SOWN and HEALTH

Join SOWN and live forever?????

Assumptions

SOWN membership means:

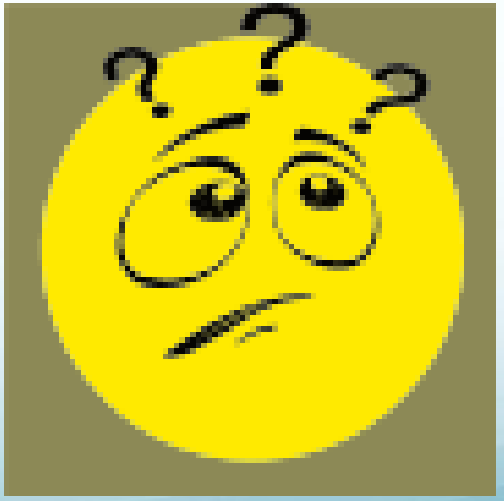
- Physical work (outside)
- Social connectedness
- Exposure to nature

APOLOGIES

- SOWN membership does not confer immortality
- I have no formal qualifications in public health

Hazards of SOWN membership

- 1. Physical injuries (speak to Leo)
- 2. Sun exposure
- 3. Infectious disease exposure
- 4. Bites



SUN EXPOSURE

SUN EXPOSURE and:

- EYES
- SKIN

Sun and eyes

- Need sunlight for normal eye growth

  96.5% of 19 year old males in Seoul are short sighted.

Short sightedness originally thought to be due to screen exposure. Now known to be inadequate sunlight during eye growth.

Children need to play outside ..... But what about adults?

Eye Risks of Sunshine

- Macular degeneration
- Cataracts
- Eye cancer
- Other

Eye protection for SOWN members

- Glasses
- UV coating
- Hat – wide brimmed
- Wrap around sun glasses

Sunlight and skin

- Vitamin D production
- Mood improvement

  Human evolution occurred outdoors
- Sunlight is necessary for normal health

Sunlight and skin

- Excess sunlight causes:
  - rapid skin ageing
  - skin cancer

Skin protection

- Shady environment where possible
- Avoid high UV times of day
- Protective clothing
- Hat
- SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen

- Slows ageing
- Protects from cancer
- Which sunscreen?
  - Fresh
  - 30 SPF is OK. Little additional protection from higher SPF

How to use sunscreen

- Adequate amounts (e.g. teaspoon per arm)
- Daily, whether or not sun exposure
- If you are venturing into the sunlight, need to top up every TWO HOURS

Infectious diseases

Legionnaires disease - 2 types

- 1. *Legionella pneumophila* (cooling towers)
- 2. *Legionella longbeachae* (potting mix)

Around 30 cases a year in Qld

Mortality 5-30%

PREVENTION

- If potting mix is dry and dusty, dampen it.
- Wear gloves
- Wash hands when finished (ordinary soap)

TICKS

- Ixodes holocyclus-complex life cycle
- Adult form is commonest problem
- Climbs up grass to ~50 cm. and attaches to passers by
- Climbs up the body to find an attractive moist part
- May inject paralysis toxin
- Does not cause Lyme Disease
- May cause severe allergy
- May cause meat allergy

TICKS

- REMOVAL: Lasso (with dental floss)
- FINE forceps
- Freeze with wart freezing liquid (ether)
- PREVENTION: Physical barriers
- Insect repellants (DEET or PICARIDIN)

Now for the good news.....

Value of exercise and SOWN

- In the nursery
- Bushcare
- Walking through the bush

Types of exercise

- Aerobic
- Interval
- Balance
- Resistance
- Impact

Aerobic exercise

- Improves stamina and fitness
- Reduces frailty
- Improves mood
- Reduces cognitive decline

High intensity

- Improves fitness quickly
- Little studied in older age group

Resistance exercise

- E.g. carrying trays, squatting, weight lifting
- Advantages
  - Prevents loss and builds muscle bulk
  - Maintains strength
  - Prevents frailty
  - Probably reduces cognitive decline

Psychological benefits of SOWN membership

- Social connectedness (cohesion) results in better mental health
- SOWN membership may prevent loneliness.

  (Loneliness is a serious risk factor for death.)
- Morning tea is important – not just rest and eat time!

Wider benefits of SOWN's work

- Trees and greenness encourage exercise
- Trees cool the environment
- Trees reduce pollution and erosion
- Trees sequester carbon dioxide (and produce oxygen)
- Trees reduce urban run off
- Trees improve society's mood

TREES AND POLLUTION

- Air pollution kills ~3000 /year (~1000 car accidents.
- In Australia coal powered power stations are worst emitters
- In Brisbane motor vehicles are biggest polluters

Trees and society

- Help avoid “NATURE DEFECIT DISORDER”

IN SUMMARY

- The known risks related to SOWN volunteering can be ameliorated to a large degree
- They are more than counteracted by the known benefits
  - To individual members
  - To our society