

Respiratory diseases lower in homes with retrofitted insulation: NZ study

12 September 2022 | News

Retrofitting insulation is a relatively inexpensive way of not only making houses warmer and more affordable to heat but also healthier to live in: Researchers



Retrofitting home insulation can reduce the onset of chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma by up to 10 per cent, new University of Otago research shows.

The research, published in science journal *Indoor Air*, found insulation can also help to manage symptoms, with even greater gains in homes that also had heat pumps fitted.

Researchers from the He Kōhanga Oranga – Housing and Health Research Programme at the University's Wellington campus in New Zealand (NZ) analysed pharmaceutical prescriptions that were dispensed to residents of more than 200,000 houses that received subsidised insulation through the EECa Warm-Up New Zealand: Heat Smart programme that ran between 2009 and 2014.

Results show the intervention group, which included people whose homes were insulated between 2009 and 2011, was 10 per cent less likely to develop chronic respiratory diseases when compared with a control group whose homes had no retrofitted insulation.

Researchers also discovered there was a 4 per cent relative reduction in medication for respiratory disease symptoms dispensed to the intervention group after insulation was retrofitted.