Australian Health Survey 2012

How well is Western Australia doing?

The 2011-13 Australian Health Survey (AHS) is the largest and most comprehensive health survey ever conducted in Australia. This survey, conducted throughout Australia, was designed to collect a range of information from Australians about health related issues, including health status, risk factors, actions, and socioeconomic circumstances. In 2011-13, the AHS collected new information on nutrition and physical activity, as well as the first national biomedical information collection.

PHAIWA analysed these data for Western Australia[1], to identify how we addressing these risks in relation to the prevention of chronic disease. These findings are illustrated below.

Overall Indicators

A range of genetic, social, economic and environmental factors are recognised as increasing the risk of developing a particular health condition. Specific lifestyle and related factors which have been identified as negatively impacting health include:

- being overweight or obese;
- smoking;
- excessive alcohol consumption;
- poor diet and nutrition; and
- lack of physical activity.

[1] This is a preliminary analysis. Any comments or amendments can be forwarded to phaiwa@curtin.edu.au

Figure One illustrates these risk factors by Australian state for the 2012 Australian Health Survey. Table One provides these data by percentage of proportion of persons.

Key Advocacy Message

Despite some improvements in specific lifestyle related factors, Western Australia has not improved in any area at the same rate as other Australian states.

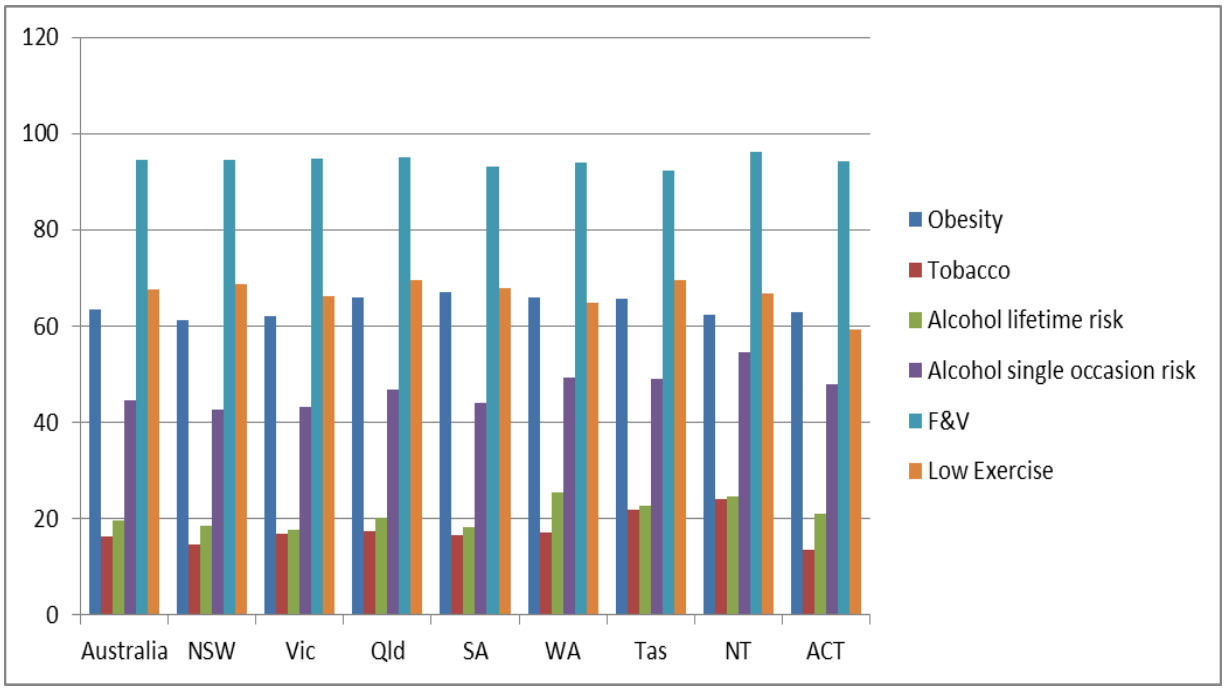

Figure One: Selected Health Characteristics 2011-2012

Table One shows these data (non-age standardised).

