



Chief Health Officer Seminar Series

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Why is prevention so difficult?

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How often do we wheel out the old cliché that prevention is better than cure? And yet, both in our own daily lives, and in designing and running our health system, how much do we do to make that cliché a reality?

We all know that prevention can mean longer and healthier lives for individuals. And in crude financial terms, preventing ill health is usually much more cost-effective than curing disease.

So why is prevention so difficult? Why don't we do more of it; and why don't we do it better?

This paper considers five broad areas where barriers to effective prevention and early intervention might be considered to exist:-

- financial;
- systemic;
- individual;
- social; and
- cultural.

The paper also highlights some recent efforts to overcome those barriers.