FINDINGS IN BRIEF

- Respondents in the South East Health Region were more likely to be classified as obese.
- Respondents were less likely to report a current mental health condition.

INTRODUCTION

This brief report provides a snapshot of key epidemiological information on the prevalence of chronic conditions, risk factors, and mental health for respondents 16 years and over in the South East health region (n=570), the rest of South Australia (n=12557), 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 report or SAMSS methodology technical paper series.

RESULTS

Mental Health

Table 1 shows the prevalence of self-reported mental health conditions in the South East health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South East (%)</th>
<th>Rest of South Australia (%)</th>
<th>Whole of South Australia (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Mental Condition</td>
<td>10.4 ↓</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Distress</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal Ideation</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Key Findings:

- The proportion of respondents with a current mental health condition was statistically significantly lower in the South East health region (10.4%; 95% CI 8.2–13.4) than the rest of South Australia (14.2%; 95% CI 13.6–14.8).

Chronic Conditions

Figure 1 presents the prevalence of selected self-reported chronic conditions in the South East health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia. There were no statistically significant differences.

Figure 1: Prevalence of selected self-reported chronic conditions in the South East health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia, 16 years and over (injury 65 years and over)
Health Risk Factors

Figure 2 shows the prevalence of selected risk factors in the South East health region, the rest of South Australia, and the whole of South Australia. The selected risk factors include: consuming less than the recommended daily intake of vegetables and fruit\(^3\), insufficient physical activity (using definition 2)\(^4\), risk of harm from alcohol in the long (LT) and short term (ST)\(^5\), current smoking, current high cholesterol (HC), current high blood pressure (HBP) and body mass index (BMI).

The prevalence of overweight and obesity among 16 and 17 year olds was calculated using the classification of Cole et al.\(^6\) The body mass index of respondents aged 18 years and over was calculated according to World Health Organisation (WHO) criteria.\(^7\)

Key Findings:

- The proportion of respondents who were obese according to the BMI classification was statistically significantly higher in the South East health region (23.9%; 95% CI 20.3–27.9) than in the rest of South Australia (18.2%; 95% CI 17.5–19.0).

SUMMARY

The findings presented here indicate that in the South East health region, the most apparent risk to the respondents' health is obesity. Respondents in this region had a statistically significantly lower proportion of current mental health conditions.

REFERENCES


Figure 2: Prevalence of selected risk factors in the South East 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 (\( p<0.05 \))

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