

The health behaviours and attitudes of working men

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Introduction and objectives: Australian men have poorer health outcomes than women, with shorter life expectancies and higher mortality. In the North Queensland regional town of Mackay, the health status of men is below the national average. Help-seeking behaviour of men has been reported to contribute to poor health outcomes due to delay and inadequate utilisation of health care practitioners. The aim of this study was to investigate the general health and help-seeking behaviour of men in the wider Mackay area and explore motivations and barriers to undertaking regular health checks.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey of working men, including fly-in fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in drive-out (DIDO) workers, was undertaken in the wider Mackay region (Sarina, Dysart, Clermont, Moranbah, Collinsville, Bowen, Proserpine, Mackay and surrounding areas). Participants were recruited directly, as well as via communication with industries in the local community. The local print, radio and television media assisted with awareness and the recruitment process. The survey used electronic (Survey Monkey) and paper-based methods and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Information regarding variables, including age, industry, FIFO/DIDO status, and health status (smoking, weight, alcohol, depression, GP visits) was collected. Participants were also able to provide responses regarding where they seek health-related information and barriers to accessing health care, for qualitative analysis. Data will be analysed using SPSS. This study was approved by the Townsville Health Service Research Ethics Committee and funded by the Mackay Base Hospital Private Practice Trust Fund.

Results: To date, 250 surveys have been completed with recruitment continuing to the end of 2014. Data will be statistically analysed for associations with help-seeking behaviours and industries, marital status, age groups and FIFO/DIDO status. Thematic analyses of questions about motivations to have regular health checks will be conducted by the research team.

Conclusions: To be developed at the conclusion of the data analysis.