

# Study of diabetes threat for fly-in fly-out miners

1 September 2015

Fly-in fly-out workers and their families are being targeted in a new QUT study investigating the skyrocketing rates of diabetes in mining communities.

Health promotion researcher Dr Marguerite Sendall, from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI), said in the past four years mining communities have seen rates of diabetes increase by 67 per cent.

"More than 186,000 Queenslanders are diagnosed with [type 2 diabetes](#), but the problem is there are nearly as many undiagnosed, pre-diabetic or high-risk cases," Dr Sendall said.

"One of the big risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes is obesity and compared to other industries, miners have the highest rates with 76 per cent of workers classified obese."

Dr Sendall said diabetes was a major health and safety issue for workplaces, costing the Australian economy an estimated \$14.6 billion a year.

"Diabetes also impacts on workplace productivity, absenteeism and [premature death](#)," she said.

"A recent study has found that fly-in fly-out workers struggle to manage chronic diseases such as diabetes because of their rosters, remote location and work stresses.

"The problem the mining industry is that it is made up of predominantly a male workforce, who are shift workers and who spend most of their time sitting down.

"Therefore they don't have a lot of time to eat well and exercise."

Dr Sendall said the study aimed to understand the experiences of fly-in fly-out miners and their partners living in south-east Queensland who have

been diagnosed with, or were at risk of type 2 diabetes.

"We know that many workplaces offer their staff wellness programs and it is likely that many miners are aware that they are at risk of diabetes," she said.

"But what we want to know is whether there is relationship between [health promotion](#) in the workplace and diagnosis of diabetes? Are miners going to the doctor for check-ups, and if so do their partners have a role encouraging them to do so?"

"People at risk of developing type 2 [diabetes](#) are those who don't eat fruit or vegetables every day, don't exercise every day, have a waste measurement of more than 100cm, smoke or have a family history of the disease."

The study will involve taking part in a relaxed 60 minute interview, at a location and time suitable to the participant. Participants will be reimbursed for their time with a \$50 Bunnings Warehouse voucher.

**More information:** To take part in the study, please email Laura McCosker at QUT [lk.mccosker@qut.edu.au](mailto:lk.mccosker@qut.edu.au)

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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