

MEDIA RELEASE

1 MARCH 2020



Doctor survey reveals patient apathy driving Queensland obesity crisis

Most overweight and obese Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make healthy lifestyle changes, a survey of doctors has revealed.

Launching the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released the findings of a GP survey about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

“Doctors are treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses,” Dr Dhupelia said.

“Equally worrying is the patients’ apparent apathy towards this serious health issue.

“Nearly 90 per cent of doctors said their patients were not prepared to change their diet or exercise, even when they were aware of the health dangers of being overweight or obese. Clearly, we are losing the battle of the bulge.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, has been launched by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge, such as adding more steps or switching off a screen or swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step was seeing a GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

“We need Queenslanders to recognise obesity as a serious public health problem and start taking steps towards a healthier future,” he said. “Small daily changes can have big effects over time.”

Health Minister Steven Miles said obesity was a leading cause of hospitalisation and disability in Queensland.

“Being overweight or obese impacts people’s lives every single day – they struggle to run around and play with their kids or many spend days strapped to a dialysis machine,” Mr Miles said.

“It increases costs to our health system and the prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, back pain, osteoarthritis and many cancers.

“Reducing the rate of obesity is a priority of the Queensland Government. We’ve established Health and Wellbeing Queensland to support people with eating better, becoming more active and creating healthier environments to live, work and play.”

OAW will coincide with the inaugural World Obesity Day on March 4. More: ama.com.au/oaw

Obesity Facts and Figures

- In Queensland, two-thirds (66%) of adults and one quarter (25%) of children overweight or obeseⁱ. That's risen from 61% of adults and 20% of children in 2007-08ⁱⁱ
- Obesity costs Australian businesses \$477 million a year through lost productivity and absenteeism.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Obesity contributes to cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers^{iv}.

AMA QUEENSLAND GP SURVEY

What percentage of your patients do you estimate suffers from obesity-related health issues?	No. of doctors
<15 per cent	9%
16-50 per cent	58%
51-100 per cent	33%
How does this compare with five years ago?	No. of patients
Up to 10 per cent increase	49%
10 – 20 per cent increase	18%
More than 20 per cent increase	4%
It's stayed the same	26%
It's decreased	2%
What is the most common attitude of your obese and/overweight patients towards the health risks posed by carrying extra kilograms?	No. of patients
They are generally aware of the risks AND are committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	5%
They are generally aware of the risks BUT are not committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	62%
They are not very aware of the risks BUT, once explained, they are committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	6%
They are not very aware of the risks BUT, even when advised, are not committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	27%

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Fran Metcalf, Sequel PR – 0417 627 867 or Chiara Lesèvre, AMA Queensland – 0419 735 641

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ⁱⁱ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4842.0.55.001/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/weighing-the-cost-of-obesity-final.pdf>

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1 March 2020

Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Gladstone obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Central Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of Queensland GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Central Queensland representative Dr Nick Yim said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Yim said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found more than 30,000 people in the Gladstone Local Government area were either obese or overweight. The data showed 34 per cent were obese and a further 34 per cent were overweight.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Yim said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

“We need Queenslanders to recognise this as a serious public health epidemic and start taking small steps towards a healthier future,” Dr Dhupelia said.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

Obesity Facts and Figures

- In Queensland, two-thirds (66%) of adults and one quarter (25%) of children overweight or obeseⁱⁱ. That's risen from 61% of adults and 20% of children in 2007-08ⁱⁱⁱ
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Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Mackay obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Central Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of Queensland doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Central Queensland representative Dr Nick Yim said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Yim said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found more than 62,700 in the Mackay Local Government Area were either overweight or obese.

The data showed 37 per cent of Mackay residents were obese and 34 per cent were overweight and, in the neighbouring Isaac region, 41 per cent of people were obese and 33 per cent were overweight.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Yim said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

“We need Queenslanders to recognise this as a serious public health epidemic and start taking small steps towards a healthier future,” Dr Dhupelia said.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

Obesity Facts and Figures

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1 March 2020

Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Rockhampton obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Central Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of Queensland doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Central Queensland representative Dr Nick Yim said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Yim said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found more than 43,000 people in the Rockhampton Local Government area were either obese or overweight.

The data showed 39 per cent were obese and a further 33 per cent were overweight. In Central Highlands, 40 per cent were obese and 32 per cent were overweight while in Livingstone, 36 per cent were obese and 32 per cent were overweight. Banana Shire had the lowest rates with 33 per cent obese and 36 per cent overweight residents.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Yim said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

Obesity Facts and Figures

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Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Townsville obesity rates

Most overweight and obese North Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of Queensland doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland North Area representative Dr Michael Clements said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Clements said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found 97,495 people in the Townsville Local Government Area were either overweight or obese.

