World Mental Health Day – Mental Health Facts

World Mental Health Day is held on 10 October every year as part of World Mental Health Week. This year’s theme set by the World Federation for Mental Health is: 'Mental health and long term illness: The need for continued and integrated care.'

World Mental Health Week is an annual national awareness event held in October every year around WMHD. The aim is to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the wider community, to increase community awareness and education about mental health issues, and to encourage participation in life enhancing lifestyles.

Mental Health in Australia

- Almost half the total population (45.5%) experiences a mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime.
- One in five or 20% of the Australian population aged 16 – 85 years, experienced mental disorders in the previous 12 months (of their survey). This is equivalent to 3.2 million Australians.
- Only one third of people (34.9%) with a mental health disorder used health services for their mental health problem – and two thirds of people with a mental health disorder did not report using services for their mental health disorder.
- Estimates suggest that up to 75% of people presenting with alcohol and drug problems also have additional mental health problems.6
- Reports indicate that up to 85% of homeless people have a mental illness.

Mental Health and Cancer

- Approximately half of all patients with terminal or advanced cancer suffer with poor mental health. Death rates are as much as 25% higher in cancer patients who felt depressed and 39% higher in cancer patients who received a diagnosis of depression. Less than half of cancer patients receive treatment for their mental health.
- Cancers, especially breast cancer and lung cancer, are the second most common cause of death in people with schizophrenia, whose risk for cancer death is 50% higher than that of the general population.
Mental Health and Diabetes
- Estimates indicate that one in four persons with diabetes suffers from depressive symptoms. The odds of developing depression and the rate of depression are doubled for people who have diabetes.
- Depression increases the risk of mortality in people with diabetes by 30 percent.
- The economic burden of diabetes alone is significant. When depression is present with diabetes, there is an additional increase in health care costs by 50-75 percent.

Mental Health and Heart Disease
- Depression is present in 1 of 5 outpatients with coronary heart disease and in 1 of 3 outpatients with congestive heart failure, yet the majority of such cases are not recognized or appropriately treated.
- Up to 15 percent of patients with cardiovascular disease and up to 20 percent of patients who have undergone coronary bypass graft surgery experience major depression.
- Depression has been proven to be such a risk factor in cardiac disease that the American Heart Association (AHA) has recommended that all cardiac patients be screened for depression.

Mental Health and Obesity
- Obesity has been associated with an increased lifetime risk for major depression and panic disorder, particularly among females.
- Individuals with current depression or chronic depression are 60% more likely to be obese than those with no history of depression.
- Individuals with a chronic history of anxiety are 30% more likely to be obese than those who have not had a diagnosis of anxiety.
- Some research studies indicate that obesity in adolescence may lead to depression in adulthood, while other studies indicate that depression in adolescence leads to obesity in adulthood.
- Obesity and depression share similar symptoms such as sleep problems, sedentary behaviour and poorly controlled food intake; but for the most part are treated as separate health problems, often leading to poor treatment outcomes.

For more facts go to the World Mental Health Day Fact Sheets at www.achmn.org