

# The silent OH&S Risk.... 'Chronic diseases'

Annette Zeman  
Dietitian



corporate nutrition solutions



- Do you have a minefield of employees?
- Which one is waiting to detonate?
- Will others be affected?



# Frightening facts



## Cardiovascular disease

- most common cause of death

- ♂ are 2x likely to have a heart attack as ♀
- Coal miners have an ↑ risk of heart disease c.f. the general population

REF: (Chief Health Officer Report), (Simtars)

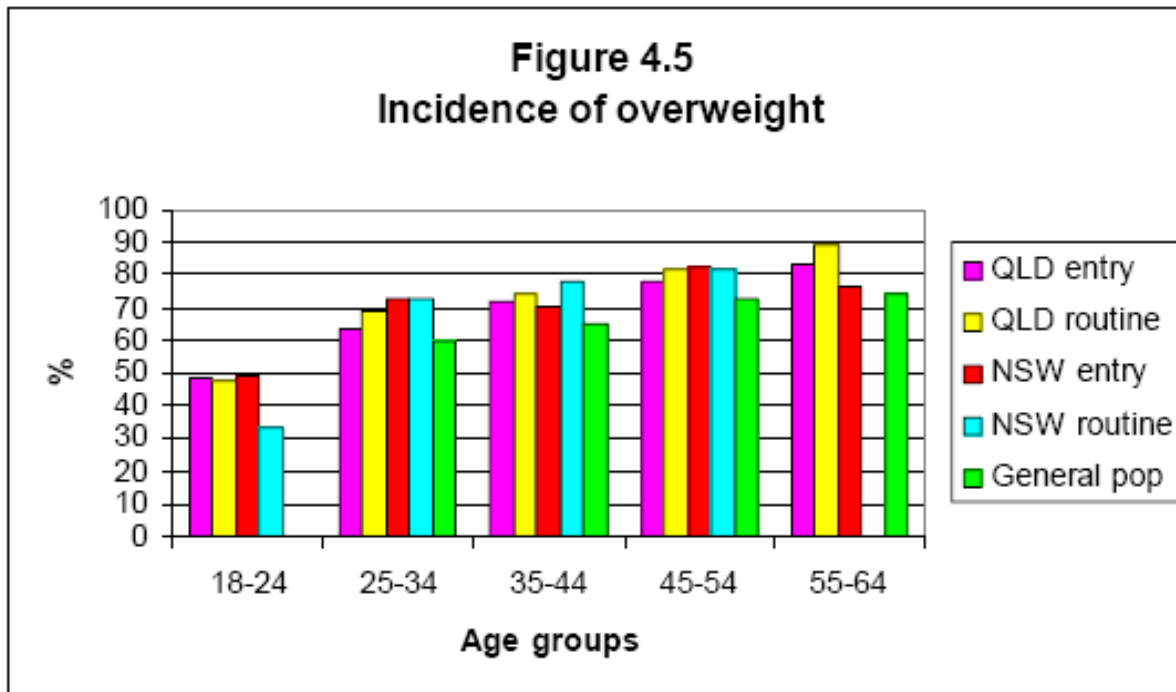
# Overweight!



- 67% of Aust. ♂ are overweight /obese (AIHW, 2001).
- half → consider themselves to be acceptable weight (ABS 2004)
- The incidence of overweight among NSW mine workers is higher!

