THE 45 AND UP
E – NEWS

Issue 2
October 2006

Research to improve health and wellbeing

www.45andup.org.au

Welcome to the second issue of the **45 and Up E-News**.

Early information from Study Participants

Preliminary analysis of data from over 36,000 participants who joined the 45 and Up Study after the first mailout shows that we have a heterogeneous sample that will enable examination of multiple determinants of health and different population groups. Although the Study population is derived from the general population and is likely to be among the most representative of large scale cohort studies, the analyses describe this sample and are not prevalence estimates for the population of NSW. The analyses show that the participants have a wide range of backgrounds, lifestyles and health needs and that:

- There is good balance in participation of men and women in the Study, with close to 50% of each
- 30% of participants are aged 45-54, 31% aged 55-64, 21% aged 65-74 and 17% aged 75+
- 75% were born in Australia, with the UK, New Zealand, Germany and the Netherlands being the next most common countries of birth
- 1% are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin
- Around half the participants are in paid work, with the remainder being retired, doing home/family care, doing unpaid work or not working for other reasons
- 8% of participants are current smokers and 35% are former smokers
- 4% report caring full-time for a friend or family member with an illness or disability and 5% require help with daily activities themselves
- Participants report a wide range of health needs, with just over 50% rating their health as excellent or very good

If you would like more information, the initial characteristics of the first 36,000 participants have been collated in the Study's Preliminary Data Book which is now available at www.saxinstitute.org.au

New Study partners - *beyondblue* and Macquarie Bank Foundation

We are very pleased to welcome both *beyondblue* and Macquarie Bank Foundation as new funding partners. We look forward to working with *beyondblue* to ensure we make the best use of the Study to understand depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia.

Consumer and Community Committee

We are establishing a Consumer and Community Committee to help us make sure that we understand issues from the perspective of potential and actual participants. The Committee will be chaired by Ms Betty Johnson, a long term consumer advocate, and will report to our Community and Ethical Oversight Committee.

We will be calling for Expressions of Interest from community members to join the Committee in October and will be interviewing to select a small number of committee members.

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Using the 45 and Up Study for research

The 45 and Up Study is a collaborative research resource designed to facilitate high quality large-scale research in NSW. The value of the cohort will grow over time, but it is already the second largest cohort in Australia – we have both questionnaire data and permission to link to other data sets from the 36,000 participants. It is also possible to go back to participants to invite them to join additional studies around particular issues.

We are committed to making sure that this resource is used as well as possible to inform our understanding of health and health services. We would like to encourage researchers, policy makers and other individuals to link with the 45 and Up Study by:

(a) **Joining the Research Network**.

Network members will receive regular updates of Study progress, notification of Collaborators' meetings and other events. Members will also have the opportunity to join Study Special Interest Groups to develop project ideas; and

(b) **Using the 45 and Up Study for future research.**

Researchers can conduct research using the Study by applying through the 45 and Up Study Scientific Advisory Committee. The Committee wants to facilitate as much high quality research as possible within the Study and is keen to receive proposals to use the resource. There is a two-stage process:

- **Stage 1 - Preliminary Access Approval** allows researchers to gain in-principle agreement to conduct their research project within the 45 and Up Study; this early stage approval is designed to support applications for competitive research funding.

- Researchers whose projects have funding and appropriate ethical and data custodian approval can apply directly for **Stage 2 - Full Approval to Access Study Data**. Following approval of Stage 2, researchers will work with Study staff to receive the appropriate access to data and other elements of the Study to meet the needs of their specific project.

If you would like to join the 45 and Up Study Research Network, please contact Charmaine White (details below). Information on how to apply and conduct research within the Study, including use of Study data, is available at www.saxinstitute.org.au under Quick Links.

Further Information

If you would like to know more about any of the above, please contact the Ms Charmaine White on (02) 9514 5949 or e-mail charmaine.white@saxinstitute.org.au