



Aussie workers a health shock

Daniel Hoy

AUSTRALIAN workers are among the world's most unhealthy, a Monash University study has found.

Only 5 per cent of the Australian workforce get the recommended amounts of fruit, vegetables and physical activity.

The results shocked James English, general manager of the Global Corporate Challenge, at which the study was held.

"This would have to rank our workforce as one of the unhealthiest in the world," he said.

"This strongly suggests that we are also at very high risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain cancers — just to name a few."

It was also found that walking 7500 steps a day could reduce waist size by 2cm.

The study, one of the largest of its kind, is continuing to evaluate 750 people involved in last year's challenge, which involved teams of seven logging their steps in a virtual race around the world. The final results will be available after this year's event, which starts next month.

Study results include:

A DIRECT correlation between more physical activity and decreases in blood pressure, waist circumference and waist-to-hips ratio.

FIFTY-EIGHT per cent of participants were overweight, with a body mass index in excess of 25 units

and 21 per cent were obese with a body mass index in excess of 30 units.

FIFTY-FOUR per cent did not meet the healthy guidelines of a waist circumference of below 94cm for men or below 80cm for women.

HIGH blood pressure was evident in 18 per cent of participants.

SIXTY-ONE per cent did not meet established health guidelines for physical activity levels.

SEVENTY per cent were not eating enough fruit and 85 per cent were not eating enough vegetables.

ONLY 5 per cent were meeting the guidelines for consumption of fruit and vegetables and physical activity.

The study is also

addressing the question of the World Health Organisation recommendation of taking 10,000 (6.4km) steps a day.

"There are plenty of recommendations for people to undertake 10,000 steps a day, however there is not a heap of scientific studies that evaluates this," Mr English said.

One of the reasons for the study was to see if intervention by the workplace could improve health, he said.

Monash's Dr Anna Peeters said: "We also decided to do the study because very few studies have looked at the health benefits of workplace pedometer-based interventions."



Fitness takes off

DANIEL HOY

THE sixth Global Corporate Challenge will begin on May 21.

The virtual race around the world, in which teams of seven wear pedometers and record their steps, has been improving the health of corporate Australia.

From a solely Australian initiative with 2800 participants in 2004, its first year, GCC has grown to become the world's largest health-and-fitness drive for business.

Last year, 50,000 people took part and early indications are that this will increase to more than 80,000 this year.

The challenge tries to raise the step count of the average white-collar worker, which is only 3500 steps a day.

The World Health Organisation recommends they should aim to take 10,000 steps a day to improve health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Last year those taking part improved their health in several ways:

MEDICAL research on those taking part in the challenge found that, after completing the program, there was a 32.8 per cent decrease in women classified as having increased risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.

BY THE end of the event, women had an average weight loss of 6kg and a reduction in waist measurement of 8cm. Men averaged a loss of 5kg and an average decrease in waist measurement of 5cm.

BEFORE the event, a staggering 95.3 per cent of the men had an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. After completing the challenge, the percentage of men at risk had fallen 23.3 per cent.

visit > www.gettheworldmoving.com



Getting fit: Glen Riseley (right) and Shane Bilsborough power-walking near St Kilda Rd.