



## Australian Firefighters' Health Study Bulletin No 2

Monash University is pleased to report that the Australian Firefighters' Health Study is well underway. In collaboration with participating firefighting agencies, the study team is currently assembling a cohort of former and current, career, part-time and volunteer firefighters. This study bulletin provides an overview of the study progress over the past six months.

### Participating agencies

Country Fire Authority (CFA) has recently joined the study. Subject to privacy concerns and remaining contractual matters, the study cohort will consist of data held by following nine firefighting agencies:

- ACT Emergency Services
- Airservices Australia
- Country Fire Authority
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority, WA
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board, Melbourne
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NT Fire and Rescue Service
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

### Study progress

The study has made further progress on several fronts:

- After the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) granted ethics approval to the study last year, further applications have been submitted to the NSW Population & Health Ethics committee and the NT Department of Health and Menzies School of Health Research. Ethics applications to the remaining state and territory cancer registries and to the AIHW have been drafted.
- Monash commenced the data collection phase earlier this year. Each agency was asked to provide necessary information such as names, dates of birth and post code of firefighters and service history information such as job title, number and type of fires attended. Recent efforts at Monash have concentrated on data cleaning to prepare the data for analyses.

#### In this Issue:

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## Study progress (cont.)

- The second Advisory Committee meeting took place on July 19th 2012. The Monash team gave the meeting a detailed update on the study progress, reviewed data issues, and discussed different methods of exposure assessment. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 2012.
- The CFA and MFB are intending to advertise the study to potential participants to identify those individuals who do not wish to take part in the study so that their data is not provided to Monash. The ACTESA are also considering this approach.
- In order to provide scientific support to the researchers, the Scientific Reference Group has been established. The group will provide guidance to the researchers on the establishment and conduct of the study, evaluate and suggest improvements to the proposed analytical methodology, and review findings from the study and their potential implications.
- We expect to form a subgroup for career and another for volunteer firefighters to discuss to how best group career and volunteer firefighters with respect to their exposures.
- The 1800-number and study email address has occasionally been used by firefighters, media, etc. over the past months.
- Sabine Pircher, the study project officer will be presenting a poster with some background information on the Firefighters' Health Study at the AFAC & Bushfire CRC Conference in Perth in August 2012.

To learn more about the study or to find copies of this and other bulletins, visit our study website: <http://www.coeh.monash.org/ausfirefr.html>. If you have any questions or comments, please send an email to [firefighterstudy@monash.edu](mailto:firefighterstudy@monash.edu).