



Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all!

## A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PARTICIPANTS!

The North West Adelaide Health Study continues to grow! In Stage 1 in 2000 and 2002/03, we recruited people into the cohort and took baseline measurements. In our current phase ~ Stage 2 ~ we asked people to return for their second free health assessment and this phase will wind up in January 2006. Stage 2 has been a great success with almost 90% of the original cohort participants taking part, including people from interstate and overseas.

Stage 2 started in May 2004 and followed up on many of the health conditions and risk factors investigated in Stage 1. It included a focus on musculoskeletal conditions and mental health and had three components: the telephone interview; the self-completed questionnaire which also included questions on social determinants of health such as income and education; and the clinic appointment which included repeat measurements of blood pressure, height, weight, waist and hip circumference, fasting blood cholesterol and glucose and lung function, in addition to hand photographs, hand grip strength, shoulder flexibility, and foot pain. The study team also investigated participants' views about their experiences with the health care system, including things that may have gone wrong in doctors' rooms or in hospital such as being given the wrong medication, or being injured through treatment.

At this time, we are expecting to conduct a short telephone questionnaire in 2006 and to roll out Stage 3 (the third clinic examination) in 2007/08 - which equates to one clinic visit approximately every three years and one telephone questionnaire in between each.

The success of the study so far would not have been possible without the generous gift of time and effort from all of our participants - *thank you all so much!!* We look forward to your ongoing support of the study, as we seek to improve the health of South Australians.



## WE NEED YOU!!! ... TO BE A MEDIA STAR

The North West Adelaide Health Study is now starting to be recognised by the health community for its findings. Recent attention has centred on findings about:



- ◆ the metabolic syndrome, a set of risk factors including central obesity, high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar (diabetes) and high cholesterol (The Advertiser, June 2005)
- ◆ asthma in older people (radio segments on 5AA and ABC Radio, and newspaper articles based on interviews from some of our participants in The Advertiser, The Portside Messenger and The Bunyip September 2005);
- ◆ awareness of the symptoms of having a stroke (radio segments on ABC country radio and Radio Adelaide, and a short story on the Channel 10 news, September 2005, again featuring one of our participants).

We occasionally receive requests from the media for personal insights from participants about their health or about being involved in the study. These requests relate to a topic of interest at the time, and are generally for articles in the newspaper, although the occasional request for a radio or television interview may occur.

We *very much* need volunteers of all ages who would be willing to help us with these media requests. If we then contact you with a media request and you agree to assist us, we will support you in every way possible. Your name will not be passed onto the media without your consent. You would not be under any obligation to take part and may decline a request at any time. If you can help us in any way, please contact the study team (contact details over the page) who will record your interest. We look forward to hearing from you!



# SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE STUDY AROUND THE GLOBE



Since the study started in 2005, we have been working hard to tell people about the valuable contribution its findings can make. We have conducted in-house seminars for people within the Department of Health and overseas visitors, as well as published reports on the baseline findings, how people with chronic conditions deal with illness, education and information issues among people with diabetes, and the use of services and products from Medicare data. So far, we have:

-  Published ten papers in international journals such as *Social & Preventive Medicine*, *Thorax*, *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *Diabetes Care* and *the Medical Journal of Australia* - on topics such as obesity, undiagnosed asthma and asthma in older people, the burden of chronic disease risk factors, and the metabolic syndrome.
-  Presented over 50 oral presentations and posters at overseas, national and local conferences including the European Respiratory Society Conference in Copenhagen, the 1st International Congress on Prediabetes & the Metabolic Syndrome in Berlin, and the Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity, as well as annual Australian Diabetes Society and Public Health Association of Australia conferences.

Details of publications, reports and conference presentations and posters are available on the NWAH Study website or by contacting the study team (see below).

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**W**ith Christmas holidays coming, Nutrition Australia have some timely advice for us! They suggest the following tips:

 *Don't try to lose weight over Christmas with all its special foods - just maintain your current level and aim to get back to healthy eating on 2nd January.*

 *Don't starve yourself - eat regular healthy meals so you don't want to snack!*



 *Try to avoid deep fried, crumbed and battered foods, cheese platters and nuts - instead choose fruit, vegetable or bread-based snacks.*

 *Been asked to bring a plate? Instead of potato chips, try fruits in season now - apricots, peaches, strawberries, melon.*

 *Remember that while alcohol does not have fat, it does have calories! Try diluted drinks such as spritzers (half wine, half soda) or use a diet mixer - light beer has less calories than regular beer.*



The website also has healthy Christmas recipes to try - let's make the holiday season a (reasonably) healthy one!

Information provided by Nutrition Australia "Surviving the Festive Season"



We value your support on the NWAHS project and would like to keep you informed. If you change your address, telephone number or circumstances, or have any questions regarding your clinic visit or results, please contact the study team:

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