

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 1: Innovation in models of care

Ms Janine Clark, West Wimmera Health Service *jclark@wwhs.net.au*

Abstract title: *'Footy practice for farmers': Improving the health of farmers*

Health checks were performed on farmers as part of a Landcare project. Results showed participants were at increased risk of developing chronic disease and other health complications.

West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS) Primary and Preventative Health established and implemented an innovative program titled 'Football Practice for Farmers' to improve the overall health of this target group of males. With consumer input, a 6 week program was formulated and consisted of a weekly fitness session and concluded with Allied Health Dieticians educating on healthy eating, weight loss and cooking demonstrations.

Now in its 3rd year the program has proved to be successful on a number of levels. The weekly program attracts 8-18 males aged 25-55 years from the district. Measurable data has been collected to show weight loss, decreased waist measurements and increased fitness and flexibility. Behavioural changes in positive eating habits and an increase in physical activity and increased social connectedness were further documented benefits. The program is now sustainable with participants paying their own way. The dietetics department provides education regularly along with Community Health Nurses, and more recently, the Physiotherapy and Social work department.

The success of this program is evident with measurable data collected, positive verbal feedback, a successful grant to supply participants with a 'fitbit' for motivation and local government funding the program to six other rural communities in Hindmarsh Shire to improve health and well-being of farmers in drought conditions.

Biography

Janine has been nursing for 30 years and has resided in the rural area of Nhill and District during this time. She is currently employed as a Clinical Support Nurse and Community Health Nurse in Health Promotion at West Wimmera Health Service. Janine has seen how chronic diseases are prevalent in the rural areas and is well aware of the benefits of healthy eating, being physically active and social connectedness. This has led to her passion for a collaborative approach to health promotion and ratifying the benefits of innovative programs such as Football Practice for Farmers.