Tar-filled lungs bring to life consequences of smoking

Thursday 19 November 2015

As Australia marks Lung Health Awareness Month, smokers in NSW are being confronted with a powerful campaign that brings to life the terrible health consequences of smoking.

Many Diseases centres on a TV commercial with a graphic montage of smoking-related illnesses and a moving outdoor installation that shows tar choking a set of lungs.

The campaign aims to encourage smokers to quit the dangerous habit, as the single best thing they can do to improve their health.

Manager of Cancer Prevention at the Cancer Institute NSW, Anita Dessaix explains that smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in NSW and the biggest contributing risk factor to lung cancer.

“The Many Diseases campaign is a reminder that heart disease, gangrene, stroke, emphysema and lung cancer are all consequences of smoking.”

Each year in NSW, about 46,000 people are hospitalised and more than 5000 people die as a result of smoking1. Lung cancer is also responsible for one in five cancer deaths2.

“It is important to have a diverse approach to support smokers to quit and this campaign is part of a range of tobacco control measures aimed at driving down the smoking rate and in turn the numbers of people dying from tobacco-related disease,” Ms Dessaix said.

“We want to encourage smokers to make a step in the right direction. Making the decision to quit, no matter how long you’ve been smoking for, is one of the best things you can do to improve your health and wellbeing.

“Quitting reduces your risk of lung cancer, heart attack and stroke and best of all, the risk continues to decrease the longer you’ve stayed quit.”

For information, tools and advise to help you quit, the NSW Quitline service can be reached on 13 7848, or visit iCanQuit.com.au.

KEY SMOKING FACTS

- More than one in four male cancer deaths (29%) and one in five female cancer deaths (20%) could be attributed to smoking in NSW in 20083

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Working together to lessen the impact of cancer

The Cancer Institute NSW is Australia’s first statewide government cancer control agency. Established under the Cancer Institute (NSW) Act 2003, the Institute is responsible for lessening the impact of cancer by reducing cancer incidence, increasing cancer survival, improving quality of life for people living with cancer, and providing expert advice on cancer.
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- The average number of cigarettes smoked per day by NSW daily smokers aged 18+ has decreased from 19.3 in 2011 to 14.7 in 2013.

- The five year relative survival from lung cancer in NSW is 18%; survival from lung cancer is much lower than most other cancers.

- The cost to the NSW community as a result of tobacco smoking in 2006-07 was estimated conservatively at $8.4 billion – including $2.9 billion in direct/tangible costs (of which 53% were borne by individuals, 42% by businesses and 5% by Government) and a community cost of $5.5 billion largely accounted for by premature deaths.

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6 Collins DJ, Lapsley HM. The social costs of smoking in NSW in 2006/07 and the social benefits of public policy measures to reduce smoking prevalence, in Health NDo (ed). Sydney, 2010