

Medication Safety: A Mutual Responsibility

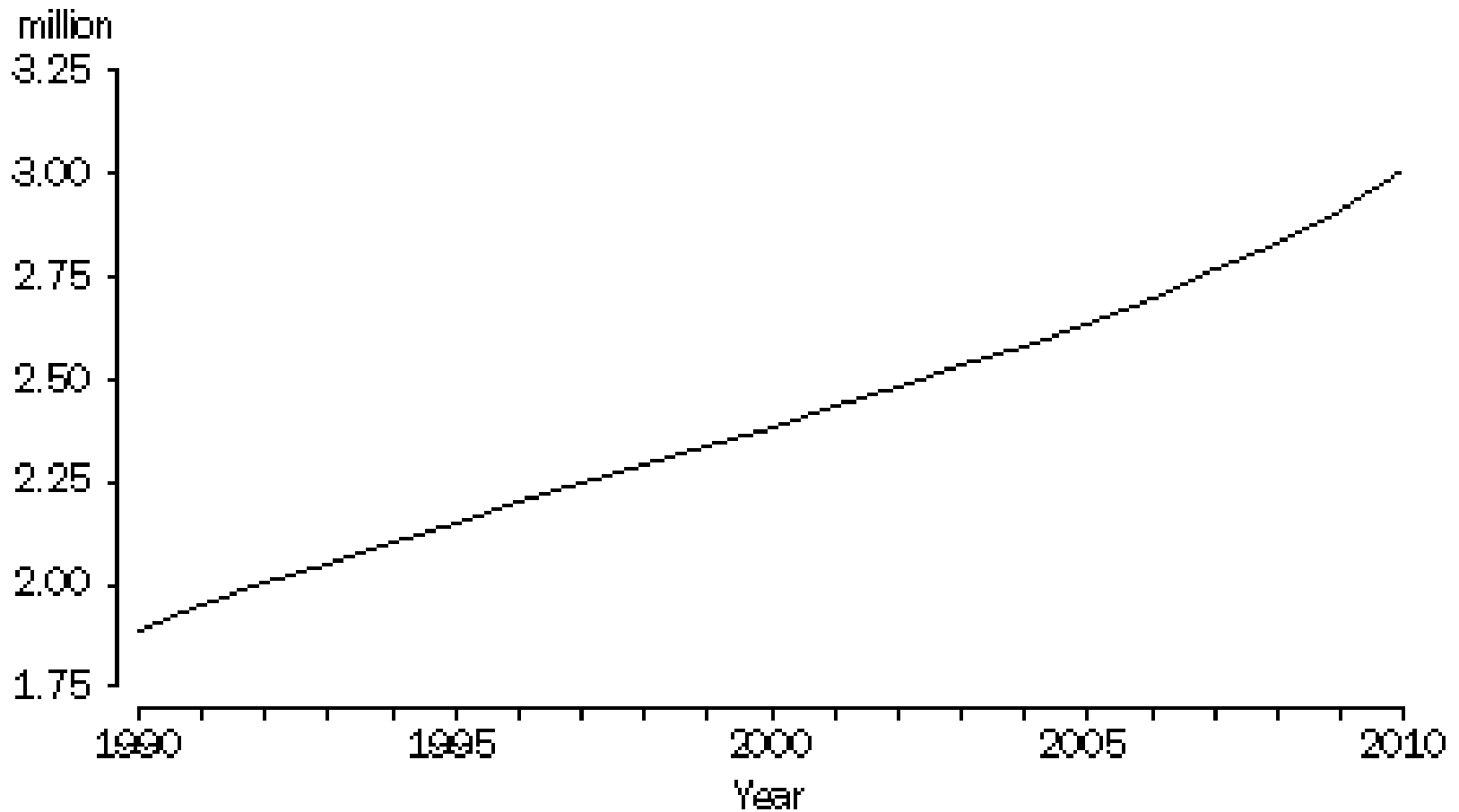
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Principal Pharmacy Advisor

