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Media Release

Male carers must make time for their own wellbeing

Men's Health Week provides all male carers with a timely reminder that their own health and wellbeing is as important as that of those for whom they care.

Carers Australia President Tim Moore said, "It is vital that male carers look after themselves and Men's Health Week is the perfect opportunity for them to visit their local GP for a check-up. Carers often put the needs of others ahead of their own, but it is important that they address their own health needs."

Male carers are more likely to have lower rates of health and wellbeing than average. Some 52 per cent reported that caring affected their health, 71 per cent had suffered minor injuries and sprains while giving care and 19 per cent had been significantly injured while caring.[1] Many also had what studies described as 'destructive' coping mechanisms.[2]

Mental health in particular has become an issue of increasing significance for male carers across Australia.

"We already know that mental health problems are a particular problem among the male population," Mr Moore said, "Add to this the stresses and strains of a caring role, and it becomes increasingly important for male carers to be well supported."

"There can be a reluctance among men to acknowledge health issues, mental or physical, let alone seek help to address them," Mr Moore said, "This approach can prove damaging, not only for themselves, but for their friends, family and the wider community."

"Many male carers are unaware that there are confidential support services available to help them take important steps to address any problems, or of the simple benefits of regular health checks. We urge all male carers to use Men's Health Week as an opportunity to undergo such checks."

According to the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, a wellbeing index score of 72.6 - 76.0 relates to a normal level of wellbeing for men. Male carers were found to have a score of 62.1.[3]

"Carers Australia believes that all male carers need to be considered an 'at risk' group, or a group with specific needs in all future men's health planning," Mr Moore said.

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