SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Population Research and Outcome Studies  
BRIEF REPORT  
Number: 2005-17

Snapshot: Riverland Health Region - Health Service Utilisation and Social Capital

FINDINGS IN BRIEF

- Respondents in the Riverland Health Region reported higher levels of neighbourhood trust.
- Respondents were less likely to have used a specialist doctor in the past four weeks.

INTRODUCTION

This brief report provides a snapshot of key epidemiological information on social capital and health service use for respondents 16 years and over in the Riverland health region (n=286) the rest of South Australia (n=12841), and the whole of South Australia (n=13127) for the period July 2002 to December 2004.

METHODS

The data in this report were obtained from the South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System (SAMSS) dataset. This system aims to provide representative, timely and relevant population data on the South Australian community. The questions in SAMSS are related to the priority health areas and main indicators pertinent to the Department of Health policies.

SAMSS collects data at the population level, and each month approximately 600 people are interviewed. The interviews are conducted by telephone utilising the CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. All households in South Australia with a telephone number listed in the Electronic White Pages are eligible for selection in the sample. Within each household, the person who last had their birthday is selected for interview. There are no replacements for non-contactable persons. For further information on SAMSS methodology consult the SAMSS methodology brief report¹ or SAMSS methodology technical paper series².

RESULTS

Social Capital

Table 1 presents the social capital issues of neighbourhood safety and neighbourhood trust in the Riverland health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia.

Table 1: Neighbourhood safety and trust in the Riverland health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia, 16 years and over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Riverland (%)</th>
<th>Rest of South Australia (%)</th>
<th>Whole of South Australia (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Safety</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Trust</td>
<td>95.2 ↑</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Statistically significantly different from rest of SA using \( \chi^2 \) test (p<0.05)

Key Findings:

- The proportion of respondents who felt people trust one another in their neighbourhood was statistically significantly higher in the Riverland health region (95.2%; 95% CI 89.6–98.4) than in the rest of South Australia (78.3%; 95% CI 77.2–79.4).

Use of General Practitioner

Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents using the services of a general practitioner in the last four weeks. There was statistically significant difference between the Riverland region and the rest of South Australia in the use of a general practitioner in the last four weeks (25.0%; 95% CI 20.3 – 30.7 and 35.5%; 95% CI 34.6 – 36.3 respectively).

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents using a general practitioner in the last four weeks Riverland health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia, 16 years and over

* Statistically significantly different from rest of SA using \( \chi^2 \) test (p<0.05)
Use of other health services

Figure 2 shows the prevalence of health service utilisation in the Riverland health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia.

Key Findings:

- Respondents in the Riverland health region were statistically significantly less likely to use a specialist doctor (not in hospital) (4.1%; 95% CI 2.3–7.4) than the rest of South Australia (8.7%; 95% CI 8.3–9.2).

SUMMARY

The findings presented here indicate that in the Riverland health region respondents were statistically significantly more likely to report that people trust one another in their neighbourhood. Respondents in this region were statistically significantly less likely to use a specialist doctor (not in hospital).

REFERENCES


INFORMATION

For further results from the survey, please visit the Population Research and Outcome Studies Unit web site at: http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/PROS.html