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Summary

The Victorian Population Health Survey 2002 collected a wide range of information relating to the health of the adult Victorian population and the determinants of that health.

Health and lifestyle

- Of all persons aged 18 years and over, 12.2 per cent usually consumed five or more serves of vegetables each day. A greater proportion of females than males (15.1 per cent and 9.3 per cent respectively) consumed the recommended number of daily serves of vegetables.
- Approximately 55 per cent of persons reported consuming two or more serves of fruit on a usual day. The proportion who consumed the recommended level of fruit consumption each day was greater among females (60.3 per cent) than males (49.0 per cent).
- The proportion of persons who did not consume the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables ranged from a maximum of 53.9 per cent among males aged 25-34 years to a minimum of 24.3 per cent among females aged 65 years or over.
- Over half (53.7 per cent) of persons consumed low fat, skim or soya milk, with 38.7 per cent consuming low or reduced fat milk. A higher proportion of females (61.4 per cent) than males (45.8 per cent) consumed these types of milk.
- Of all persons aged 18 years or over, 52.8 per cent of males and 42.2 per cent of females were found to have smoked tobacco products at some point in their lives.
- Overall, 81.0 per cent of persons reported that their home was smoke free, with the proportion ranging from 55.6 per cent of current smokers to 90.6 per cent of nonsmokers.
- Overall, 8.5 per cent persons aged 18 years or over did not undertake any physical activity during the week before the survey.
- The proportion of persons reporting no physical activity was greatest in the oldest age groups, with 14.1 per cent of those aged 65 years or over not undertaking any moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity in the week before the survey.
- After adjusting for differences in age and sex, those persons more likely to be classified as sedentary/insufficiently active were those persons born overseas, persons with lower levels of education, persons in nonprofessional occupations, smokers, overweight persons and persons with lower household incomes.
- Overall, 79.3 per cent of persons reported having had their blood pressure checked in the previous two years.
- Overall, 47.9 per cent of persons indicated having had cholesterol check in the previous two years.
- Overall, 45.3 per cent of persons reported having had a test for diabetes or high blood sugar levels in the previous two years.
- Overall, 14.7 per cent of persons reported having had a bowel examination in the previous two years.
- Overall, 25.2 per cent of persons reported having had a skin examination in the previous two years, with males aged 50 years or over found to be the most likely to have been examined (38.9 per cent).
- Of males, 27.4 per cent reported having had a prostate check (including blood tests) in the previous two years, with 11.0 per cent of males aged less than 50 years and 55.3 per cent of males aged 50 years or over having been tested.
- Overall, 64.2 per cent of persons reported having had a dental check in the previous two years, with females being more likely than males (66.6 per cent and 61.7 per cent respectively) to have used a dental service. Compared with younger respondents, fewer persons aged 50 years or over reported having had a dental check.

Self-reported health and selected health conditions

- Almost half (47.1 per cent) of all respondents reported their overall health as being excellent or very good, while 35.5 per cent reported that they were in good health.
- After adjusting for age and sex, those respondents more likely to report fair/poor health were those with lower education levels (primary [or secondary]), those in nonprofessional/other occupations, those who were unemployed or not in the labour force, smokers, those with high blood pressure, those in households with lower incomes, those without private health insurance and those living in rented dwellings.

- More than six out of ten females (60.4 per cent) aged 65 years or over had been told by a doctor that they had arthritis.
- Over one-quarter (26.3 per cent) of males aged 65 years or over had been diagnosed with heart disease, as had almost one in five (19.0 per cent) females in this age group.
- Almost 9 per cent of males aged 65 years or over had experienced a stroke. The proportion was lower (6.1 per cent) in females in this age group.
- Over one in five males (21.2 per cent) and 13.4 per cent of females aged 65 years or over had been told by a doctor that they had some form of cancer.
- In all age groups, a higher proportion of females than males reported that they had been diagnosed with depression or anxiety.
- Of females aged 65 years or over, 18.2 per cent reported that they had been told by a doctor that they had osteoporosis.

Obesity among adults

- Of all persons aged 18 years or over, 45.4 per cent were categorised as either overweight or obese.
- Of males, 52.6 per cent were categorised as overweight or obese.
- Of females, 38.6 per cent were categorised as overweight or obese.
- The proportions of both males and females categorised as being either overweight or obese rose steadily with age until the age group 55-64 years. The highest proportion of overweight males was in the age group 45-54

years (64.2 per cent). The highest proportion of overweight females was in the age group 55-64 years (49.9 per cent).

- After adjusting for age and sex, those respondents more likely to be categorised as being overweight/obese were those who rated their health as good, fair or poor (as opposed to excellent or very good), those living in rural areas, nonprofessionals, nonsmokers, those with high blood pressure, those who reported doing less than 30 minutes per week of vigorous physical activity and those with a high level of psychological distress (as measured by the Kessler 10, or K10-see section 7).

Asthma prevalence

- An estimated 22.0 per cent of persons aged 18 years or over reported having had asthma ever and 12.6 per cent reported currently having asthma (compared with 22.0 per cent and 12.3 per cent respectively in 2001).
- Younger age groups were most likely to have been diagnosed with asthma at some time in their lives, with 33.0 per cent of persons aged 18-24 years having been told by a doctor that they had the condition.
- Overall, 23.7 per cent of females and 20.1 per cent of males aged 18 years or over had been diagnosed with asthma ever.
- Asthma prevalence was higher among females in most age groups and significantly different between the sexes in the age groups 35-44 years and 65 years or over.

- Half (50.0 per cent) of the respondents who had had asthma symptoms in the 12 months before the survey had been given written instructions or an asthma action plan by their doctor.
- After adjusting for age and sex, those persons more likely to report having been diagnosed with asthma ever were those born in Australia and ex-smokers.

Diabetes prevalence

- Excluding females diagnosed with diabetes only during pregnancy, 4.5 per cent of persons aged 18 years or over had been told by a doctor that they had diabetes. The reported prevalence of diagnosed type 2 diabetes in persons aged 18 years or over was 3.5 per cent.
- The prevalence of diabetes increased with age for persons aged 18 years or over. Persons aged 65 years or over reported the highest prevalence rate (13.1 per cent).
- Those persons who had diabetes were asked about their visits to health professionals in relation to their condition in the 12 months before the survey. Most (88.4 per cent) had visited their general practitioner/doctor and over half (55.4 per cent) had visited an optometrist or ophthalmologist (table 6.3). Only 34.5 per cent had visited a podiatrist or chiropractist.
- Of all persons aged 18 years or over, 44.3 per cent reported having had a test for diabetes, with a higher proportion of females (46.8 per cent) than males (41.6 per cent) having

undertaken the test in the two years before the survey.

- After adjusting for differences in age and sex, those persons more likely to report having been diagnosed with diabetes or high sugar levels in their blood were those born overseas, those who spoke a language other than English at home, the unemployed, ex-smokers and those who did not have private health insurance.

Psychological distress

- The Kessler 10 psychological distress measure is a set of 10 questions designed to categorise the level of psychological distress over a four-week period (see section 7). Almost 3 per cent of persons aged 18 years or over were categorised as having high levels of psychological distress.
- An estimated 7.4 per cent of persons had accessed professional help for a mental health related problem during the year before the survey.
- Of those who sought professional help for a mental health related problem, most (62.8 per cent) had sought help from a general practitioner. A further 26.6 per cent had had contact with a private counselling service or a psychologist, and 19.3 per cent had had one or more visits with a private psychiatrist.

