



FACT SHEET NO. 4

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN HEALTH REGION



## The Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce

In November 2002, the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) undertook a state-wide survey to measure physical activity levels of Western Australian adults. This fact sheet presents major findings from this survey about the levels of physical activity and body mass index for the Great Southern health region<sup>1</sup>.

## Great Southern Sample Demographics

The Great Southern health region covers an area of 40,500km<sup>2</sup> and has an estimated population of 74,038 people (in 2002). From the Great Southern health region, 93 participants or 2.9% of the total sample (n = 3,200) completed the physical activity survey.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents From the Great Southern health region

Characteristic	%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	46.2
Female	53.8
<b>Age Group</b>	
18 to 29 years	12.9
30 to 44 years	28.0
45 to 59 years	40.0
60 years or more	18.3
<b>Education</b>	
Less than TEE	48.4
TEE/diploma	37.6
University	14.0

(Note n = 93)

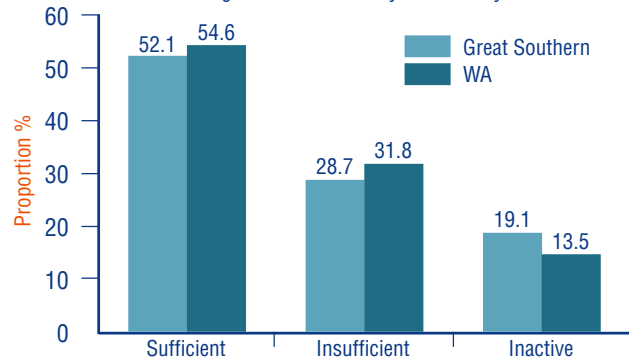
## Levels of Sufficient Physical Activity

Figure 1 presents the proportions of adults from the Great Southern region who were:

- **Sufficiently active** ( $\geq 150$  minutes of moderate activity over 5 or more days or  $\geq 60$  minutes of vigorous activity per week);
- **Insufficiently active** (some physical activity but less than sufficient), and;
- **Inactive** (no physical activity).



Figure 1. Levels of Physical Activity



The proportion of Great Southern adults who were sufficiently active was less (52.1%) than Western Australian adults overall (54.6%). The proportion of Great Southern adults who were inactive was higher (19.1%) than Western Australian adults overall (13.5%).

## Levels of Sufficient Physical Activity by Gender, Age, and Education

Table 2 presents the proportions of Great Southern adults who were insufficiently active (including those inactive) and sufficiently active by selected characteristics.

Table 2: Participation in Sufficient physical activity by age, gender, and education

Characteristic	Insufficient (%)		Sufficient (%)	
	GS <sup>1</sup>	WA <sup>2</sup>	GS <sup>1</sup>	WA <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	50.0	42.8	50.0	57.2
Female	45.7	47.8	54.3	52.2
<b>Age Group</b>				
18 to 29 years	26.6	32.5	71.4	67.5
30 to 44 years	62.1	48.3	37.9	51.7
45 to 59 years	48.1	48.8	51.9	51.2
60 years +	41.7	51.5	58.3	48.5
<b>Education</b>				
Less than TEE	43.2	51.7	56.8	48.3
TEE/diploma	58.3	43.0	41.7	57.0
University	38.5	40.3	61.5	59.7

<sup>1</sup>Great Southern; <sup>2</sup> Western Australia

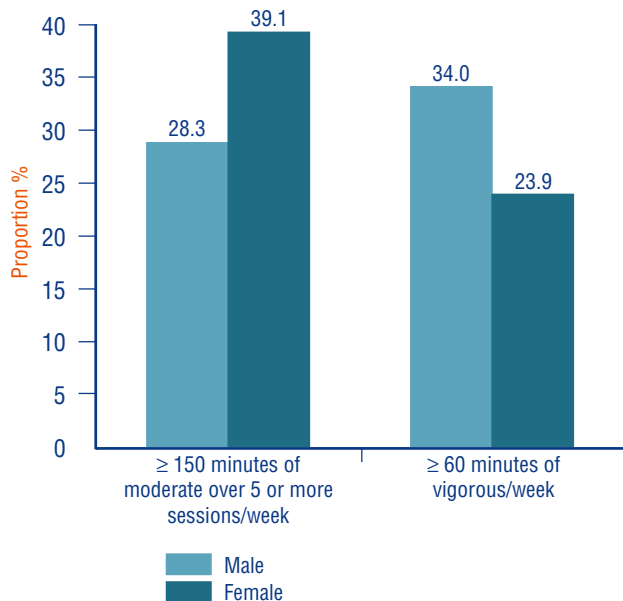
While some differences can be observed between the Great Southern region and Western Australia overall, caution must be taken in interpreting these results due to the small sample size for this region.



