

Victorian Population Health Survey 2010

Loddon Mallee Region - selected findings

Loddon Mallee Region is located north-west of Melbourne and its estimated resident population as of 2010 was 320,397¹ with adults comprising 75.8% of the population, compared to 77.8% for Victoria¹. More than one-third of residents (35.9%) were aged 50 years or older compared to 31.4% for Victoria. Life expectancy at birth in 2007 was 83.4 years for females and 78.6 years for males, lower² than the Victorian figure of 84.4 years and 80.3 years respectively³.

The Victorian Population Health Survey is an annual state-wide survey that the Department of Health undertakes to collect information on the health of the adult Victorian population (18 years or older).

Smoking status

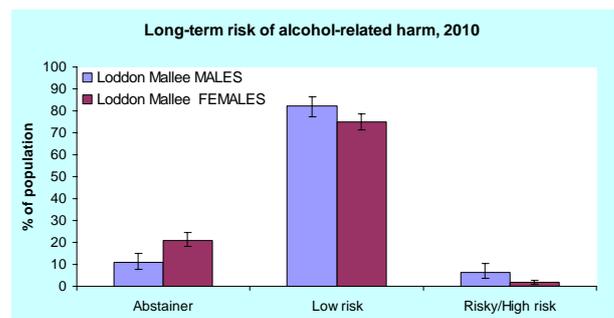
Current smokers are defined as those who smoke daily or occasionally. In 2010, 19.4% of males and 17.5% of females from the Region were current smokers⁴, similar to all Victorian males (17.8%) and females (15.8%).



Alcohol consumption⁵

The *Australian Alcohol Guidelines*⁶ specify the risk of long-term alcohol-related harm by level of alcohol consumption in males and females.

The patterns of alcohol consumption were similar between the Region and Victoria for both males and females. Females in the Region were more likely to abstain from alcohol consumption (21.1%) than their male counterparts (10.8%). Males (6.2%) in the region were far more likely than their female counterparts to consume alcohol at a risky or high risk level for long-term harm (1.6%).



Overweight and obesity

Being overweight or obese is an important risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, certain cancers, sleep apnoea and osteoarthritis. It is typically measured by calculating a person's Body Mass Index (BMI), which is their weight in relation to their height^{7,8}.

In 2010, 44.3% of males in Loddon Mallee Region were overweight, whilst 14.6% were obese, similar to Victorian males (41.0% and 18.5% respectively). More than one in four females in the Region (26.9%) were overweight, similar to all Victorian females (25.7%), whilst 20.3% were obese, higher than all Victorian females (15.2%). Males in the Region were more likely to be overweight compared with their female counterparts.

¹ Service Planning, Department of Health (DH).

² Region estimates are considered to be higher or lower than the Victorian estimate based on statistical significance, determined by comparing the 95% confidence intervals (CI) between estimates. Where the 95% CI of estimates do not overlap there is strong evidence that the estimates are different. Where they overlap, the estimates are deemed to be similar.

³ Health Intelligence Unit, DH.

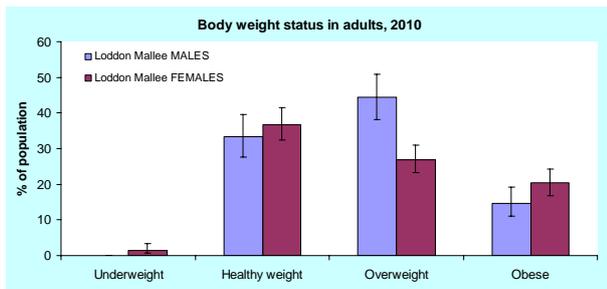
⁴ Estimates are age-standardised to the 2006 Victorian population.

⁵ The 2010 VPHS survey questions on alcohol consumption captured the risks of alcohol-related harm based on the 2001 Australian Alcohol Guidelines.

⁶ NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) 2001.

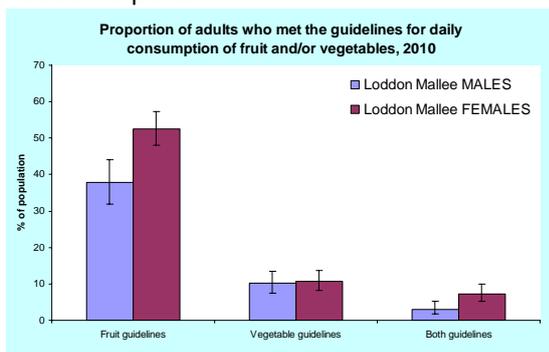
⁷ Based on self-reported weight and height.

⁸ BMI Reference: WHO 2000, *Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic*, WHO Technical Report Series 894, World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva.



