



The Royal Australian College of
General Practitioners

Prevention is better than cure, right?

Mr Ian Watts

National Manager – GP Advocacy and Support

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Adjunct Senior Lecturer

Discipline of General Practice, University of Sydney

Overview

- Prevention – what do we mean?
- Prevention – why would we do it?
- What might a global view of prevention tell us?
- Segmentation
- Using primary prevention as an example
- What are some of the challenges?
- The importance of research

Prevention – at what level?

- **Primary prevention**
 - Promotion of health
 - Prevention of disease
- **Secondary prevention**
 - Early detection
 - Prompt intervention to correct departures from good health or treat early signs of disease
- **Tertiary prevention**
 - Reducing impairment and disability
 - Minimising suffering
 - Promoting adjustment to chronic or irremediable conditions

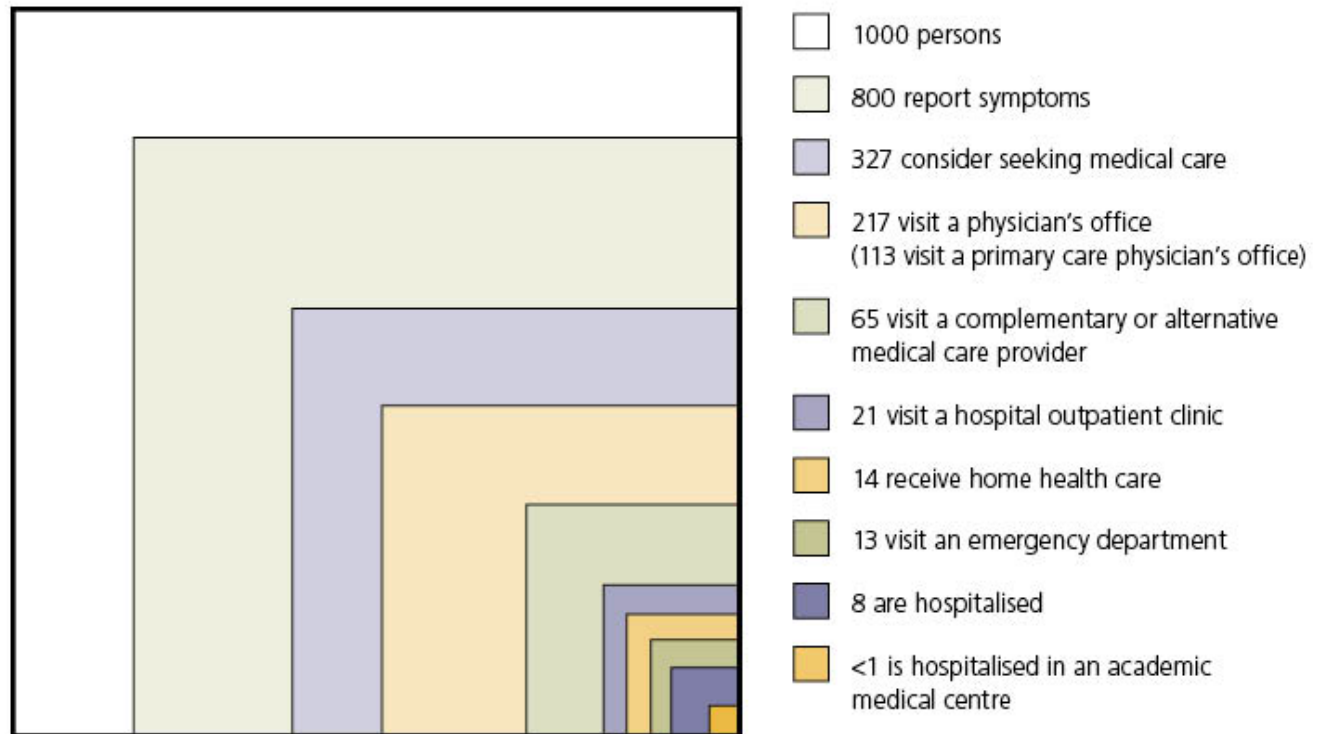
Why a preventive approach?

- Patients
 - Often respond to even brief interventions
 - Have enhanced quality of life, reduced morbidity and mortality from some preventive activities
- GPs
 - Value preventive approaches
 - Are valued by patients when they take this approach
 - Understand that preventive approaches can realise a productivity gain for all stakeholders



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Starting with a global view



Results of a re-analysis of the monthly prevalence of illness in the community and the roles of various sources of health care. Each box represents a subgroup of the largest box, which comprises 1000 persons. Data are for persons of all ages.

Reference: Green LA, Fryer GE, Yawn BP, et al. The ecology medical care revisited. NEJM 2001;344:2021-5.

So ... we need to segment

- Segment by
 - Primary prevention
 - Secondary prevention
 - Tertiary prevention
- Segment by
 - Interventions demonstrated in the research evidence to be (cost) effective
- Is this the same thing?

Primary prevention – an example

- RACGP *Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice (6th edn)*
 - An evidence-based guide to preventive activities for Australian general practice
 - Consultations that are only for primary prevention are (in the main) not covered by the Medicare Benefits Schedule
 - This area is one of opportunity for the private health insurers

So ... what about the challenges?

- We need to know and understand the impact of:
 - **The ‘Pay back’ period**
 - The period that it takes for a preventive measure to realise a net benefit
 - **‘Hit and run’ behaviour**
 - The ‘investment’ in prevention being recouped by another insurer
 - **Competition and collaboration**
 - To what extent can we collaborate?
 - **Economies of scale**
 - Where will economies of scope or scale influence our decisions.



General practice – our challenges

- Is general practice?
 - Indispensable
 - Over-burdened
 - Reliable
 - Efficient/productive

We need to research and evaluate

- We need to know
 - What works
 - Why it works, and in what situations
 - How to replicate it
 - How to adapt it?
- Thus, we need to invest in research and evaluation.