The data revealed 35 per cent were obese and another 35 per cent were overweight. However, the North Queensland Local Government Areas with the highest obesity rates were Charters Towers and Whitsunday regions where 41 per cent of people were obese, followed by 39 per cent in the Burdekin region and 36 per cent in both Douglas and Hinchinbrook areas. At least another third of the population in each LGA was also overweight.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Clements said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

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Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Wide Bay obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of Queensland doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Central Queensland representative Dr Nick Yim said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Yim said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found the Wide Bay Local Government Area with the highest rate of obesity was South Burnett where 39 per cent of residents were obese and another 32 were overweight.

In North Burnett, 38 per cent were obese and 33 were overweight and in Fraser Coast, 36 per cent and a further 34 per cent were overweight.

In Gympie, 35 per cent were obese while another 33 per cent were overweight and, in Bundaberg, 34 per cent of residents were obese while another 35 per cent were overweight.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Yim said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

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Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

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Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Cairns obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland North Area representative Dr Michael Clements said some doctors in Far North Queensland were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Clements said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found more than 82,000 people living in the Cairns Local Government Area were either overweight or obese.

The Cassowary Coast region recorded the highest percentage of obese residents (39 per cent) with another 34 per cent overweight. In the Tablelands, 34 per cent of people are obese and 35 per cent are overweight and, in Cairns, 34 per cent are obese and 33 per cent are overweight.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Clements said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

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They are not very aware of the risks BUT, even when advised, are not committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	27%

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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ⁱ <http://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/data#social-health-atlases-of-australia-local-government-areas>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2017-18~Main%20Features~Queensland~10004>
<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2017-18~Main%20Features~Queensland~10004>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4842.0.55.001/>

^{iv} <https://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/weighing-the-cost-of-obesity-final.pdf>

^v <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/f8618e51-c1c4-4dfb-85e0-54ea19500c91/20700.pdf>

DOWNLOAD IMAGES AND VIDEO HERE - <http://tiny.cc/AMAobesity>

1 March 2020

Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Darling Downs obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Downs and South West Queensland representative Dr Marco Giuseppin said some doctors in the region were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr Giuseppin said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found 83, 887 people living in Toowoomba Local Government Area either overweight or obese. In total, 34 per cent were overweight while 33 per cent were obese.

In Lockyer Valley, 34 per cent were overweight and 38 per cent obese while in Western Downs, 33 per cent were overweight and 39 per cent obese. In Southern Downs, 34 per cent were overweight and 38 per cent obese; west in Goondiwindi, 34 per cent were overweight and 41 per cent obese.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr Giuseppin said. “Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on regional health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

Obesity Facts and Figures

- In Queensland, two-thirds (66%) of adults and one quarter (25%) of children overweight or obeseⁱⁱ. That's risen from 61% of adults and 20% of children in 2007-08ⁱⁱⁱ
- Obesity costs Australian businesses \$477 million a year through lost productivity and absenteeism.^{iv}
- Obesity contributes to cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers^v.

AMA QUEENSLAND GP SURVEY

What percentage of your patients do you estimate suffers from obesity-related health issues?	% of Doctors
<15 per cent	9%
16-50 per cent	58%
51-100 per cent	33%
How does this compare with five years ago?	% patients
Up to 10 per cent increase	49%
10 – 20 per cent increase	18%
More than 20 per cent increase	4%
It's stayed the same	26%
It's decreased	2%
What is the most common attitude of your obese and/overweight patients towards the health risks posed by carrying extra kilograms?	% patients
They are generally aware of the risks AND are committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	5%
They are generally aware of the risks BUT are not committed to a long-term lifestyle regime necessary to return to a healthy weight range.	62%
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1 March 2020

Doctor survey reveals patient apathy drives Gold Coast obesity rates

Most overweight and obese Queenslanders know they are putting their health at risk but are not willing to make lifestyle changes to be healthier, a survey of doctors has revealed.

For the inaugural *Obesity Awareness Week* (OAW), Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia released findings of a survey of GPs about their overweight and obese patients.

It revealed more than 70 per cent of doctors had seen a rise in the number of patients with obesity-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, compared with five years ago.

AMA Queensland Gold Coast representative Dr Kat McLean said some doctors on the coast were treating up to 20 per cent more patients with obesity-related illnesses.

“Any increase is extremely concerning,” Dr McLean said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data collated by the Public Health Information Development Unit at Torrens University in Adelaide¹ found a total of 304,268 Gold Coast residents were either overweight or obese.

In all, 36 per cent (165,441) were overweight and a further 30 per cent (138,827) were obese.

“Also extremely concerning is that many Queenslanders don’t seem to take their health seriously,” Dr McLean said.

“Nearly 90 per cent of GPs surveyed said their patients were not willing to make healthy changes, even when they knew their weight was posing health risks.

“Apart from the impact on individual health, this obesity epidemic is a huge burden on the coast’s health services.”

Obesity Awareness Week, from March 2 – 6, was created by AMA Queensland to help Queenslanders create healthier habits at work, home and school. It challenges people to a realistic daily challenge – from adding more steps or switching off a screen, to swapping junk food for healthier options.

Dr Dhupelia said the first step for overweight or obese people was to see their GP for a health check-up and to create a plan.

More information on Obesity Awareness Week: ama.com.au/oaw

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