

# Reducing obesity among ageing baby boomers a priority

September 27 2012

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New strategies to reduce obesity among baby boomers in the workforce are urgently needed, according to a report released today by University of Adelaide researchers.

Professor Graeme Hugo AO, Director of the Australian Population and Migration Research Centre at the University of Adelaide, says baby boomers have the highest levels of obesity of any age group in the country.

"If baby boomers want to delay their retirement plans and remain active in the workforce and the community, it is imperative we develop effective strategies to reduce obesity and related chronic conditions," Professor Hugo says.

Professor Hugo is chief investigator of a \$1.4 million Australian Research Council project led by the University of Adelaide which today handed down preliminary findings of research aimed at halting the [obesity epidemic](#) among Australian baby boomers.

The project examines how work and home environments shape weight and [health trends](#) in this generation.

Preliminary findings show that [obesity rates](#) among baby boomers are more than double that of their parents at the same age. They also have twice the rate of asthma and [hearing loss](#); triple the rate of diabetes and almost double the [cholesterol levels](#) of their parents (age group 53-62).

The proportion of baby boomers with three or more chronic conditions is 700% greater than the previous generation.

Social indicators suggest they will also have less support, more will enter their later life without a spouse, a greater percentage will live alone, fewer will own their own home and more will rent.

Professor Hugo says while the report paints a grim picture, it also offers opportunities.

"[Baby boomers](#) are a tremendous social resource for Australia. Their contribution to volunteering in this country is significant and they have a lifetime of accumulated skill and experience to pass on, with 64% intending to work 16 hours or more per week in retirement. However, if we are to harness this potential we need to stem the tide of obesity and improve their health while we can."

Professor Hugo says Australia has a brief window of opportunity to reduce the onset of [chronic conditions](#) in the baby boomer generation and to maximise their ability to lead active, socially productive lives.

"But that window won't remain open for very long," he said.

Provided by University of Adelaide

Citation: Reducing obesity among ageing baby boomers a priority (2012, September 27) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-obesity-ageing-baby-boomers-priority.html>

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