

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-018

OUTCOME 1: Population health

Topic: Diabetes and Mental Illness - Obesity
Diabetes and mental illness

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

- a) There is a strong correlation between obesity and type 2 diabetes. This is generally accepted by the general population but we know that people don't like to be told what's good or bad for them so they ignore the health messages and continue on their lifestyles.
- b) There is evidence though that if the health message is delivered in pictures, this works and motivates people to change their eating habits. For example if there is a picture of a healthy breakfast together with a picture of an unhealthy breakfast containing dietary information, people who make the visual comparison are far more likely to choose the healthier option. Is the department aware of this and if so, is it changing its strategy on how to motivate people to live healthier lifestyles.

Answer:

The Department of Health and Ageing is not aware of the specific evidence referred to. All communication produced by the Department is thoroughly researched with target audiences to determine the most effective approach for the specific campaign objectives.

Images are used in a number of the Department's physical activity, dietary and healthy lifestyle promotional materials for a broad range of target groups. Research with consumers for the following campaigns found the delivery of messages in highly visual ways to be the most effective approach:

- Swap It Don't Stop It campaign resources (managed by the Australian National Preventive Health Agency): www.swapit.gov.au; and
- National Physical Activity Guidelines:
http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#rec_5_12