

The Rest

Relationship Statistics

Vol. 70 – June 2007

HEALTH OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

- In June 2006, there were 3.7 million people in Australia aged 12 to 24 years representing 18% of the total population. Of these, 116,698 or 3.4% were Indigenous in 2001.
- Over 90% of young people rated their health as good, very good or excellent.
- Death rates among young Australians aged 12-24 years halved between 1980 and 2004. In particular, deaths from suicide declined by 40% and deaths from transport accidents declined by 35% between 1995 and 2004.
- Injury (including poisoning) is the leading cause of death among young people, accounting for two-thirds of deaths of young people in 2004. Transport accidents accounted for 45% and suicide accounted for 27% of all deaths from injury.
- Hospital separations due to asthma for young people aged 12-24 have more than halved between 1996-97 and 2004-05. In addition, asthma prevalence among young people declined from 16% to 13% between 2001 and 2004-05.
- The rate of melanoma incidence has decreased by 23% for males (aged 12-24) and by 14% for females (aged 12-24) between 1993-97 and 1998-2002.
- The percentage of 12-year olds and 15-year olds who are free of clinical tooth decay was 60% and 40% respectively in 2001 – approximately 70% more than in 1990.
- There were 47,000 hospital separations relating to young people for mental disorders in 2004-05. This compares to 40,000 hospitalisations of young people for mental illness in 1997-98. Mental health problems made up almost half of the total disease burden for young people in 2003.
- The hospitalisation rate for diabetes increased by 16% from 2000-01 to 2004-05.
- The percentage of young people who were overweight or obese was 25% in 2004-05.
- There was a significant increase in weight problems for those aged 18-24 years with the percentage of overweight going up from 17% to 22% and the percentage of obese going up from 3% to 5% between 2001 and 2004-05 for this age group.
- Only 46% of young males and 30% of young females were meeting recommended guidelines for minimum physical activity in 2004-05.
- Only 47% of those aged 12-18 years and just 8% of those aged 19-24 were meeting the daily recommended intake of vegetables in 2004-05.
- 31% of young people drank alcohol at levels that put them at risk of short term health concern and 11% drank at levels that put them at risk of long term harm.
- Around 17% of young people were daily smokers and 13% were exposed to tobacco smoke inside their homes in 2004-05.
- There were 9,276 12-17 year olds were on care and protection orders in 2006 (a rate of 5.5 per 1,000) and this is an increase of almost one-third since 1998 (4.2 per 1,000).
- The death rate for Indigenous young people was 4 times higher than for non-Indigenous young people and the death rate from injury was 5 times higher in 2002-04. Hospital separation rates for injury for Indigenous young people were 1.7 times higher and hospital separations for diabetes were 3 times higher.
- The percentage of Year 7 students meeting national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy was 91%, 94% and 82% respectively in 2006.
- The apparent Year 12 retention rate rose from 49% in 1986 to 75% in 2006.

SOURCE

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2007). *Young Australians: Their Health and Wellbeing 2007*, Canberra: AIHW.