Bofinger, Simtars 2003

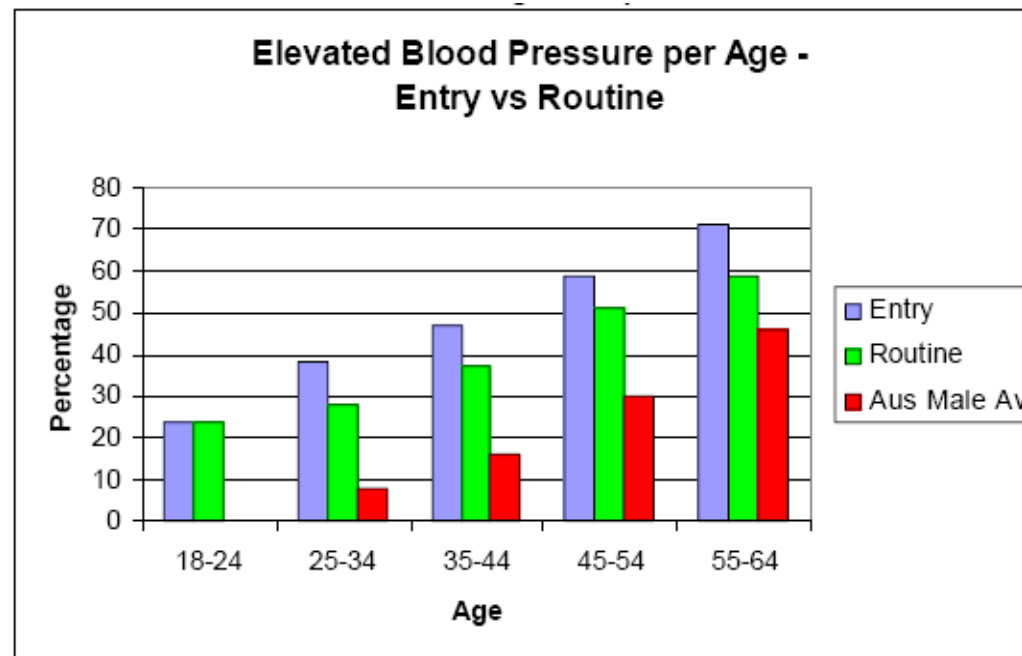
# Overweight – Coal mining



Ref: Bofinger, Simtars 2003

# Elevated Blood Pressure

- NSW coal mine workers (Singleton, Newcastle, Corrimal and the Lithgow district)



Ref: Bofinger, Simtars 2002

# Diabetes

- **Diabetes** -2 x as likely to have heart disease

Chahil TJ - *Endocrinol Metab Clin North Am* - 01-SEP-2006; 35(3): 491-510, vii-viii

- If also overweight →  
↑ in fatigue complaints  
and > productivity  
losses (Boles)



# Poor health



- Health of an individual negatively effects
  - productivity
  - absenteeism
  - lost time due to injury (Burton, AIHW Oct 2005)
  
- BUT also places the safety of fellow workers at risk



- Is your workplace sitting on employee time bombs?



- Can you think of an employee whose health status worries you?



- Is the health of one employee putting many more employees at a safety risk?



# A time bomb employee....

- This is best demonstrated by the Waterfall train accident



# Waterfall train accident

“ ...severe underlying coronary artery disease had been detected by a more rigorous process of medical assessment than was undertaken, then not only would the accident probably have been avoided, it may also have saved lives and injuries”



- But I ask you is it simply enough to *detect* an employees chronic disease?
- Should worksites *assist* employees to their risk of developing chronic diseases?



- What are the pressing issues?
- Is health the company's responsibility?



# Pressing Issues

- ageing workforce
- early retirement
- a skills shortage
- absenteeism
- men do not seek healthcare
- high workers comp premiums

REF: medibank private

# Minerals Council of Australia's Safety and Health Vision

- “An Australian minerals industry free of fatalities, injuries and diseases”,

This vision indicates that mine sites are taking the health of their employees seriously!

# Health Education / Promotion



- Health promotion is interventions that ensure better health, well-being and pleasure, and... promote health and prevent illness.  
(Naumanen)



# Improved productivity

- It makes productivity, economic and social sense to prevent employees from developing chronic diseases

AND

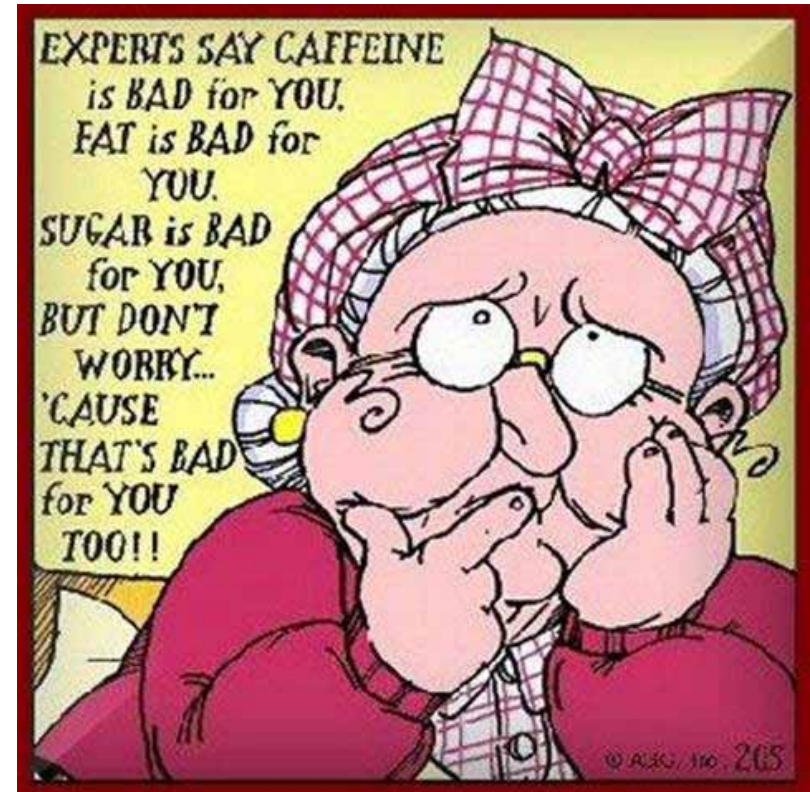
- assist those already with chronic diseases to manage them to optimise their health



# Healthy employees

- Employees that are happy and healthier
  - fitter for work
  - more productive
  - less absent
  - less injured at work

(Burton).




