

Under the Microscope **with Professor Paul Norman**

A study which investigates health and illness in older men has received almost \$400, 000 from the National Health Medical Research Council.

Professor Paul Norman, a member of the clinical staff at both Royal Perth and Fremantle Hospitals, is leading the study with fellow researchers Professor Konrad Jamrozik and Royal Perth Hospital's Professor Leon Flicker.

Prof Norman said the aim of the study is to improve the understanding of healthy aging in older men.

"We are interested in learning about common acute medical problems such as heart attacks or stroke, chronic debilitating problems such as dementia or heart failure and psycho-social challenges of aging such as depression and isolation," Prof Norman said.

These researchers have been studying over 4, 000 men for nearly a decade and from this have obtained information about their background, lifestyle and health.

"We are now following them to see what predicts the outcomes of interest."

The men in the study have been asked psycho-social and medical questions, have provided blood samples, and also details such as height, weight, blood pressure and measures of cognitive function.

"This research is important because the proportion of the population aged 75 years and over is expanding rapidly."

"Although we know a lot about predictors of health and illness in middle age, we know surprisingly little about these things in the elderly – we hope this research answers some of these questions."

"We will then be able to examine the extent to which lessons learnt about cardiovascular risk principally from studies of middle-aged individuals also apply in old age."

The study will examine the relationship between 'classical' cardiovascular risk factors and the use of pacemakers, admissions to hospital for cardiac failure and peripheral arterial disease.

The study also aims to evaluate the factors that determine whether an individual can age 'well'.



“In the long term we hope this may lead to the development of effective strategies to decrease the risk of poor mental and physical health outcomes in later life.”