

Media release

CAMPAIGN PILOTS SUCCESSFUL

More men are taking positive steps to lower their risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke as a result of a PHARMAC-led campaign.

Pilots of the One Heart Many Lives campaign ran in Gisborne and Porirua last year. The pilots aimed to both raise awareness of cardiovascular disease (mainly heart attack and stroke) and encourage people to do something about it.

Targeted mainly at men aged over 45, the campaign involved local health providers and an innovative approach to promoting lifestyle changes through Pacific Island churches in the Porirua basin.

PHARMAC's Medical Director Dr Peter Moodie says the pilots had a number of positive impacts.

“The campaign pilots succeeded in their aims of both raising awareness of cardiovascular risk and in moving people to change their lifestyle for the better,” Dr Moodie says.

“For example, in Gisborne a higher number of people than usual were referred by their GP to the SPARC-administered Green Prescriptions programme. This helps people become more physically active.

“In Porirua, some Pacific Island churches established exercise groups that have kept going even after the pilot ended.”

Dr Moodie says in both Porirua and Gisborne, there was a greater than average increase in the prescribing of statin drugs, which lower cholesterol levels, one of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

“This is all good news as becoming active and reducing cholesterol are two ways that people can improve their health by lowering their overall risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke.”

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.

Dr Moodie says the campaign's success is important as cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death in New Zealand.

The success of the pilots has encouraged PHARMAC to roll the campaign out more widely, and it is now being extended into areas such as Taupo, Tauranga, Auckland and Rotorua.

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