



Media Release

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Don't 'Tough it Out' – The Flying Doctor is Calling on Men to 'Man Up' About Their Health.

The biggest barrier to improving men's health is often the challenge of getting men to visit their doctor, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is calling on men to 'man up' and get a primary health check.

June 9-15 is Men's Health Week and the RFDS is aiming to increase the awareness among men of preventable health problems, and encourage early detection and treatment of disease.

RFDS General Manager of Health Services Linda Cutler said there is still reluctance for men to consider and discuss their own health and well-being, and they often adopt a 'last resort' approach to seeking professional help.

"We know that men's life expectancy is shorter than that of women. They experience higher rates of heart disease, skin cancer, lung cancer and diseases of the liver.

"Men have higher rates of accidents and suicide as well compared with women.

"In regional and rural areas these problems and issues are exacerbated because of a number of reasons including location, work, risk factors and lifestyle.

"In addition, studies have shown that an attitude of self-reliance and reluctance to seek help combined with fewer opportunities to access preventive healthcare and public health education in rural and remote Australia contribute to the poorer health of men in these areas.

"The Flying Doctor is seeking to turn that attitude around by challenging men's beliefs about visiting a GP.

" 'I don't have time, I'll tough it out, I'm fine' are excuses we hear every day.

"While we may be able to 'shake off' a flu, ignore a nagging pain or think our mood will improve, there are many times when symptoms will only get worse if proper treatment is not received.

"We're all busy, but making time for a doctor's visit should be a priority.

"We are encouraging men to have regular check-ups, engage with GP's about any symptoms they may be experiencing and understand the link between lifestyle and health" Linda said.

A recent screening initiative to encourage men to get health checks was manned by RFDS medical staff at Broken Hill's Agfair and highlighted a range of health issues exacerbated by isolation and the pressures of drought.

“One diabetic man who had been in town for 12 months but was yet to link with a new GP was found to have dangerously high blood pressure. He was assisted to make an appointment for a GP in town,” said Dr Jared Kilday, an RDFS Medical Officer.

“Alcohol featured as an area of potential improvement for a number of men. One was concerned he was using alcohol to take his mind of the drought and aid sleep.

A number of men we saw should have followed up on health issues, such as previous heart problems, urological problems, but they’d lost contact with their GP or cardiologist GP.

High blood pressure was another issue and we gave lots of suggestions to go and get blood tests and other checks done as they had a family history of heart disease or stroke and never had cholesterol etc checked.” Added Dr Kilday.

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Notes to Editor

	Standardised Death Rate		Male:Female	Percent Of Total Deaths	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Underlying cause of death	Per 100 000	Per 100 000	Ratio	%	%
Prostate cancer	31	-	..	4.1	..
Suicide	16.1	4.4	3.6	2.3	0.7
Transport accidents	9.6	3.2	3	1.4	0.5
Skin cancer	12	4.7	2.6	1.7	0.9
Diseases of the liver	9.3	4	2.3	1.4	0.7
Parkinson's disease	7.8	3.7	2.1	1	0.8
Lung cancer	47.9	23.5	2	6.8	4.1
Ischaemic heart disease	126.7	72.7	1.7	16.9	15.9
Chronic lower respiratory disease	34.6	21	1.6	4.6	4.1
Stroke	49.5	47	1.1	6.4	10.3

Australian Bureau of Statistics – selected causes of death 2008

ABOUT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The not-for-profit Royal Flying Doctor Service has been taking the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia since 1928. The service provides 24 hour emergency cover to 90% of the Australian continent, via a modern fleet of specially equipped aircraft. In the past year, the South Eastern Section flew the equivalent of 6.5 round trips to the moon as it conducted over 4,700 clinics, took over 5,000 telehealth calls, had over 54,000 patient contacts and transported almost 8,600 patients.