

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

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New analysis prompts calls for greater investment in chronic disease

New data analysis by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has shown the devastating effects of living with two or more chronic conditions, prompting renewed calls by health groups for Government commitment to tackle chronic disease.

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death in Australia. One in two Australians have a chronic disease and 4.9 million Australians have multiple chronic conditions, known as multimorbidity.

The [new analysis](#), released today, reveals the progressive worsening of health associated with multiple chronic conditions. People living with multimorbidity are more likely to experience chronic pain, psychological distress, and restrictions or limitations in everyday activities. They also have poorer self-assessed health and are less likely to work compared to people with no conditions or a single chronic condition.

In response to the new analysis, the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance is calling on the Government to increase investment in prevention, risk assessment and early detection of chronic disease to reduce the enormous burden of these conditions across the population.

Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Sharon McGowan said the effects of multiple chronic conditions are far-reaching and urgent action is required to help people reduce their risk.

“We know that people with chronic conditions experience a range of challenges associated with their condition, and these are exacerbated for people with two or more conditions,” said Ms McGowan.

“Chronic diseases can be largely prevented or reduced through risk assessment and management of risk, but there needs to be urgent Government commitment and investment to achieve this,” said Ms McGowan.

Ms McGowan continued, “We welcome the \$1.9 million in the 2021-22 budget for preventive health research and scoping activities, including a national health literacy strategy, to inform a National Preventive Health Strategy, but this falls short of the investment needed to address the increasing burden of chronic disease and its enormous impact on the lives of Australians.”

The new analysis demonstrated the interconnected web of chronic disease, including strong links between chronic kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancers.

Ms McGowan highlighted that many chronic conditions do not occur in isolation, and there needs to be a more holistic approach to reduce chronic disease.

Ms McGowan said, “Many chronic diseases share risk factors and interact to increase risk. Australians should be supported to understand and manage their risk to reduce complications, disease progression and the long-term effects of multiple chronic conditions.”

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance is calling on the Government to include concrete targets and actions for chronic disease prevention, risk assessment, and early detection in the national prevention and primary care strategies.

Ms McGowan said, “The national prevention and primary care strategies are huge opportunities and a great step forward, but these strategies need to be backed by Government commitment to invest in chronic disease and the long-term health of Australians.”

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The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) is an alliance of Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; National Heart Foundation of Australia; Kidney Health Australia; and Stroke Foundation. Members work together to collectively support prevention, integrated risk assessment and effective management of chronic disease risk.