

June 2010

Issue7

Study Update – Suzanne Pitama

Kia Ora Koutou,

There is something about the autumn leaves and cooler mornings which make getting up and exercising a little more difficult. This month's newsletter is about how the best way to improve our health, is to make small changes and sustain them over time. I love the ads on TV that try to sell us the newest contraption that promises to turn us into supermodels or make us look like a professional athlete in 2 weeks! The reality is that the true secret to staying healthy is to eat well and exercise regularly. It has been great this year to begin to meet up with our Christchurch participants for their 2nd year follow up appointments and to hear of amazing stories of commitment and discipline which have led to their lowering their risk factors for heart disease. I look

forward to catching up with other Christchurch participants over the next couple of months. Just a reminder for those in Christchurch to complete their questionnaires and make sure you make an appointment to come back and see us.

For those in Wairoa, keep up the good work; it is fantastic to hear from those who are making and sustaining positive changes in their lives. Thank you to Olive Jenkins and Hoani Keefe for sharing your stories with us, they are inspiring.

Also we have been contacted by PHARMAC (our sponsor) about a new music video on their One Heart Many Lives campaign (aimed at reducing our risk of heart disease). You can watch this music video www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKsD_J5pAzU

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It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of one of our Christchurch participants, Tineke Foley. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to her whanau.

Please let us know if you've changed address or need to update your contact details

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If you'd like a question answered in the newsletter or have a healthy recipe, success story or photo you'd like to share, please email these to: miriam.esteves@otago.ac.nz



Vicky Cameron

In The News

It has been wonderful for the team to meet our study participants again during the follow-up clinics and especially rewarding to hear some of their success stories in reducing their heart disease risk since the initial clinics. While we are still collecting the data from our Christchurch follow-up clinics, we can share some highlights with you from the Wairoa 2nd year follow-up.



Allamanda Faatoese

Despite the fact that we are all 2 years older (and wiser!) and most heart disease risk factors naturally increase with age, almost half of Wairoa participants had maintained the same BMI or had lowered their BMI since the screening clinic back in 2007. Also, over half of Wairoa participants had maintained the same or had lowered their blood pressure since 2007. How did they do it? It seems by increasing exercise levels and improving diet and lifestyle choices...

About half of the Wairoa participants had taken up walking in the last two years. The Wairoa walkway was used by 15% of participants. Other popular forms of physical activity reported by Wairoa participants included doing more gardening (29%) and being involved in other forms of physical activity (23%) that ranged from dancing to pig hunting. Other activities also included joining the gym (12%), swimming (12%), biking (12%) and some (7%) were involved in activities through the Green Prescription programme from their doctor.

74% of participants reported that they ate the recommended FIVE servings of fruit and vegetables either everyday or at least 3 times per week. Dietary changes people had made included eating more fish (16%), changing to skim milk (13%), using margarine instead of butter (20%), eating more vegetables (33%), more fruit (31%), less takeaways (33%), less junk food (23%), drinking more water (36%) and less fizz (23%).

Overall, there were 19 people (9%) who had successfully quit smoking over the past 2 years. This means the smoking rate in our Wairoa follow-up sample has dropped from 42% to 35% – how fantastic is that!

Heart To Heart...

This month we talk to two participants, Hoani Keefe, and Olive Jenkins, and find out how their lives and health have changed since joining The Community Heart Study a little over 2 yrs ago.

When we caught up with Hoani Keefe at his second year follow up in Wairoa last year, we were impressed with his positive attitude and his willingness to try new things in order to improve his health. Hoani admitted that before joining the study, exercise and healthy lifestyle choices were not a big priority for him. "I used to sit and watch TV all day – I must have weighed about 20 stone when I started off 2 yrs ago".

Hoani says that being involved in the study has been fun and it's given him the encouragement he needed to "get up off my backside and join the gym". At the time we spoke with him, Hoani was going to the gym 5 times a week!

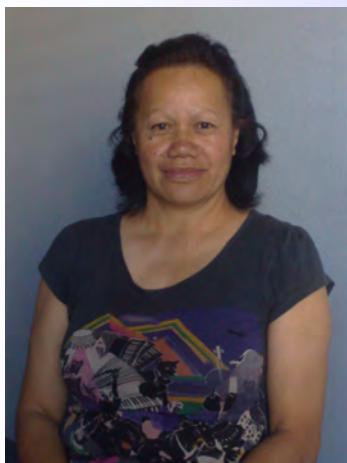
3 days a week were spent in the pool doing aqua-aerobics and the other 2 days Hoani exercised on the treadmill and rowing machines. He said that as well as losing a significant amount of weight, he also noticed that he felt better and had more energy. He liked that he was able to take on more physical tasks and that he is now able to help out friends and family and be more active in the community – he can often be found helping out at the Marae.

While he knows that there are still ways he could improve his health, Hoani is pleased with the progress he has made. He says he is glad he decided to participate in the study because having such a thorough



Hoani Keefe of Wairoa

heart health check has been a really positive experience. "I didn't expect to see my own heart beating there. That really opened my eyes".



Olive Jenkins of Christchurch

Our very first Christchurch participant to book in to the 2nd year follow up clinic was Olive Jenkins. When she was a young child, Olive was told by her mother that she had a heart

defect. Olive never really understood what this meant so when invited to be part of The Community Heart Study, she accepted in the hope that she would learn more about her condition. Olive has a heart murmur and was among several of our participants who were given a second echocardiogram. She says having her heart scanned was a great experience and being able to see her heart in action has given her peace of mind and helped her to understand how her heart works.

Olive, 57, enjoys keeping herself busy, and has many interests that help to keep her fit and active. These include exercising, gardening and reading.

When we first saw Olive 2 yrs ago, we discovered that she had diabetes. "I've always wanted to be healthy and enjoy life. I've never wanted to be sickly, so when they told me I had diabetes I was shocked". She says the news made her re-evaluate her health and she immediately made some simple changes to her lifestyle and diet. These simple changes have led to some big changes in her overall health, which are reflected in the results of her latest tests. Olive has lost weight, improved her cholesterol, and lowered her blood pressure. Olive not only feels great physically, but is also really glad that she has been able to decrease her risk of heart disease.

A special note from study co-ordinator, Karen Tikao-Mason, to our Christchurch participants:

Thank you to everyone who has come in for their 2nd year check up. We've had a great response and we have enjoyed catching up with you all. If you have not yet done so, please remember to have your fasting blood tests done at Canterbury Health Laboratories. You will need to make sure you take in the Research Request Form that was included in the pack we sent you. If you have misplaced this, please call us on the numbers listed.

To those of you who have not booked in for a follow up appointment, we'd love to hear from you soon. We are very flexible with our clinics and will do our best to see you at a time that fits in with your schedule. Your follow up appointment should only take about half an hour – there is metered parking close by our offices, or free parking at the nearby Botanical Gardens.

To book an appointment, or if you have any queries at all you can phone Naomi on 364 3689, Clara-Ann on 364 3610, or myself on 364 3643. You can also call or leave a message on our freephone number: 0800 428672