

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF THE MIDWEST 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 for the Midwest health region<sup>1</sup>.

## Midwest Sample Demographics

The Midwest health region covers an area of 468,728km<sup>2</sup> and has an estimated population of 50,359 people (in 2002). From the Midwest health region, 105 participants or 3.3% of the total sample (n = 3,200) completed the physical activity survey.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents from the Midwest Health Region

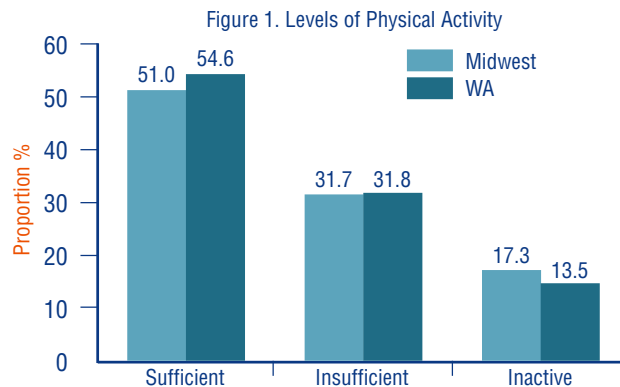
Characteristic	%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	41.9
Female	58.1
<b>Age Group</b>	
18 to 29 years	21.0
30 to 44 years	34.3
45 to 59 years	26.7
60 years or more	18.1
<b>Education</b>	
Less than TEE	47.6
TEE/diploma	36.2
University	16.2

(Note n = 105)

## Levels of Sufficient Physical Activity

Figure 1 presents the proportion of adults from the Midwest 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).



The proportion of Midwest adults who were sufficiently active was less (51%) than Western Australian adults overall (54.6%). The proportion of Midwest adults who were inactive was higher (17.3%) than Western Australian adults overall (13.5%).

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

Table 2 presents the proportion of Midwest 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 (%)	
	MW <sup>1</sup>	WA <sup>2</sup>	MW <sup>1</sup>	WA <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	46.3	42.8	53.7	57.2
Female	51.9	47.8	48.1	52.2
<b>Age Group</b>				
18 to 29 years	47.4	32.5	52.6	67.5
30 to 44 years	52.8	48.3	47.2	51.7
45 to 59 years	50.0	48.8	50.0	51.2
60 years +	45.5	51.5	54.5	48.5
<b>Education</b>				
Less than TEE	48.0	51.7	52.0	48.3
TEE/diploma	51.3	43.0	48.7	57.0
University	50.0	40.3	50.0	59.7

<sup>1</sup>Midwest; <sup>2</sup> Western Australia

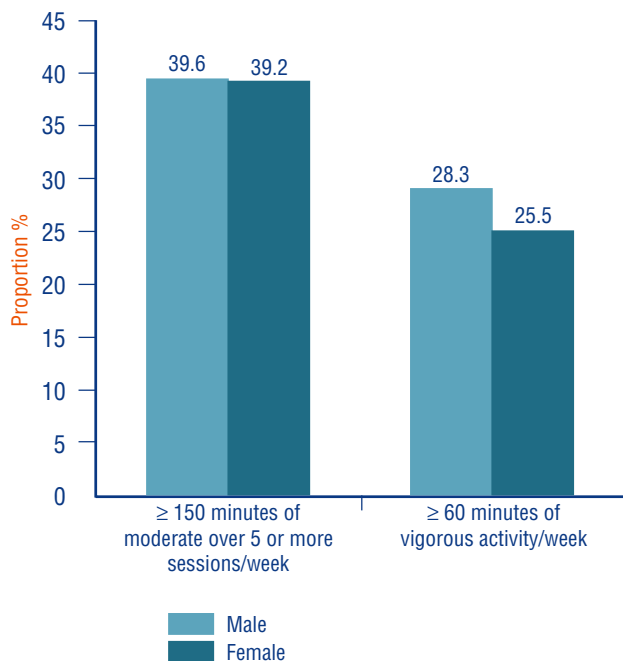
A lower proportion of males and females, people aged 18-59 years and people with TEE/diploma or University education participated in sufficient levels of physical activity, compared to the Western Australian adult population.



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

Figure 2 presents the proportions of Midwest 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 similar proportion of Midwest males (39.6%) and females (39.2%) participated in sufficient levels of moderate physical activity, both of which were slightly higher compared to Western Australian adult males (35.4%) and females (37.7%) overall. A lower proportion of Midwest males (28.3%) and a similar proportion of Midwest females (25.5%) participated in sufficient levels of vigorous physical activity compared to Western Australian adult males (37%) and females (25.8%) overall.

## Other Physical Activity Facts for the Midwest (WA results in brackets)

- 66.7% (62%) walked for recreation or exercise, 19.5% (28%) walked for transport, and 2.3% (8%) cycled for recreation in the week before the survey.
- 40.5% (57%) used the streets or footpaths, and 7.2% (17%) used a public park or oval for physical activity in the week before the survey.
- 51.4% (49%) reported “not having enough time” as a barrier to being more active and 31.9% (34%) reported “to improve fitness” as a major reason for participating in physical activity.
- 84.4% (74%) were aware of the Department of Health’s “Find thirty, it’s not a big exercise” message.



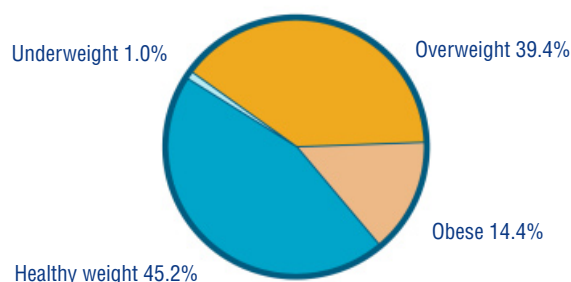
## Overweight and Obesity

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 metres squared). The following BMI categories were used to define weight<sup>1</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 Midwest health region is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Levels of BMI



A lower proportion of Midwest adults were in the healthy range (45.2%) and higher proportions were overweight (39.4%) and obese (14.4%) 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 can be obtained from the Physical Activity Taskforce 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, J. (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.