing strong links between sedentary time and obesity. But until now, there has been limited evidence about the impact of sitting time on mortality risk.

The research is one of nearly 60 sub-studies currently underway using data from the 45 and Up Study, managed by the Sax Institute. It will be presented at today's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Collaborators Meeting, where the Institute will launch its five-year follow up of the 265,000 people currently enrolled in the study.

During the follow up, more than one in every 10 over-45-year-olds in NSW will be asked to provide more information about their health, lifestyle, the medications and types of health services they use. Such a large-scale project enables world class research to be carried out, and contributes important new knowledge health policy makers can use to help Australia face the challenge of an ageing population.

Professor Dame Valerie Beral AC, Director of Oxford University's Cancer Epidemiology Unit and principal investigator of the UK's Million Women Study, will launch the five-year follow-up today.

"Large-scale, longitudinal studies such as these are critical to our understanding of population health and Australia is incredibly fortunate to have this rich information source right here in Sydney," she said.

#### Other key 45 and Up Study findings to be presented at today's meeting include:

- People with excellent overall health are 20 times more likely to have a good memory compared to those with poor health. People with hearing loss, poor teeth, poor quality of life and vision are more likely to have a neurological condition called mild cognitive impairment.
- Having erectile dysfunction (ED) increases the risk of dying from any cause and being hospitalised with cardiovascular disease – even in men with no history of the disease. Those with severe erectile dysfunction have double the risk of dying in the next one or two years compared with those without ED.

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**Media contact:** Kellie Bisset T: 02 9514 5975 M: 0434 614 578

#### 45 and Up Study partners:

