Heart disease

Coronary heart disease (CHD), also known as ischaemic heart disease, is the most common form of cardiovascular disease. Its two major clinical forms are heart attack and angina. 1

Mortality
Heart disease is the single leading cause of death in Australia, with 20,173 Australian lives lost to the disease in 2014. On average, one Australian dies as a result of CHD every 26 minutes. 2

CHD accounted for 13% of all deaths in Australia in 2014, including 14% for males and 12% for females. In the last 10 years (from 2005 to 2014), the number of CHD deaths has fallen by 14% from 23,570 to 20,173. 2

Hospitalisation
CHD was the main cause for 148,632 hospitalisations in 2013/14. The number of hospital separations due to CHD has decreased by nine per cent from 2003/04 to 2013/14. 3

Prevalence
In 2014/2015, four per cent of the population reported having a long term CHD condition, accounting for 614,400 Australians. 4

Overall, people in lower socioeconomic groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living in remote areas have higher rates of hospitalisation and death resulting from CHD than other Australians. Prevalence of CHD was higher amongst the lowest socioeconomic group and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 1

Lifetime risks of heart disease
At age 40 years, the lifetime risk of coronary heart disease was one in two for men and one in three for women. This risk lessens with age, but remains high at older ages (70 years). 5

Burden of disease
The burden of CHD in 2003 was estimated to be the leading specific overall disease burden for males (11% of burden) and the second leading specific cause for females (9% of burden). 6

CHD cost $2.03 billion in 2008-09, with hospital costs accounting for $1.52 billion. 7

Days of reduced activity for people with heart disease were 2.3 times the average Australian. 8

Awareness of heart disease as the leading cause of death
In 2015, 27% of Australians believe that heart related diseases are the leading cause of death for women. 9

Awareness of heart related diseases as the leading cause of death was much higher for men, at 47%. 9

Understanding heart disease
Overall, Australians are more likely to see lifestyle risk factors such as diet, lack of exercise or body weight as a risk factor for heart disease than high cholesterol or high blood pressure. In 2015, only 10% of Australians reported that high cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease, with only 7% reporting high blood pressure as a cause of heart disease. 9

Told by a doctor...
In 2015, 1.3 million or 12% of Australians aged 30 to 65 were told by a doctor that they have a high risk of developing heart disease. 9

References: