

# WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE.

## FACTS AND STATISTICS.

#WOMENSHEARTS  
INVISIBLE  
VISIBLE



### Risk factors in young women:\*

#### Risk factors and trends over time

More than 1.3 million women, or 31%, have at least three risk factors. Close to 100,000 women aged 18 to 44 have five or more risk factors.

#### 1. Overweight and obesity

- 22% of women 18–44 were obese in 2014–15 compared to 7% of women 20–44 in 1989.
- The total of women 18–44 overweight or obese in 2014–15 has risen to 46% from 24% for women 20–44 in 1989.
- Among the youngest cohort, obesity prevalence has increased from 4% to 17% since 1989.
- For Australian women aged 18 to 44, the proportion of obesity has tripled since 1989.
- Waist circumference has increased by at least 10cm for all ages between 18–44.
- Women between 18 & 44 are at least 6kg heavier in 2014–15 compared to 1989.

#### 2. Physical Activity

- Compared to 1989, a higher proportion of Australian women in 2014–15 were sedentary (i.e. did not exercise at all). This was most pronounced in 18–24 year olds (26% vs 31%)

- Between the ages of 18 and 44 only 56% of women are sufficiently active (>150 minutes of physical activity in the last week). This was only slightly better among young women between 18 & 24 (57%).

#### 3. Cholesterol

More than one in five women aged 18 to 44 have high blood cholesterol (>5.5mmol/L) including 7% of 18–24 year olds.

#### 4. Blood Pressure

Around one in ten women aged 18 to 44 have high blood pressure (>140/90mmHg) including 6% of 18–24 year olds.

#### 5. Smoking

More than 650,000 women (or 15%) aged 18 to 44 smoke, with the majority daily smokers.

#### 6. Depression

One in nine are suffering from depression including 7% of women 18–24 years.

#### CURRENT RISK FACTOR SUMMARY

For women aged 18–44:

**425,000**

have high blood pressure.

**900,000**

have high cholesterol.

Close to **1 million**  
are obese.

More than **1 million**  
are overweight.

More than **650,000** smoke.

Close to **1.3 million**  
did no exercise at all.

**100,000** have at least  
five risk factors.

**350,000** have  
cardiovascular disease.

\*All content from this page has been referenced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Health Survey 2014/15 and Heart Foundation Risk Factor Prevalence Study 1989.

# Heart disease in all Australian women.

## Deaths

Heart disease is the number one killer of Australian women<sup>1</sup>.

Heart disease claims 24 female lives every day (8,750 deaths in 2013)<sup>1</sup>.

Heart disease kills more than three times as many women as breast cancer<sup>1</sup>.

Heart disease is responsible for one in eight premature deaths in women<sup>1</sup>.

## Hospitalisation<sup>2</sup>

More than 48,000 women are hospitalised with heart disease each year.

Total healthcare expenditure on women with heart disease was less than half of that spent on men. A total of \$1.365 billion was spent on men, compared to \$663 million on women.

Despite women with heart disease spending longer in hospital than men, more is spent on men per hospital stay than women, on average around 20% (\$8,685 for women per hospital stay compared to \$10,368 for men).

Women admitted to hospital with heart disease were less likely than men to have a number of heart related procedures. This included:

- Coronary angiography (24 per 100 hospitalisations for women, 30 for men).
- Echocardiography (5 per 100 hospitalisations for women, 6 for men).
- Percutaneous coronary interventions – or stents (16 per 100 hospitalisations for women, 22 for men).
- Bypass surgery (5 per 100 hospitalisations for women, 9 for men).

## Lifestyle risk factors<sup>3</sup>

- More than one in four (2.46m) adult women are obese (BMI  $\geq$  30). Since 1995, the proportion of women who are obese has increased by 45%.
- More than one in four (2.6m) adult women are overweight (BMI = 25 to 29.9).
- The average weight of an adult woman in Australia has increased from 67kg in 1995 to 7.41kg in 2011/12. The average BMI of an adult woman is 27.2.
- One in seven Australian women smoke, or 1.2 million. Women in the 18 to 24 age group have the highest rate of smokers (more than one in six).

## Clinical risk factors

One in three (2.86m) Australian adult women has high cholesterol ( $\geq$  5.5 mmol/L). Nine in ten women who have high cholesterol are not aware of their condition<sup>3</sup>.

One in four (28% or 1.76m) of women aged 35 and over have high blood pressure ( $\geq$  140/90 mmHg)<sup>3</sup>.

Only one in eleven women aged 30–65 know that high blood pressure puts them at risk of heart disease<sup>4</sup>.

Only one in nine women aged 30–65 know that high cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease<sup>4</sup>.

## Awareness and knowledge<sup>4</sup>

In 2008 public awareness of heart disease in women was at an all-time low. Only 20% of women surveyed knew that heart disease was the female leading cause of death in women.

The Heart Foundation instigated a campaign to address this issue and by 2015 women's awareness had increased to 35%. The Heart Foundation now wants to convert this awareness into a public movement and ensure that by December 2017 awareness is at 50%.

Although women are more likely to experience atypical symptoms (jaw, shoulder, neck and back pain) when having a heart attack, only one in four women are aware of at least one of the symptoms.

Only one in two women are confident they would know what to do or actions to take if they were having a heart attack.

For women aged 30 to 65, they are less likely to have spoken to their GP about heart disease than men (27% v. 39%) and considerably less likely to have had a heart attack check (33% v. 47%).

**Heart disease kills more than three times as many women as breast cancer<sup>1</sup>**



**Every hour of every day, heart disease is responsible for the death of one Australian woman<sup>1</sup>**



**Only 27% have spoken to a GP about heart disease<sup>4</sup>**



**More than 48,000 women are hospitalised with heart disease each year<sup>2</sup>**



**One in three women aged 30–65 years had a heart health check<sup>4</sup>**

## Heart attack

- 11 Australian women die each day from a heart attack<sup>1</sup>.
- One woman dies of a heart attack every two hours<sup>1</sup>.
- 50 Australian women have a heart attack each day<sup>1</sup>.
- Women are much more likely to die from a repeat (second or third) heart attack than men (21% death rate for women, compared to 14% for men)<sup>5</sup>.
- Women are largely surprised and unaware that they are also at risk of a heart attack. However, almost half of all deaths from heart attacks in 2013 were women<sup>5</sup>.

## REFERENCES

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Causes of Death 2014 (3303.0). March 2016.
2. AIHW, National Hospital Morbidity Database 2012/13.
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Health Survey 2014/15.

4. Heart Foundation. Heartwatch Survey 2014.

5. Deloitte Access Economics, ACS in Perspective: The Importance of Secondary Prevention, 2011.