2011-2012	Obesity	Tobacco	Alcohol lifetime risk	Alcohol single occasion risk	F&V	Low Exercise
Australia	63.4	16.3	19.5	44.7	94.4	67.7
NSW	61.2	14.6	18.5	42.5	94.4	68.8
Vic	62	16.7	17.6	43.3	94.8	66.1
Qld	65.8	17.4	20.2	46.8	95	69.4
SA	67.1	16.6	18.1	44.1	93	67.9
WA	65.9	17	25.4	49.3	93.9	64.7
Tas	65.6	21.8	22.7	48.9	92.2	69.4
NT	62.4	23.9	24.7	54.6	96.2	66.7
ACT	63	13.4	21	48	94.2	59.2

Table One: Percentage of persons for selected health characteristics

The following Figures (Two and Three) further cover these data.

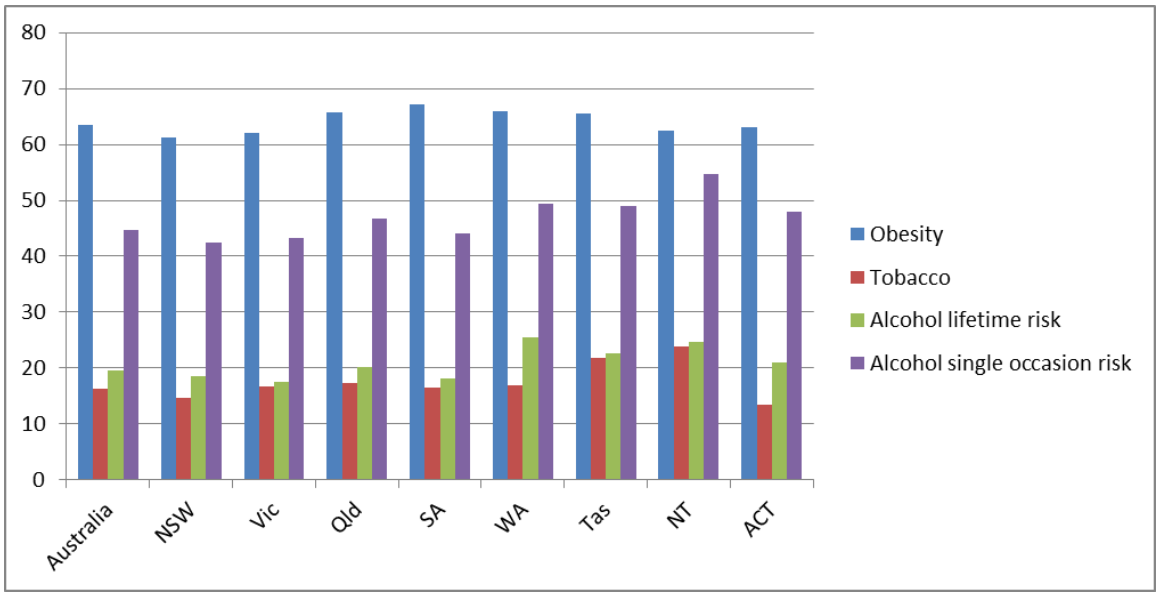

Figure Two - Comparison between states of Obesity, Tobacco and Alcohol 2012 (non-age standardised)

