

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

ONE HEART MANY LIVES CAMPAIGN HAS POSITIVE IMPACT

A campaign aimed at reducing the risk of heart disease has made people more aware of the impact it can have on their lives and their families, research into the campaign's impact has shown.

Pilots of the One Heart Many Lives campaign, which encouraged people to make lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke, ran in Gisborne and Porirua between March and June 2003. The primary target group was men aged over 45 and had a Pacific Island focus in Porirua, and a Maori and mainstream focus in Gisborne.

Qualitative research on the impact of the advertising campaign shows a high level of recall, both of the messages and the images of the campaign. Among Maori and Pacific Island men, 88 percent thought the messages of the campaign were relevant to them.

Maori and Pakeha men surveyed after the pilots said they rated cardiovascular disease the most important health issue to them, while Pacific Island men rated it second only to diabetes.

Prior to the campaign pilots, only 15 percent of Maori, 6 percent of Pacific and 17 percent of Pakeha men aged 45 and over considered cardiovascular disease to be a significant health issue. The campaign aimed to double this awareness, and the research shows those figures have changed to 44 percent for Maori, 25 percent for Pacific and 47 percent for Pakeha, well in excess of the target figures.

PHARMAC Medical Director Peter Moodie says raising awareness is an important first step in leading people to adopting healthier lifestyles.

“This research shows the campaign has had an impact on the people it was aimed at, in raising their awareness and making the issues relevant to them,” Dr Moodie says.

“Cardiovascular disease is a significant cause of death in New Zealand with higher rates among Maori and Pacific Island men.”

“It’s important that this is addressed as a health issue, and that people are aware they can take control of their lives and make changes that will improve their health, such as stopping smoking, eating a healthier diet or becoming more physically active.”

“We’re pleased that the pilot has shown that the campaign has succeeded in raising awareness and we will now be looking to see whether it has also influenced people’s behaviour.”

“This information will then be used to decide whether to extend the campaign nationally.”

The campaign, which encouraged people to make lifestyle changes to reduce their cardiovascular risk, used radio, newspaper, poster and billboard advertising to encourage people to visit their health providers to discuss their cardiovascular risk.

It involved PHARMAC working in conjunction with Sport and Recreation NZ, the National Heart Foundation and Maori and Pacific health providers in Gisborne and Porirua.

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