

Men hearing obesity health messages at last

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More men than ever before are taking control of their health and seeking treatment for being overweight and obese at Royal Prince Alfred's Metabolism and Obesity Services (MOS), says its head Professor Kate Steinbeck.

Professor Steinbeck said the MOS, which this year was celebrating its 25th anniversary, had witnessed a steady increase in the number of people seeking treatment for obesity. However figures also suggested that men were "finally listening to important health messages".

"In 1992 the percentage of people presenting at MOS who weighed more than 200kg was 0.2 per cent, compared to 4.9 per cent in 2008 – a dramatic increase," Professor Steinbeck said.

"The encouraging news is that we are also now seeing a great percentage of men seeking weight loss treatment. The rate of overweight or obese men seeking treatment in 1992 was one man to every four women, yet now it is one man to every three women.

"These figures could perhaps indicate that men are now recognising that being overweight or 'solid' is not necessarily a sign of strength – it can have negative health implications that could increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obstructive sleep apnoea, low testosterone and low libido."

Professor Ian Caterson established the Metabolism and Obesity Services at RPA in 1983, with the aim of developing a scientifically proven and clinically tested hospital-based weight loss program.

Today MOS continues to operate as a multidisciplinary weight loss program and has evolved into a specialist weight loss clinic that sees up to 4000 patients a year.

"It is important for people to accept that they may never get back to the weight they once were or would like to be. However, if they are able to lose between 10-15kg and keep those kilograms off, it will provide them with very significant health benefits," Professor Steinbeck said. People can access Get Healthy by calling 1300 806 258 – a number which can be called from any NSW fixed landline for the cost of a local call –or by visiting www.gethealthynsw.com.au