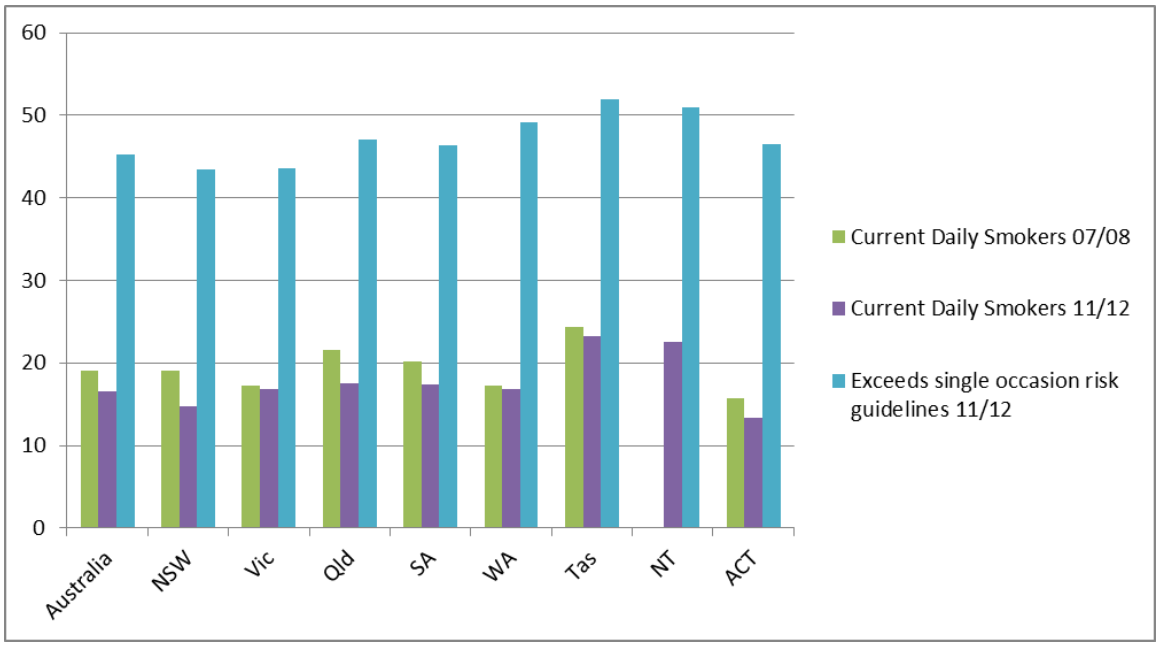

Figure Three: Comparison between states of smoking and drinking 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 (age standardised)

Figure Three shows the comparison between Australian states for smoking and the consumption of alcohol that exceeds single occasion risk guidelines for the periods 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 (age standardised). The 2009 NHMRC guidelines advise that

on a single occasion of drinking, the risk of alcohol-related injury increases with the amount consumed. For healthy men and women, 'drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion'. A single occasion of drinking refers to a person consuming a sequence of drinks without their blood alcohol concentration reaching zero in between.

Key trends from these data include:

- WA has the highest proportion of persons consuming more than two standard drinks of alcohol on any day;
- WA has the second highest proportion of persons consuming more than four standard drinks of alcohol in any occasion;
- WA has the highest portion of persons overweight or obese, and
- WA is ranked 5th with 16.9% current daily smokers behind NSW, Vic, SA and the ACT.

Tobacco

West Australian smoking rates have decreased since the 2007 survey, but only marginally. The ACT and NSW have the lowest proportion of persons smoking on a daily basis. Western Australia ranks 4th lowest, with 16.9% of the population smoking on a daily basis as indicated in Figure Four.

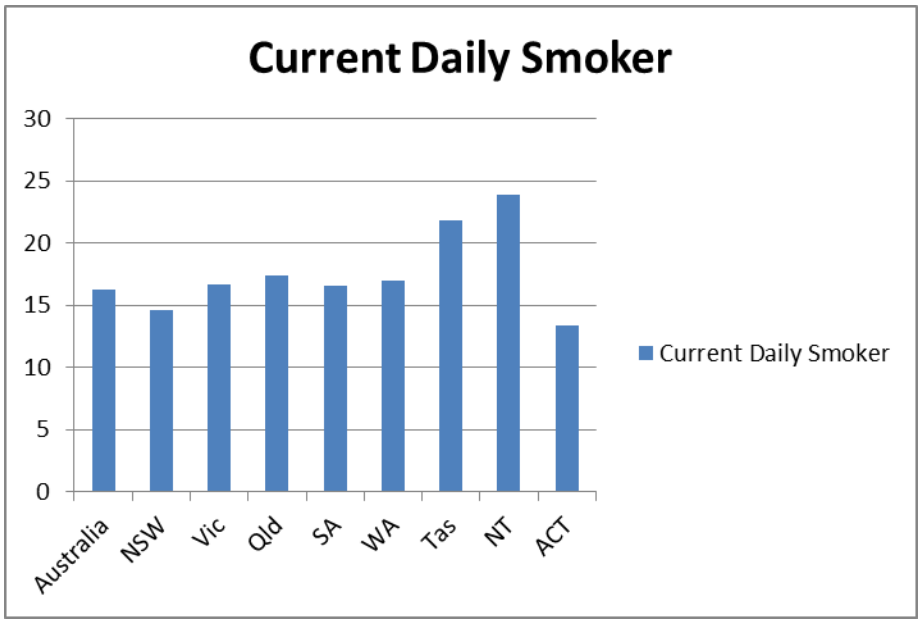

Figure Four: Current Daily Smoker States Comparison (non-age standardised)

In the 2007-2008 survey results, WA ranked second as indicated in Table Two.