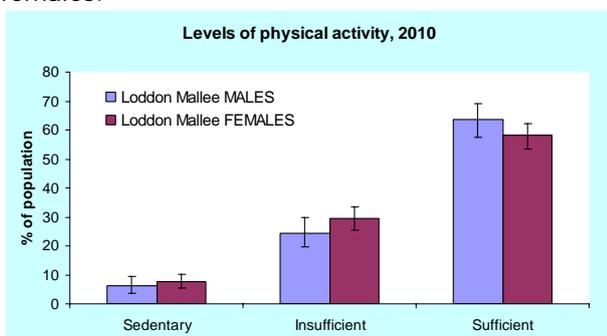
Nutrition

In 2010, 10.2% of males in the Region met the dietary guidelines⁹ for vegetable consumption, higher than Victorian males (5.2%). However, 10.7% of females in the Region met the dietary guidelines for vegetable consumption, similar to Victorian females (10.0%). Less than four in 10 males (37.8%) and 52.6% of females in the Region met the dietary guidelines for fruit consumption, similar to Victorian males and females (45.1% and 54.5% respectively). Females in the Region were also more likely to meet the dietary guidelines for consumption of fruit and combined fruit and vegetables than their male counterparts.



Physical Activity

In 2010, 63.5% of males and 58.0% of females in the Region met the physical activity guidelines¹⁰, similar to Victorian males and females (61.2% and 57.1% respectively). There were no differences in physical activity levels between the Region and Victoria, or between males and females.



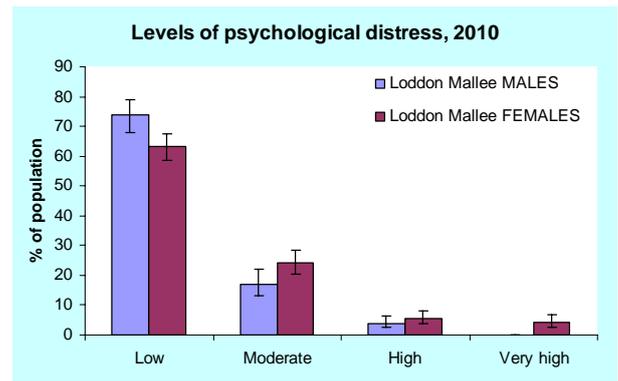
⁹ The **Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults** recommend five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit daily for adults, aged 19 years and older, to ensure a healthy diet. NHMRC 2003. For persons aged 12 to 18 years, the recommendations are for three serves of vegetables and three serves of fruit.

¹⁰ The **National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians** recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most, preferably all days in persons aged 19 years and over. DoHAC (Department of Health and Aged Care) 1999, Canberra.

Psychological distress

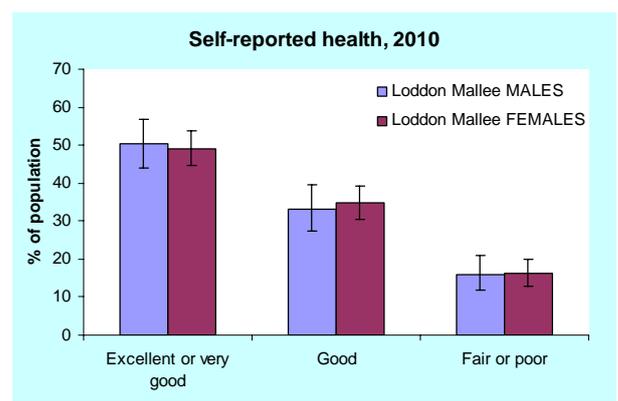
Poor mental health is a significant risk factor for poor health outcomes. The Kessler 10 (K10) scale is a measure of the level of psychological distress, which in turn is a risk factor for poor mental health¹¹.

In 2010, 73.7% of males and 63.3% of females in the Region experienced low levels of psychological distress, similar to Victorian males and females (68.9% and 59.9% respectively). Males in the Region were more likely to have experienced a low level of psychological distress than their female counterparts.



Self-reported health

In 2010, 50.4% of males and 49.1% of females in the Region reported their health as excellent or very good, similar to Victorian males and females (45.2% and 46.8% respectively). More than one in six males (15.8%) and 16.1% of females in the Region reported their health as only fair or poor, similar to Victorians males and females (17.1% and 16.2% respectively). There were no differences between the Region and Victoria, or between males and females in self-reported health status.



This fact sheet presents selected key findings from the Victorian Population Health Survey 2010. The full report of the Victorian Population Health Survey 2010 is at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/survey/vphs.htm>

¹¹ The Kessler 10 is a set of 10 questions designed to categorise the level of psychological distress over a four week period and has been validated as a simple measure of anxiety, depression, and worry (psychological distress).