

FOR IMMEDIATE USE
Tuesday 19th May 2009

Back pain – a weighty issue for Australians

Nearly half of Australians (48%) who consider themselves overweight suffer from daily back pain according to new research undertaken by the Chiropractors' Association of Australia (CAA).

Being overweight made them almost twice as likely to experience daily back pain when compared to the average Australian.

The research found that Australians are failing to recognise the importance exercise, diet and posture in reducing back pain but instead turning to painkillers for a quick fix.

The independent research, commissioned for National Chiropractic Care Week 2009 (May 18-24) found that Australians could potentially reduce the chances of suffering frequent back pain by 18%, just by exercising for at least 30 minutes a day.

Reducing stress was another key factor found to reduce the likelihood of back pain.

However, 45% of Australians choose to take a painkiller, which have no long-term benefit for back pain sufferers.

Despite the burden of back pain, the majority of Australians consider themselves to be in good health even though three quarters of respondents don't take the recommended amount of daily exercise.

CAA National spokesperson Patrick Sim said, "Lack of exercise is one of the key contributing factors to back pain and poor spinal health along with other 'big picture' lifestyle choices such as diet, smoking and poor posture. It's not just back pain, it's the big picture."

"59% failed to recognise exercise as an action they should undertake to reduce back pain and 92% failed to consider a healthy diet."

"Australians need to consider that back pain could be a sign of something more significant, and should not be viewed as something that can just be treated with painkillers."

"While drugs may relieve pain temporarily, they are a quick fix solution, which ignores underlying structural problems and lifestyle habits – the 'big picture'."

The research also found that the majority of Australians blamed a specific incident such as an injury or heavy lifting for their back pain without recognition that their lifestyle could be making them more susceptible.

Making good lifestyle choices and maintaining your spinal health are key to reducing the risk of back pain and leading a healthy life," said Patrick.

Through their five-year university training, chiropractors can provide specialist care, exercises, healthy lifestyle advice and information regarding the 'big picture'.

"Chiropractic care offers a safe, proven, and effective drug free choice in spinal health, care. Chiropractic can help you get to the cause of your pain and most importantly, it helps you to maintain your long term spinal health and maximise the body's overall health and performance," said Patrick.

"Not only can chiropractic provide pain relief, it corrects dysfunction in the nervous system and musculoskeletal system, enabling individuals to unlock their full health potential."

As part of National Chiropractic Care Week 2009 (May 18 – 24), the CAA has developed a free "Big Picture" booklet on spinal health, to provide great information to Australians and help them lead healthy lives.

The booklet contains information on back pain such as common misconceptions, causes, lifestyle choices, risk factors, spinal health, chiropractic care and a do it yourself home posture check.

Throughout May, selected chiropractors from the CAA will also help Australians by offering free spinal assessments and will be on hand to provide expert advice on how to maintain your spinal health.

For more information on National Chiropractic Care Week 2009 visit www.chiropractors.asn.au/thebigpicture or contact the CAA hotline toll-free on 1800 075 003.

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About the Chiropractors' Association of Australia

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia (National) Limited (CAA) is the peak body representing chiropractors in Australia. It has state associations in all states and territories of Australia.

The Association has a current membership of approximately 2,500 members. The national body is involved with such matters as education, publications, conventions, international relations and the liaison with federal government authorities.

The CAA actively promotes the profession within Australia to the general public and to other professionals in health related fields.

About the Research

2009 Australia's Back Pain: Commissioned by the Chiropractors' Association of Australia (National) and conducted by Square Holes Pty Ltd between March 1-3 2009. The research looked at Australians experience with back pain including prevalence, attributed causes, treatments and lifestyle habits.

The Australia's Back Pain research was conducted using a sample size of 600 with interviews conducted in every major capital city making it statistically reliable for the population size. The research carries a +/- 4% margin of error, which is within accepted industry guidelines.

The key findings from the research can be obtained by contacting Karl Herger on (02) 4731 8011 or 0429 999 160.