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New report shows a third of burden of disease is preventable

The [Burden of Disease](#) report highlights the importance of prevention to keep our community out of hospital and have the best quality of life says Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) Vice President David Templeman.

A new report, Australian Burden of Disease Study 2011, released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows a least 31% of the burden of disease is preventable if risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol use and physical inactivity were addressed.

“Tobacco use was responsible for 9% of the total burden of disease and injury making it the most burdensome risk factor. While PHAA applauds the Government for increasing the excise on tobacco, an overall approach needs to be considered when looking at prevention. There’s still a long way to go,” said Mr Templeman.

The report shows alcohol use was responsible for 5.1% and physical inactivity accounted for 5% of the total burden of disease and injury.

“Alcohol use and physical activity leads to chronic conditions including heart disease and type II diabetes. A sugar tax on soft drinks is one way to prevent the rising burden of disease especially chronic diseases. There is no nutritional value in soft drinks. By implementing a tax and educating the public on the harms soft drink has on a person’s overall health, we can become a healthier nation,” said Mr Templeman.

“The burden of chronic diseases is putting pressure on our hospitals making it difficult for families to receive the care they need. The report particularly shows the inequities for those in lower socioeconomic areas and regional areas,” says Mr Templeman.

Large inequalities were also found across socioeconomic groups and remoteness areas. A 4% reduction could be achieved if all remoteness areas experienced the same level of burden as Major cities.

“This report shows the Government needs to implement a comprehensive approach to target those who are being affected especially in rural and remote areas. We have a responsibility to ensure all Australians has access to healthcare services no matter their postcode,” said Mr Templeman.

“Greater investment into prevention initiatives can save lives. Over one third of Australians don’t need to have the burden of disease. These statistics show a clear cause to affect and how it can be stopped – let’s start targeting the risks and begin saving lives,” said Mr Templeman.

For further information/comment:

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