2011-2012	Current Daily Smoker
Australia	16.3
NSW	14.6
Vic	16.7
Qld	17.4
SA	16.6
WA	17
Tas	21.8
NT	23.9
ACT	13.4

Table Two: 2007-2008 Survey Results for daily Smoker Status

Obesity

West Australians are getting fatter. Currently WA is the second highest state for overweight and obesity, with 66% of the population falling into this category. Figure Five illustrates the comparison between states for obesity, fruit and vegetable consumption and low levels of physical activity for the 2012 survey (non-age standardised).

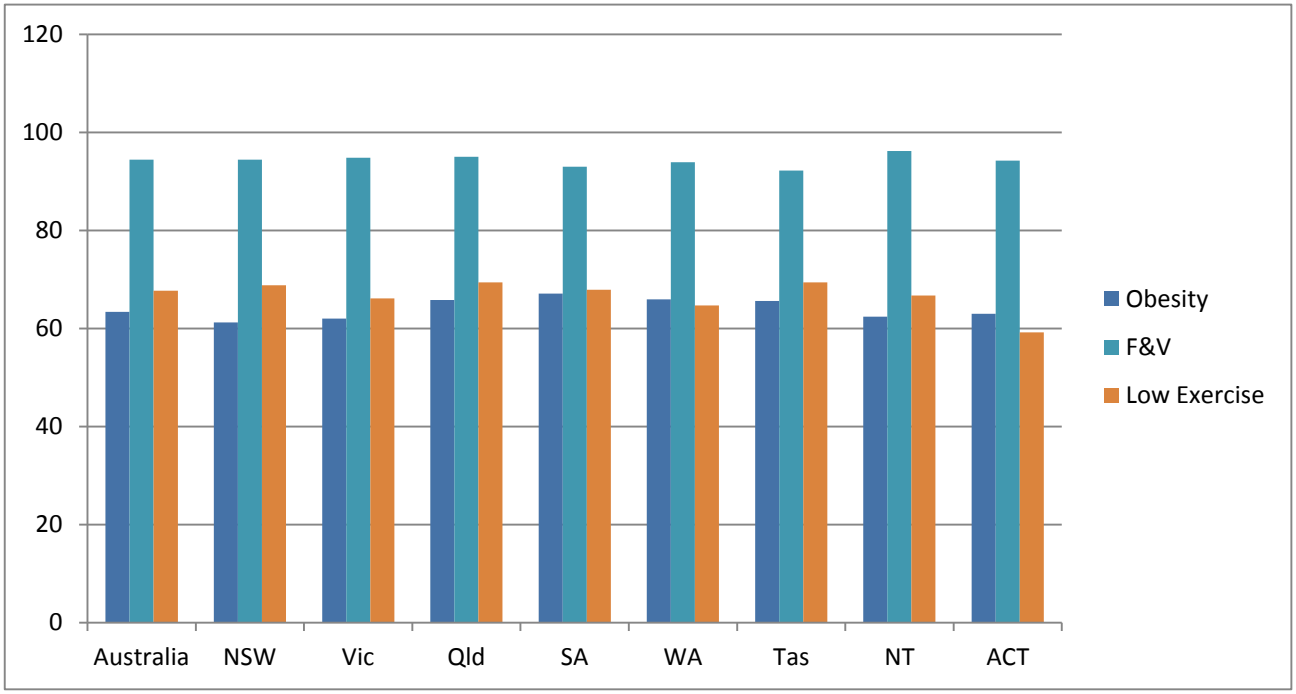

Figure Five: Comparison between states of Obesity, F&V consumption and Low exercise level 2012 (non-age standardised)

These data indicate that:

- In 2011-12, 65.9% of Western Australians aged 18 years and over were overweight or obese, and
- Only 6.1% of Western Australian adults had an adequate usual daily intake of fruit and vegetables.

For more information

The ABS report can be accessed online at:
http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.001Chapter1202011-12