# Waterfall disaster report

- “A rigorous process of medical assessment”
- It is **NOT** simply enough to detect an employee’s chronic disease



# Company Tips

- Chronic diseases - not solved by annual tool box talk which ticks the box on OH&S requirements 
- These time bombs require:
  - progressive OH & S managers
  - A comprehensive approach to management of life long chronic disease

# Health programs work!



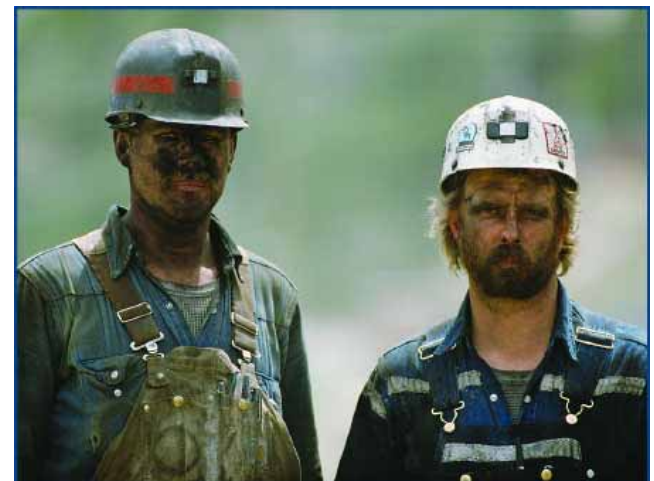
- 122 studies to 2004
  - improved health outcomes
    - weight loss,
  - coronary heart disease risk
- in worksite health programs

(Pelletier)

# Gains for the Company...

- Individuals who :
  - **reduce one health risk**
- improve their presenteeism by 9%
  - reduce absenteeism by 2 %

(REF: Pelletier, July 2004.)

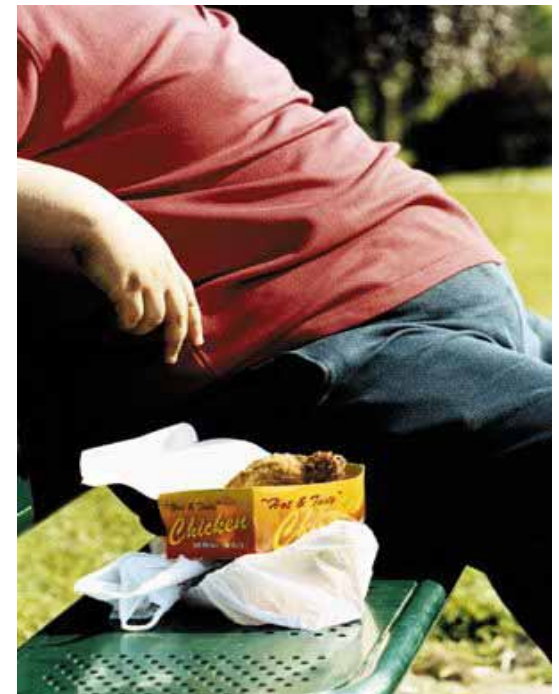


- Reduce the Minefield!
- Prevent the chronic disease explosions



# Nutrition education – a must!

- Nutrition education is:
  - the cornerstone of preventing the development of the disabling chronic disease
  - a complex area
  - requires a trained Dietitian





# CVD is largely preventable through lifestyle modification

8 x 1 hour education sessions  
emphasized low-fat eating behaviours  
significant in cholesterol levels

REF: Hartman



# Improvement in Diabetes

- Pre-diabetic and previously undiagnosed diabetic employees participated in a 12-month worksite diabetes prevention program

**50%** no longer pre-diabetic or diabetic

(REF: Aldana)

# GlaxoSmithKline

- Health program impact – saving of \$633 per person.
- Equals \$3M/ Yr due to significantly lower health care and lifestyle related costs
- Provided ongoing support and education for at least 1 year

(REF: Stave)

# Corporate Nutrition Solutions

- ✦ specialises in flexible workplace health programs
- ✦ assessment
- ✦ individual / groups
- ✦ tailored to the budget &
- ✦ training requirements of the mining worksites



- Chronic diseases are....the silent OH&S risk

- They need **not** be developing in your workforce.



- Diffuse the bombs, reignite with a health lifestyle supported by the worksite.



**From people you MAINTAIN  
To  
Those you SUSTAIN**

[www.corporatenutrition.com.au](http://www.corporatenutrition.com.au)



Annette Zeman

corporate nutrition solutions

eat you way to excellence

Mobile 0412988192