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New report shows prevention funding shrinking

The new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [Australia's health 2016](#) report, released yesterday shows funding for prevention initiatives has reduced from 2.2% (2008) to 1.4%. The Government should be embarrassed about this finding and take action to rectify it according to Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) CEO Michael Moore.

“Investing in prevention is paramount to good public health for all Australians. Since 2008, prevention funding has decreased. This is simply not good enough. The report shows a rise in obesity and chronic disease with an increase in recurrent spending on hospital admissions. If more money was invested in prevention of chronic disease, the pressure on hospitals would decrease and Australians would have a better quality of life,” said Mr Moore who is also President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations.

The newest biennial report shows an increase in life expectancy. However, 50% of Australians are living with one or more chronic diseases. Obesity rates have risen from 43.8% (1990) to 63.4% with 45% of adults inactive or insufficiently active.

“Chronic diseases are increasing and the number of Australians with multiple chronic diseases are increasing. An estimated 1.2 million Australians have diabetes, 85% of whom have type II diabetes. Type II diabetes may be directly attributed to lifestyle factors, and is, therefore preventable,” continued Mr Moore.

“The good news is the decreasing smoking rates and alcohol consumption yet healthy food consumption is still a challenge,” said Mr Moore.

“There has been a 35% rise in obesity in the last twenty-five years. If these rates continue, by 2040 the obesity rates will be at 91%. The only way to stop this number from growing at this exponential rate is to invest in prevention. Australia’s ageing population is also on the rise so the risk of a majority of elderly people with chronic conditions relying on primary health and hospital services is high,” said Mr Moore.

Last week, the [Roy Morgan Research poll](#) conducted for Research Australia shows 76% Australians rank investment into preventive health among the top ten priorities for the Australian Government.

“Australians are sending a message to Government – we need more preventive measures in place so we can improve our overall health. There is overwhelming data on what the next thirty years are going to look like in Australia - it doesn’t look good,” said Mr Moore.

“Prevention is better than cure. If prevention isn’t funded more funding will need to be pumped into hospitals to manage chronic diseases. Fund prevention, save lives. It’s that simple. By doing this we can give future generations the best start in life and role models who live by example,” concluded Mr Moore.

The joint PHAA 44th Annual Conference and 20th Chronic Diseases Network Conference will be held from 18 – 21 September 2016 in Alice Springs, NT. The theme is Protection, Prevention, Promotion, Healthy Futures: Chronic Conditions and Public Health. #PHAACDN2016

For further information/comment:

Sophie Brown (Michael Moore comment)

0421 749 608