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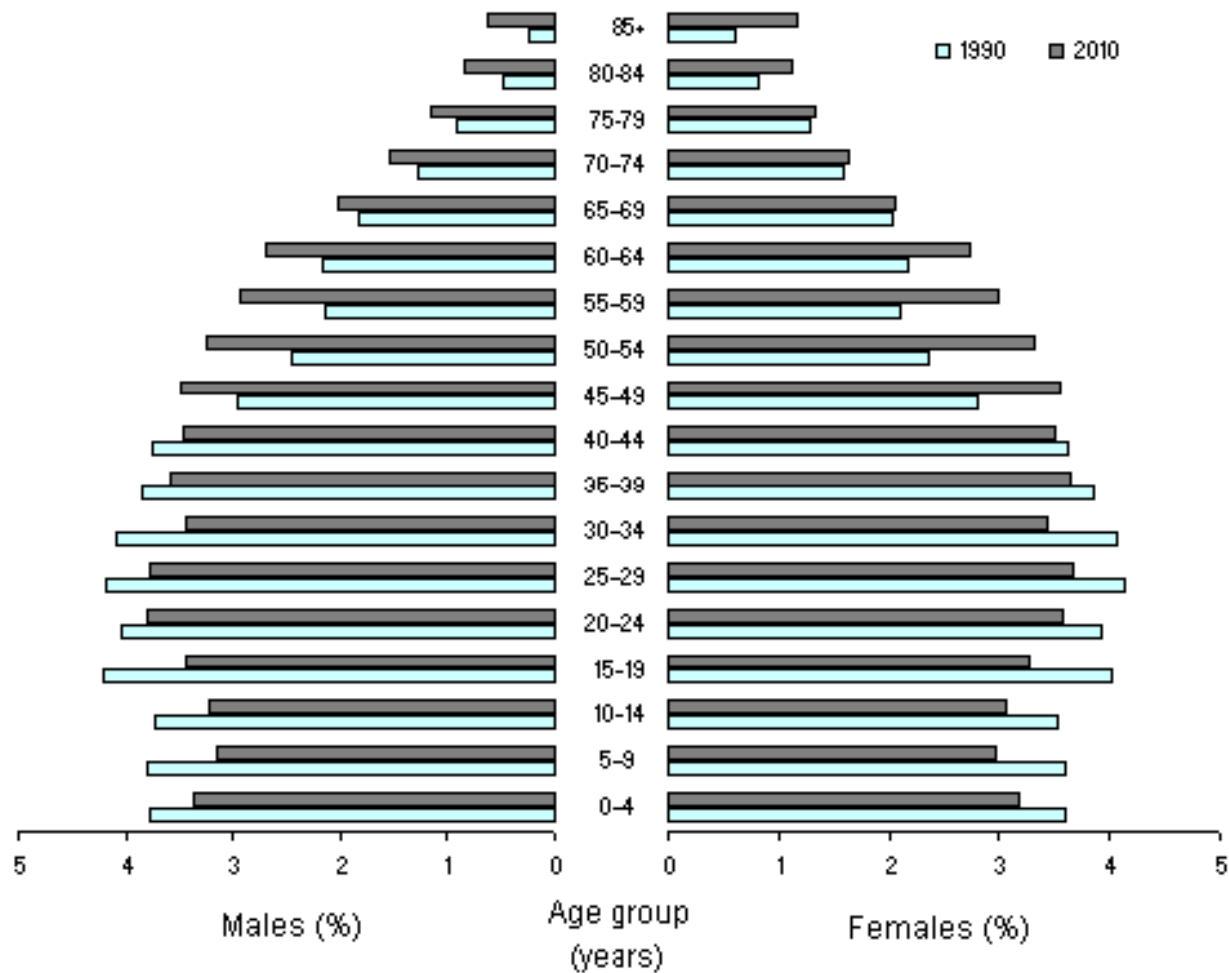
Department of Health and Ageing



Population aged 65 years and over



Population Structure, Australia - 1990-2010



Self-assessed health status 2004-05

Health status	25-64	65+	85+
Excellent/Very good	75%	34%	22%
Good	22%	34%	37%
Fair/poor	4%	32%	41%

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme 2007-08

Age	0-14	15-64	65+	Total
People	4.1m	14.7m	2.9m	21.8m
PBS Prescriptions	4.4m	71.8m	104.1m	180.4m
Prescriptions per person	1.1	4.9	35.9	8.3

Reality for older people?

- Higher levels of medicine use
- Greater vulnerability to medication effects
- Negative health outcomes e.g.
 - - Increased falls risk
 - - Urinary incontinence
 - - Delirium
 - - Constipation

Adverse Drug Events

- Can occur from diagnosis to treatment to monitoring and can include
 - Adverse drug reactions
 - Polypharmacy
 - Non compliance
 - Errors
- Many preventable

QUM is important!



Quality Use of Medicines

Original QUM policy documents noted that older people at risk of:

- Inappropriate selection - analgesics, antibiotics, respiratory drugs, gastrointestinal drugs
- Excessive use - analgesics, antibiotics, major and minor tranquillisers
- Under use - depression in institutionalised elderly, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, immunisable conditions, CHF, post-AMI, GI ulcer

Structures and processes to support QUM

- Interim medication administration chart
- Medication management plan
- Tallman lettering
- Veterans' MATES
- Medication charts in RACFs
- Hospital-initiated medication reviews
- Dose administration aids
- MedsCheck
- & more ...

Supporting an informed consumer and health professional

- Workforce initiatives
- Guideline development
- Independent information
 - National Prescribing Service
 - Consumer Medicines Information

Summary

- Older people receive great health benefit from medicines
- Older people can also experience harm from their medication regimen
- A team approach, with the older person as part of the team is essential for QUM
- An informed consumer and an informed health professional are essential for quality use of medicines

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