



## Preschool pester power to tackle silent killer

A new campaign will be released this week, harnessing the pester power of the *smallest* members of our community to combat our *biggest* health issue – high blood pressure.<sup>1,2</sup>

In the lead up to World Hypertension Day (17 May), the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia has released a [video](#) which features young children telling their grandparents to get their blood pressure checked, using the timeless parenting phrase, “*Because I say so*”. The Research Council is urging Australians to share the video on social media to bring high blood pressure into the spotlight, using the hashtag #Becausesaysso.

The new campaign targets older Australians through the words of their grandchildren to raise awareness of, and encourage real action against, high blood pressure. The condition now affects a staggering one-in-three Australian adults,<sup>3</sup> of whom four million are living with uncontrolled or untreated blood pressure levels.<sup>4</sup>

High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart disease,<sup>4</sup> which claims the lives of more than 45,000 Australians each year.<sup>5</sup> As such, heart disease remains the number one cause of death in Australia.<sup>2</sup>

According to Professor Markus Schlaich, spokesperson for the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia and representative of the International Society of Hypertension, high blood pressure is a “silent killer”. “Most people don’t experience any symptoms, and many have no idea they even have it until it’s too late,” he said.

“There’s no way of knowing whether you are affected unless you get your blood pressure checked regularly. What better way to encourage our ageing population to make that step than the concern of their cherished grandchildren?”, he asked.

“It’s often the simple things in life that jolt us into action. I urge the children and youths in our community to pester their loved ones to get their blood pressure checked and avoid unnecessary risk to their health,” said Professor Schlaich.

120/80mmHg is considered a healthy blood pressure for most people.<sup>6</sup> High blood pressure occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls becomes consistently too strong. Getting your blood pressure checked is straightforward. Simply make an appointment with your doctor or take advantage of the often free services offered in many pharmacies.

Professor Schlaich is calling for a concerted effort to test the blood pressure of patients over the age of 45 during all GP visits. “It’s a two-way street; patients need to ask, and doctors need to insist. Testing blood pressure cannot be left to chance,” he added.

Professor Schlaich will be speaking at the 2019 General Practice Conference & Exhibition (GPCE) 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Sydney on 17 May regarding the effective diagnosis and monitoring of high blood pressure in primary care.

The ‘Because I say so’ campaign is supported by the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia, the International Society of Hypertension, The George Institute for Global Health, Stroke Foundation and the Servier Foundation.

**ENDS#**

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