



## Australian Podiatry Association (Victoria)

October 3, 2005

### **Ill-fitting shoes cripple the elderly**

#### ***National Foot Health Week October 9– 15***

More than 70 per cent of older people wear shoes that are too small for their feet.

Research by a Melbourne foot specialist has shown that ill-fitting shoes are crippling the elderly.

The research also showed that women are more likely than men to wear ill-fitting shoes.

La Trobe University research fellow Dr Hylton Menz said podiatrists had known about the high prevalence of ill-fitting shoe wearers among the elderly for some time but that his latest research was able to quantify the problem.

He said many were victims of fashion and persisted with wearing problem shoes despite the pain they induced.

“It’s amazing the amount of 80-year-olds who don’t want to be seen wearing an 80-year-old’s shoe,” Dr Menz said.

Dr Menz interviewed 176 retirement village residents aged 52 to 96.


“We asked people to show us the shoes they wore most outdoors and indoors. Seventy-eight per cent wore outdoor shoes that were too narrow for their feet and 81 per cent wore indoor shoes that also were too narrow.”

Dr Menz said part of the problem was that shoe shops generally failed to cater for older broader feet.

He said wearing shoes that are too narrow leads to an increased risk of bunions and corns, which can reduce mobility.

Podiatrists also warn that wearing sloppy old favourites that offer little support is also dangerous for the elderly.





“They can cause instability and lead to a higher incidence of falls,” said Australian Podiatry Association (Vic) chief executive officer Celia Gahan.

She urged the elderly to have an annual foot check, to keep walking and to choose firm fitting shoes with soft soles.

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**For details about National Foot Health Week (October 9-15), check [www.podiatryvic.com.au](http://www.podiatryvic.com.au)**

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