



Solving Australia's \$3.2 billion bone and joint disease crisis

Australian
Rheumatology
Association
Victorian Branch

Bone and Joint Disease - Solutions for the 21st Century

A special event for health professionals and consumers

Saturday 18th October

Aikenhead Conference Centre, St Vincent's Hospital



PRESS RELEASE- October 2003 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Chronic non-fatal diseases such as bone and joint disease are *less likely to attract public-health* solutions than, say, infections or cancer, simply because they are less visible in the public's eye," says Associate Professor Damien Jolley, from Deakin University. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has estimated that bone and joint disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis, costs ***in excess of \$3.2 billion*** annually.

Opportunities for prevention and improved management of chronic bone and joint disease will be the focus of a one day conference on Saturday 18th October. This special event, for both health professionals and consumers, will be hosted by the Australian Rheumatology Association, Victorian Branch in association with the Bone and Joint Decade and Arthritis Victoria.

The morning will begin with an address from Associate Professor Jolley, an expert in public health and an advocate for public health strategies that support prevention and management of chronic disease. "There's more to public health than infectious outbreaks" says Jolley. "Public Health is broad, it incorporates any activities designed to reduce the burden of disease and to improve the health of the public. The focus of public health is *upstream*, away from the constant flow of patients appearing in clinicians' waiting rooms, and towards the healthy population of potential patients."

Key preventive and management issues to be discussed throughout the day include:

Surgical Management

- Advances in surgical management to impede deterioration associated with osteoarthritis

Diagnosis

- Advances in diagnosis - including genetic factors in osteoporosis

Injury management/ prevention

- Current approaches to ***sports medicine*** - adopting some of the techniques used for injured elite sports athletes and applying them to the general population

- Falls prevention in the elderly

Patient empowerment

- Creating patient empowerment, through:
 - patient education
 - self management courses
 - community awareness campaigns

Complementary medicine

- Understanding the use of **complementary medicine** and its role in the management of chronic illness

"In terms of public health education, consumers need to be empowered," says, Liz Bongetti, Health Educator from Arthritis Victoria. Liz draws on the advice of Dr Kate Lorig from Stanford University who says, "An individual can choose to do nothing and suffer. Or they can just take medication. Or they can **positively self manage** which means accessing the best treatments that healthcare has to offer and being **proactive** in their day to day management."

Bone and Joint Disease Solutions for the 21st Century will offer strategies aimed at reducing the burden of bone and joint disease and possibly the annual \$3.2 billion bill.

There will be **free entry to all media**, please contact Fiona Landgren on 03 9429 6728 or 0408 530 865 or e mail fiona@cfh.com.au prior to the conference to confirm your placement.

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- The **morning session** will be focused on **health professionals**:
8.30 am to 1.00 pm
 - The **afternoon session** (including lunchtime workshops on relaxation, Tai Chi and yoga) will be focused on **consumers**:
1.00 pm to 4.30 pm
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Media Interviews

If you would like to arrange an interview, with one of the speakers, prior to the conference, please contact Fiona Landgren on 03 9429 6728 or 0408 530 865. Speakers present on the day will be available for interviews.

There will be **good photo opportunities** on the day during the lunchtime workshops (1-2 pm) on yoga, relaxation and Tai Chi.