



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Small steps to a longer life

A Cambridge University study involving over 25,000 people aged 45-79 years has found that even small changes in lifestyles towards healthier habits can have a significant impact adding 10-12 years to people's lives. The study was conducted as part of a multinational longitudinal study the European Prospective Investigation of Cancer (EPIC) study.

"The message we are sending is that making small changes to your lifestyle such as adding one serving of vegetables each day or getting off the bus a stop or two earlier and walking the extra distance has a significant positive impact on your health" said Dr Jenny Thomson, ADGP Chair.

"ADGP supports the Government's push to enhance preventative health care in general practice. We know that a wellness oriented, primary health care system with general practice in a pivotal role can deliver better health outcomes for patients but we need the right mechanisms to achieve real results" said Ms Kate Carnell, CEO of ADGP.

Obesity has reached epidemic levels in Australia and is a critical public health issue, more than a fifth of adult Australians are estimated to be obese and half to two thirds are considered to be overweight. Almost a quarter of Australian children and adolescents are also either overweight or obese.

General practice is an ideal setting in which to manage - and prevent - overweight and obesity but the system currently isn't set up to support general practice in doing this. Simply allowing GPs to treat obesity using the Government's Enhanced Primary Care Chronic Disease Management Medicare Item Numbers will give general practice the capacity to manage a patient's care and coordinate care from a range of providers such as dietitians, exercise physiologists and psychologists amongst others. This means better patient outcomes and a significantly improved prospect for our health system.

ADGP and the Divisions of General Practice Network are implementing a healthy lifestyle initiative, Lifescripts, which provides general practice with evidence based tools that can be individually tailored to give people healthy lifestyle advice.

"Lifestyle behaviours are the largest group of preventable risk factors for death and disease in Australia. Divisions and practices are embracing Lifescripts to help patients achieve healthier lifestyles and prevent chronic disease" said Ms Carnell. "Encouraging healthier lifestyles to prevent chronic disease will save in treatment costs for the health system over the long term".

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
 - ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.

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