

# **East Belfast Community Development Agency MEN'S EVENING CLINIC 2011 – 2013 COMMUNITY – BASED HEALTH CHECKS**

## **Why a Community – Based Health Check?**

The relationship between the men's Network in east Belfast, EBCDA Health Programme, EBP and Belfast Health Trust District Nursing brought together creative thinking and action to address the declining health of men. This partnership had previously succeeded in winning the Queens Award for Nursing in 2007 for work on casefinding in the community. This approach involved going into local pubs and clubs to reach out to men with health checks supported by a group of dedicated and trained volunteers. Despite their health profile, men are continuing to be reluctant users of the health services and are continuing to present problems too late in the course of an illness.

The EBCDA Health Team linked with the Community Development Worker from the Health Trust and the Health Strategy Manager of EBP to establish community based health checks again with District Nurses in 2011. This time with a base in Hollywood Arches Health Centre but eventually moved to the new Network Centre in late 2013. It was with the intention of engaging men to conduct a Health Needs Assessment for the purposes of developing a strategy to address chronic illness. The effectiveness of the health check, as an intervention, was assessed and the findings from this study are presented here.

## **The Health Check**

Cardiovascular health checks (body mass index, total cholesterol, and blood pressure). Lifestyle behaviours were collected for diet, mental health, alcohol consumption, smoking and stress.

### **Approach to the Health Check**

- The venue was easily accessible within Hollywood Arches Health Centre
- Men were referred by GPs and invited by the Trust to the health check
- The environment was welcoming with volunteers from the Wise Men of the East Network providing teas and coffees in a waiting area and a member of staff from EBCDA Health Team was always available to explain the process.
- To avoid queuing men were given appointments and were phoned by staff the day before to confirm their availability.
- Men were not rushed with two District Nurses from the Trust providing one-to-one contact using two private consulting rooms and men were offered at least ½ hour appointments

## Age Profile of Men attending

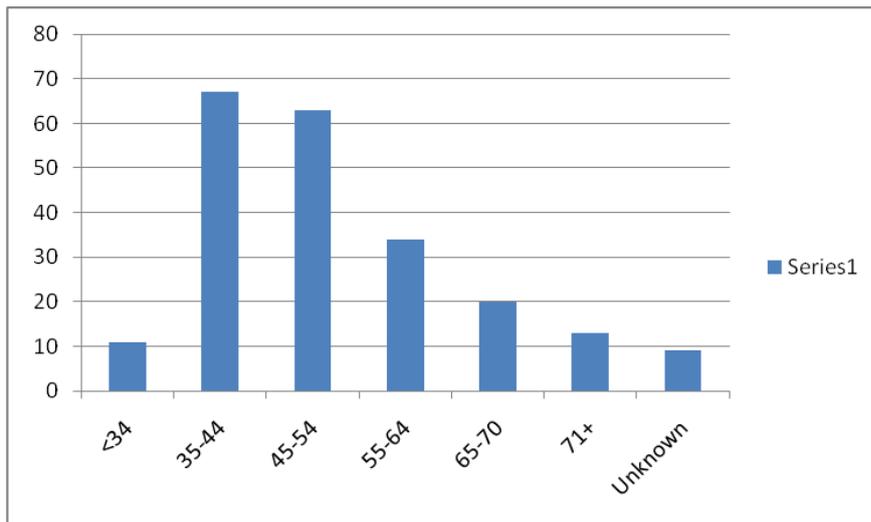


Figure 1: The majority 60% of men were aged between 35-54 years.

## Findings

During this period 217 men attended for check ups at the evening Clinic. With a 100% overall satisfaction level recorded through exit interviews for staff attitude, time and information received.

Physical activity changes were the most frequently cited behavioural changes considered as recorded through the exit survey.

Of the 217 participants 16% had been referred to see their GP, and no evidence could be found to say if they acted on the referral. A letter went to the GP informing them of concerns, a copy of the assessment template accompanied the letter.

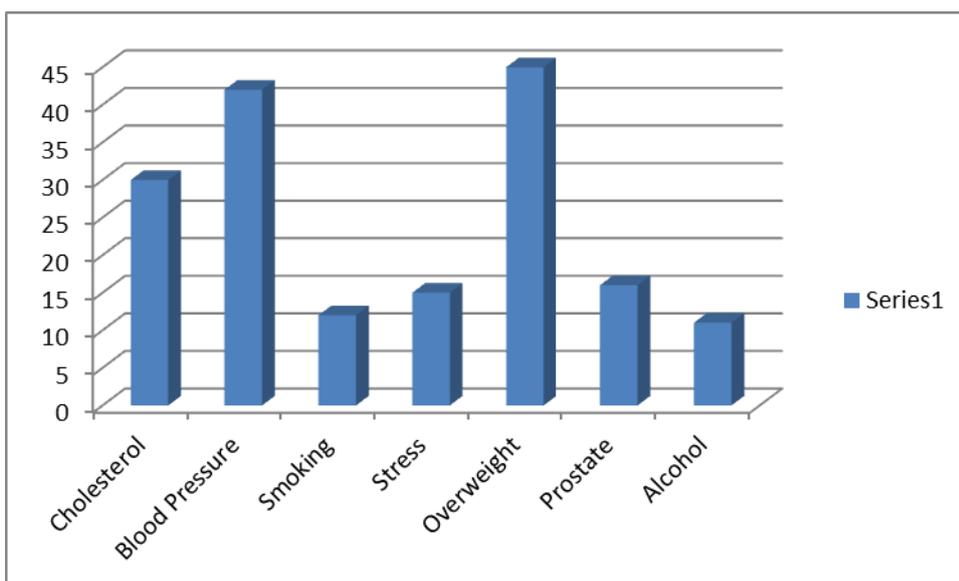


Figure2: The percentage of men who experienced health problems (n=217)

## Shared Issues

A wide range of concerns were the subject of discussion by men with volunteers and staff during the social waiting times at the clinic and during the exit interviews and included;

- Family history of prostate cancer
- Family history of suicide
- Struggles to reduce drinking and smoking
- Struggles to eat properly
- Work stress and anxiety
- Physical pain restricting mobility and inability to lose weight

## Lessons Learned

- ❖ A useful way to gather valuable information about men to inform the development of a community-based strategy
  - ❖ A useful way to engage men for a lengthy period about health and to raise awareness and to prompt them to seek further support
  - ❖ A move to the community-based Network Centre will provide support for reducing the likelihood of the 'worried well' attending
  - ❖ Improved connection with community organisations to help provide outcome results for their work with walking groups, youth and community activities
  - ❖ Further need to gather information on the participants perceptions of health status and attendance at GP surgery
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