

Advertisement – Life! Taking Action on Diabetes Brief for health professionals

May 2009

Background to the type 2 diabetes prevention ‘amputation’ campaign

The Life! Program is a Victorian Government type 2 diabetes prevention initiative. It aims to provide a lifestyle-behaviour change program to 25,000 high risk Victorians to help delay or prevent diabetes.

Why focus on diabetes prevention?

- Diabetes currently affects an estimated 1.5 million Australians.¹
- Only half the people with diabetes know they have it. For every person known to have type 2 diabetes, another is yet to be diagnosed.¹
- Research shows that most people do not think diabetes is a serious illness, and underestimate their risk.^{2,3}
- There are over 700,000 Victorians with pre-diabetes (impaired fasting glucose or impaired glucose tolerance), who are therefore at high risk of developing diabetes.¹
- Since 2001 there have been 5376 lower limb amputations in Victoria due to type 2 diabetes complications.⁴
- There were 847 amputations due to type 2 diabetes in 07/08, at an annual cost of over \$42.5 million in acute care and rehab costs.⁵



The campaign aims:

- To encourage people at high risk to ring 13 RISK (13 7475) for more information on type 2 diabetes prevention
- To encourage people to visit their GP to discuss their risk of type 2 diabetes
- To increase the number of people taking part in Life! courses

The campaign targets:

- Adults aged 50 years and over

Campaign activities:

- Television advertising/radio/print

Call 13 RISK (13 7475) or visit goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/life

When will the advertisements appear on air?

The campaign will be launched early May 2009 by the health Minister Daniel Andrews.

Why focus on amputation?

Neuropathy (or peripheral nerve disease) and blood vessel damage may lead to foot ulceration, serious foot problems and limb amputation. It is estimated that amputation is 15 times more common in people who have diabetes than in people who do not. Diabetes is the most common cause of lower limb amputation.

Do graphic media campaigns trigger behaviour change?

This campaign is emotive. It is designed to make people stop and think about the impact that their lifestyle will have on their future. The complications of diabetes are very real and can affect people in many ways, but type 2 diabetes can be prevented.

Television commercials which use a 'fear-arousing' message are more likely to be effective if there is a call-to-action that can easily be performed, such as calling a help line. The 'easily performed' call-to-action in this campaign is calling 13 RISK (137475).

The QUIT, TAC, and Pap screen advertisements have been effective while using graphic images to change people's behaviour.⁶

Are the people in the advertisement all actors?

Yes. The advertisement was produced by Campaign Palace in Victoria. The person in the advertisement is an amputee, however, she is an actress.

What will this mean for my patients and practice?

The campaign may cause patients to ask you about how they can prevent diabetes and whether they are at risk. Measure your patient's risk by encouraging them to complete the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK). The tool accurately predicts a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes within the next five years.

You can reassure your patients who have diabetes who may be concerned about amputation and remind them they can substantially prevent amputation by having regular foot checks with their doctor or nurse, to look after their feet and report any problems.

You can refer eligible patients to a Life! course. Studies have shown that a lifestyle behaviour change program can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes in participants by up to 58 per cent or half of new cases. Further information is available from the enclosed detailing card.

What's available to support me?

You can order resources for your practice using the enclosed resource order form. Funding is also available to support the identification and referral of patients and risk of diabetes to the Life! Program. Visit our website at diabeteslife.org.au under the GP and health professionals tab or call 13 RISK (13 7475) for further information.

What's available to support my patients?

Encourage your patients to call 13 RISK (13 7475) or visit diabeteslife.org.au for support. They can complete the AUSDRISK test online or order hard copies, obtain information on diabetes prevention and locate their nearest Life! course. Attached is a document outlining the referral for your patient to enrol in a diabetes type 2 prevention course.

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1. Dunstan, D., et al., Diabetes and associated disorders in Australia 2000. The Accelerating Epidemic, Australian diabetes, obesity and lifestyle report. 2001, International Diabetes Institute: Melbourne.
 2. Carter, O., Donovan, R & Jalleh, G., Diabetes Awareness Advertisement Testing for 45 To 70 year old May 2003., Western Australians CBRCC Report
 3. Donovan, R., Carter, O & Jalleh, G., Pre- and Post- testing of Multiple Media versus Television only Diabetes Advertising Campaign in Geraldton and Bunbury CBRCC Report. 2003.
 4. VAED amputation data (amputations caused by complications from type 2 diabetes)
 5. http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/173_07_021000/campbell/campbell.htm
 6. Tan N, Hassard K. Quitline calls and campaign television investment. In: Hassard K, editor. Australia's National Tobacco Campaign Evaluation Report Volume Two. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care; 2000. p.133-8.