## Participation in Sufficient Moderate and Vigorous-Intensity Physical Activity by Gender

Figure 2 presents the proportions of Great Southern adults participating in sufficient moderate ( $\geq 150$  minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity over 5 or more days per week) and vigorous ( $\geq 60$  minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week) physical activity.

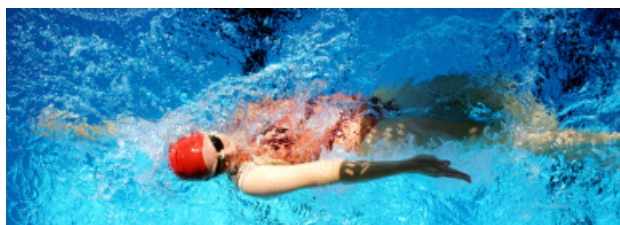
Figure 2. Levels of Sufficient Moderate and Vigorous Physical Activity



A lower proportion of Great Southern males (28.3%) and a higher proportion of females (39.1%) participated in sufficient levels of moderate-intensity physical activity compared to Western Australian adult males (35.4%) and females (37.7%) overall. A lower proportion of Great Southern males (34%) and females (23.9%) participated in sufficient levels of vigorous-intensity physical activity compared to Western Australian adult males (37%) and females (25.8%) overall.

## Other Physical Activity Facts for the Great Southern Region (WA Results in Brackets)

- 41.9% (62%) walked for recreation or exercise, 21.5% (28%) walked for transport, and 4.3% (8%) cycled for recreation in the week before the survey.
- 40.2% (57%) used the streets or footpaths, and 6.1% (17%) used a public park or oval for physical activity in the week before the survey.
- 53.8% (49%) reported “not having enough time” as a barrier to being more active and 38.6% (34%) reported “to improve fitness” as a major reason for participating in physical activity.
- 72% (74%) were aware of the Department of Health’s “Find thirty, it’s not a big exercise” message.



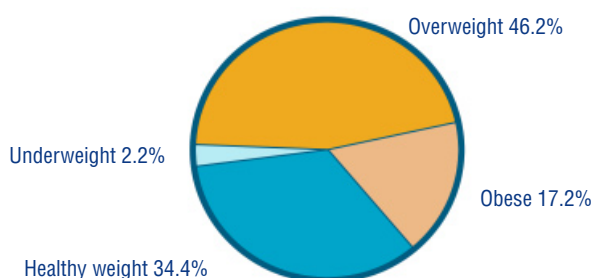
## Overweight and Obesity

Self-reported height and weight data were used to determine the Body Mass Index (BMI) for each survey participant (weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared). The following BMI categories were used to define weight<sup>2</sup>:

- $< 18.50$  (underweight)
- 18.50-24.99 (healthy weight)
- 25.00-29.99 (overweight)
- $\geq 30.00$  (obese)

The prevalence for each of these BMI categories in the Great Southern health region is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Levels of BMI



A lower proportion of Great Southern adults were healthy weight (34.4%), and higher proportions were overweight (46.2%), and obese (17.2%) compared to the overall Western Australian adult population (healthy weight 49.8%, overweight 34.7%, and obese 13%).

## Recommendations

Recommendations for increasing levels of sufficient physical activity in Western Australia, as well as key findings can be found in the recently published report, Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2002<sup>3</sup>. This report and other useful resources can be obtained from the following website ([www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au](http://www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au)) or by contacting the PATF Secretariat on 9382 5980.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Department of Health, WA

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation (2001). Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic. WHO Technical Series: No. 894. Geneva: WHO; 2000.

<sup>3</sup> McCormack, G., Milligan, R., Giles-Corti, B., & Clarkson, G. (2003). Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2002. Results from the Adult Physical Activity Survey and Pedometer Study. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.