

Conclusion

Cardiovascular disease poses a heavy burden on the health of Australians. Coronary heart disease and stroke are its most costly manifestations, both in terms of suffering for patients and their carers and of the financial burden for the community as a whole.

Risk factors for heart disease and stroke remain very common among Australians, including those with established cardiovascular disease. It is imperative that efforts are made to prevent further cardiovascular events among the latter and to reduce the overall level of risk within the population as a whole. Although effective measures and behaviours that reduce this risk are well established, there is evidence that they are not being adopted to the extent that they should.

This paper has identified gaps and deficiencies in our knowledge of CHD and stroke incidence, interventions and outcomes at a national level and suggested possible solutions. Introducing the measures proposed here would help to improve our capacity to monitor the impact of strategies and programs directed at prevention and recovery. Follow-up work to improve data availability as suggested in this report will continue through available mechanisms.