

The global financial crisis is bad for more than just your pocket

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One in four Australian adults has taken an action that puts their health at risk as a result of the global financial crisis (GFC), according to a new MBF Healthwatch poll.

The results show that lack of job security was particularly hard on families, with almost one in five parents turning up to work ill and close to one in 10 parents sending sick children to school.

Dr Christine Bennett, Chief Medical Officer of Bupa Australia* warns that short-term, risky health actions taken by individuals in an attempt to save money or prove job dedication are likely to have long term negative [health outcomes](#) for Australia.

"The poll has revealed that during the past six months, more than two million workers have gone to work ill because they have been concerned about taking a sick day, and a worrying 17 per cent of Australians have avoided or delayed a visit to a GP, [dentist](#) or a specialist," Dr Bennett said.

The results reinforce the findings of Research Australia's report, Australian Financial Crisis: Implications for Health & Research (Report), which highlights that the fall-out from the GFC goes beyond economics and has major long-term health implications for Australia.

In the Report, which has been produced with the support of Bupa Australia, health policy makers are being urged to prepare for increases

in obesity, mental illness, chronic health conditions, and alcohol and drug misuse.

"The health impact of the GFC has largely been overshadowed by the focus on the economy," Research Australia Chief Executive Officer, Rebecca James explained. "However, the health consequences may be felt long after the economy turns around."

The ground-breaking independent Report, which features the views of some of Australia's leading experts in health, the economy, government and society, has revealed that the negative health effects of the GFC include:

- An increase in psychological distress of both employed and unemployed Australians;
- An increase in the numbers of long term unemployed who are at risk of long term disadvantage, which may be characterised by lower health status;
- Health and other support services will be stretched.

Dr Bennett, who recently chaired the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, commented that the Report is a timely reminder that Australia needs a health system that is able to respond to unexpected events such as recession.

"Australia's continued investment in research will be vital to the development of effective [health](#) and social policy to ensure we are better prepared for the future," she added.

[More information:](#) To download a copy of the report, visit

www.researchaustralia.org or www.mbf.com.au/wellness .

Source: Research Australia ([news](#) : [web](#))

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