



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

20 October 2009

Osteoporosis - It Affects Men Too

New resources aimed at increasing awareness and diagnoses of osteoporosis in Australian men were launched today to mark World Osteoporosis Day.

Aimed at providing information for both members of the public and GPs, the brochures provide information on osteoporosis in men, including the common risk factors and how the disease can affect them.

One in four Australian men over the age of 60 will suffer a fracture due to osteoporosis. Fractures from osteoporosis are less common in men than in women but when fractures occur in men they cause higher disability and death rates.

Musculoskeletal conditions, including arthritis and osteoporosis affect around 6.3 million Australians.

Minister Elliot said: "Australian men should be aware that as they age, their risk of developing osteoporosis is elevated, despite the misconception that the condition only affects women."

The Rudd Government provided more than \$80,000 to Osteoporosis Australia for the development of the *Men and Osteoporosis* and *Men and Osteoporosis – for GPs* resources. To help get the message out, Osteoporosis Australia have recruited well known Australian athletes, Guy Leech and Robert de Castella to help promote the new resources.

Minister Elliot said: "These new resources, coupled with an increased community awareness of osteoporosis in men are important steps towards reducing the incidence of the disease and increasing diagnosis.

"These tools will help Australian men reduce and identify their risks of osteoporosis and fractures," Minister Elliot said.

"Older people are at greater risk of osteoporosis as when people age their bones begin to lose calcium and can become weaker and are not as effective at absorbing calcium from food.

"Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent the loss of bone mass from getting worse and can also help to improve bone density. To improve bone health, men should lead an active and healthy life by getting regular exercise, eating a healthy diet with an increased amount of calcium and vitamin D," Minister Elliot said.

This year the Rudd Government will invest nearly \$30 million for research into musculoskeletal conditions, with a further \$14.8 million over four years invested into the *Better Arthritis and Osteoporosis Care* initiative to improve care and management of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, focussing on osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis.

The *Men and Osteoporosis* resources are available from Osteoporosis Australia (national office) and its state offices, by calling 1800 242 141 or visiting www.osteoporosis.org.au.

For more information, contact Mrs Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280