

Friday August 9, 2013

Chronic pain major cause of health loss

“Chronic pain is one of the leading causes of health loss for New Zealanders, according to today’s report, [Health Loss in New Zealand](#),” says pain medicine specialist, Dr Kieran Davis. Health loss is a measure of how much healthy life is lost due to early death, illness or disability.

Dr Davis is chair of the New Zealand National Committee for the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists’ Faculty of Pain Medicine. He welcomed the report, saying it provides very valuable data that can assist with health policy and planning.

“The report notes (at p30) that chronic pain collectively was accounting for at least five per cent of the health loss recorded in the study. This makes it a burden similar in size to that of anxiety and depression, which the report ranks as second only to coronary heart disease in terms of its contribution (table 6, p22),” he says.

“This is based on 2006 data and, with an ageing population, we can expect the incidence of chronic pain to increase considerably and to require much more of our health care resources.

“There has already been acknowledgement of this, with the Medical Council recently recognising pain medicine as a specialist scope of practice and several health boards having specialist pain clinics, but much more will be needed,” Dr Davis says. “We must not under-estimate chronic pain when it comes to New Zealanders’ quality of health.”

ENDS

- **For more information or to request interviews, please contact ANZCA’s New Zealand Communications Manager, Susan Ewart, on +64 4 499 1213 (work) or +64 27 415 2815 (mobile); or email communications@anzca.org.nz. Follow ANZCA on Twitter [@ANZCA](https://twitter.com/ANZCA).**

-