In a feature chapter of the BEACH 2016 annual report General practice activity in Australia 2015–16, we examined ‘middle-aged’ patients (aged 45 to 64 years) as these patients would be prime targets for interventions to improve their future health.

This document summarises key findings of our investigation.

Middle-aged Australians accounted for 24.6% of the population in 2015 (5.86 million people).
Multimorbidity is an important health indicator of increased health care resource use and complexity of care. One-in-five people aged 45-64 years in the population have multimorbidity (defined as three or more diagnosed chronic conditions) and 6.4% have five or more.

1+ CHRONIC CONDITIONS
- 59.7%
- 3.5 MILLION PEOPLE

3+ CHRONIC CONDITIONS
- 21.2%
- 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE

5+ CHRONIC CONDITIONS
- 6.4%
- 370,000 PEOPLE

Patients aged 45–64 with diagnosed Type 2 diabetes...

- Visit GP 8.6 times per year on average
- 78.6% have 2+ other diagnosed chronic conditions
- 6% of the population
- Account for 6.0% of the population aged 45-64
- Have their diabetes managed per year
- 4.1 times

Change in management actions at GP encounters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems Managed</th>
<th>Medications</th>
<th>Tests Ordered</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01 155.6</td>
<td>2000-01 114.4</td>
<td>2000-01 48.1</td>
<td>2000-01 11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 162.5</td>
<td>2015-16 107.3</td>
<td>2015-16 69.5</td>
<td>2015-16 17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2015–16, middle-aged Australians were less likely to be normal weight and overweight, but much more likely to be obese than in 2000–01.

### CONCLUSION

The 45–64 age group of patients is the group where early diagnosis of chronic conditions and the institution of secondary prevention measures will have a large long-term impact on both longevity and the number of quality adjusted life years that will be enjoyed by elder Australians. The study demonstrates that GPs are rising to the challenge of early diagnosis and management in middle-aged people.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the GPs who participated in BEACH for their generosity. We also thank the organisations who supported BEACH financially in the years reported in this feature, see [http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/fmrc/beach/about/acknowledgements/index.php](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/fmrc/beach/about/acknowledgements/index.php)

BEACH was endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian Medical Association.

Books from the BEACH program are available for free download from our website sydney.edu.au/medicine/fmrc

**For more information please contact:**

A/Prof Helena Britt  
Email: Helena.Britt@sydney.edu.au  
Phone: 0411 197 938