

## Working together to prevent heart disease for people living with psychiatric illness

### Michael's story

Michael is a 46 year old male who left school in year 10. He doesn't have any qualifications, and has been working part time stacking shelves in a supermarket for four years. Before the supermarket job, Michael was unemployed because he found it difficult holding down a job due to ill health. Michael was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at the age of 28 after several manic episodes where he would be admitted to hospital for weeks or sometimes months.

His manic episodes consisted of fast speech, grandiose delusions, lack of sleep and agitation. Following the episodes of mania, Michael often had bouts of depression where he struggled to get out of bed, and do basic tasks such as shopping. He often felt overwhelmed in busy environments and would not attend functions with friends and family (Michael's mother also had similar symptoms).

Over the next 15 years, Michael experienced bouts of mania often followed by depression that led to suicide attempts, self-harm and hospitalisation for short periods. The bouts of mania would often occur after months of not taking his medications because he felt he was well and didn't need to. Michael trialled a few medications before settling on Na Valproate (500mg bd) and Olanzapine (10mg) at night to help with his sleep and mood stabilisation. He also regularly visits a psychiatrist and GP which has helped him remain stable and without any manic episodes for the past 10 years.

Michael doesn't earn enough money to rent his own home so he lives with his sister Cheryl and her

two teenage girls. He has never been married and has previously had two short-term relationships that both broke down due to his mental health challenges.

Michael loves watching motor sports on television and used to attend race meetings but he can no longer afford to. He was given an old car by a mate and it sits in his sister's garage. The car is his pride and joy but he can't afford to fix some major mechanical issues and he has lost the motivation to work on it.

Michael's mental health is being managed well through medication, psychological care and a stable living situation with his sister. However, his physical health is compromised due to significant weight gain, daily alcohol consumption and lack of exercise. At Michael's last GP check, his main health indicators were:

- smoking 30 cigarettes a day
- weight at 100kg (height of 170cm)
- Bp of 150/90
- cholesterol at 7.0
- hdl at 0.8, LDL at 5.0
- fasting BGL at 10
- HBA1c at 8%

Michael's sister is constantly reminding him to exercise as she is mindful of his weight gain and the negative impacts this can have on his health, especially because of additional health risks. He is a heavy smoker; has hypertension and high cholesterol; and drinks at least four stubbies of beer every night and more on the weekends when he is watching sports.