

Stronger focus needed on gender-specific health

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There is growing evidence of the need for a separate approach to men's and women's health, according to a men's health expert at the University of Adelaide.

Professor Gary Wittert, from the University's School of Medicine, has been appointed the new Director of the Freemasons Foundation Centre for Men's Health, starting on 1 July.

Speaking during Men's Health Week (11-17 June), Professor Wittert says: "The provision of health services specifically to men, especially preventative health services, is critical. It is very important to have a gender-specific approach to healthcare.

"It is incorrect to assume that men are not interested in their health, but as [health professionals](#) we need to better understand how to engage with men," he says.

"There is a common misconception that men's health relates only to sexual or lower urinary tract issues. In reality there are significant biological and behavioural differences between men and women that result in susceptibility to and prevalence of a wide range of diseases. These demand specific approaches to both treatment and prevention," Professor Wittert says.

The Freemasons Foundation Centre for Men's Health - a joint venture between the University of Adelaide and the Freemasons Foundation - is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of men through innovative scientific and medical research.

Established in 2007, the Centre was the first of its kind to take a comprehensive, [multidisciplinary approach](#) to men's [health issues](#). Research areas include male ageing, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, [prostate cancer](#), male androgens (hormones), [sexual and reproductive health](#), and mental health.

"Significant advances have already been made by the Centre's researchers in understanding: the biology of prostate cancer; how men

engage with the [health system](#) and use health services; the links between obesity and sexual and lower [urinary tract symptoms](#) in men; and the benefits of weight loss in improving and preventing these common disorders," says Professor Wittert, who over the past 18 years has secured more than \$19.5 million in competitive research funding for studies into obesity and men's health.

Professor Wittert will succeed Professor Villis Marshall AC, General Manager of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, who has been the inaugural Director of the Freemasons Foundation Centre for Men's Health for the past five years.

"Professor Marshall has made an immense contribution to men's health through first establishing and then consolidating the success of the Centre," says Mr Robert Clyne, Executive Director of the Freemasons Foundation. "We look forward to further building on our success under Professor Wittert's leadership."

Professor Wittert is currently in the United States to attend the Endocrine Society's annual meeting.

Provided by University of Adelaide

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