

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF THE PILBARA AND GASCOYNE HEALTH REGIONS

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 Pilbara and Gascoyne health regions¹.

Pilbara and Gascoyne Sample Demographics

The Pilbara and Gascoyne health regions cover an area of 646,500km² and have an estimated population of 49,738 people (in 2002). From the Pilbara and Gascoyne health regions, 90 participants or 2.8% of the total sample (n = 3,200) completed the physical activity survey.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents from the Pilbara and Gascoyne Health Regions

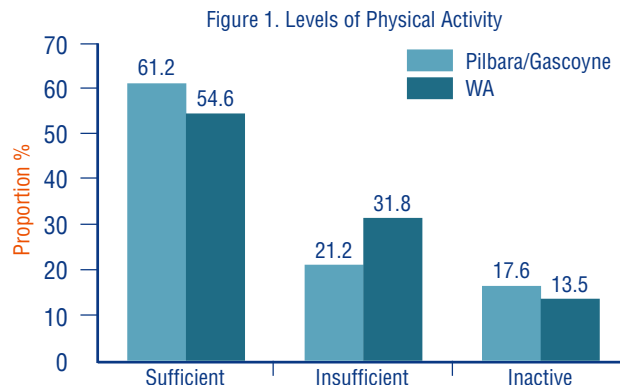
Characteristic	%
Gender	
Male	51.1
Female	48.9
Age Group	
18 to 29 years	21.6
30 to 44 years	43.2
45 to 59 years	30.7
60 years or more	4.5
Education	
Less than TEE	28.1
TEE/diploma	56.2
University	15.7

(Note n = 90)

Levels of Sufficient Physical Activity

Figure 1 presents the proportion of adults from the Pilbara and Gascoyne region who were:

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



The proportion of Pilbara/Gascoyne adults who were sufficiently active was higher (61.2%) than Western Australian adults overall (54.6%). The proportion of Pilbara/Gascoyne adults who were inactive was also higher (17.6%) than Western Australian adults overall (13.5%). These results should be interpreted with caution given the sample size surveyed from the Pilbara/Gascoyne region.

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

Table 2 presents the proportion of Pilbara/Gascoyne 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 (%)	
	PG ¹	WA ²	PG ¹	WA ²
Gender				
Male	34.8	42.8	65.2	57.2
Female	43.6	47.8	56.4	52.2
Age Group				
18 to 29 years	38.1	32.5	61.9	67.5
30 to 44 years	45.9	48.3	54.1	51.7
45 to 59 years	40.9	48.8	59.1	51.2
60 years +	0.0	51.5	100	48.5
Education				
Less than TEE	44.0	51.7	56.0	48.3
TEE/diploma	40.4	43.0	59.6	57.0
University	28.6	40.3	71.4	59.7

¹Pilbara and Gascoyne; ² Western Australia

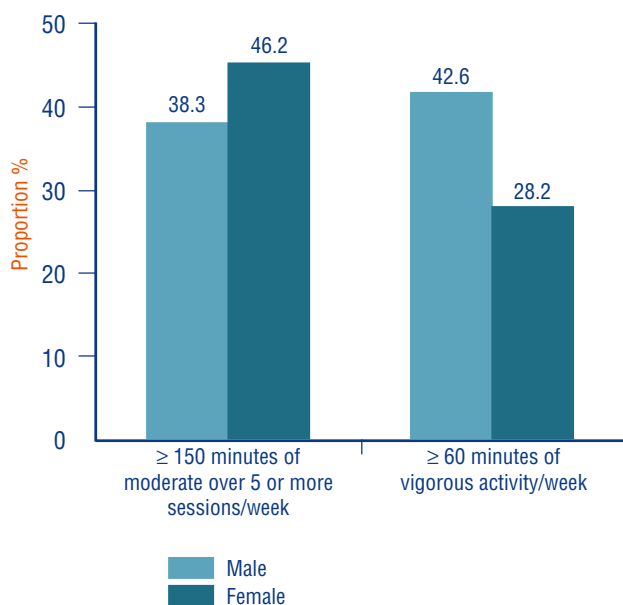
While differences in the proportion of adults participating in sufficient levels of physical activity can be observed between the Pilbara/Gascoyne region and Western Australia overall, these results need to be interpreted with caution given the small sample size surveyed from this region.



Participation in Sufficient Moderate and Vigorous Physical Activity by Gender

Figure 2 presents the proportion of Pilbara and Gascoyne adults participating in sufficient moderate (≥ 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity over 5 or more days per week) and vigorous (≥ 60 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week) physical activity.

Figure 2. Levels of Sufficient Moderate and Vigorous Physical Activity



Higher proportions of Pilbara/Gascoyne males (38.3%) and females (46.2%) participated in sufficient levels of moderate physical activity compared to Western Australian adult males (35.4%) and females (37.7%) overall. Higher proportions of Pilbara/Gascoyne males (42.6%) and females (28.2%) 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 Pilbara and Gascoyne (WA results in brackets)

- 54.3% (62%) walked for recreation or exercise, 28.6% (28%) walked for transport, and 5.7% (8%) cycled for recreation in the week before the survey.
- 40% (57%) used the streets or footpaths, and 4.3% (17%) used a public park or oval for physical activity in the week before the survey.
- 37.2% (49%) reported “not having enough time” as a barrier to being more active and 26.3% (34%) reported “to improve fitness” as a major reason for participating in physical activity.
- 80.2% (74%) were aware of the Department of Health’s “Find thirty, it’s not a big exercise” message.



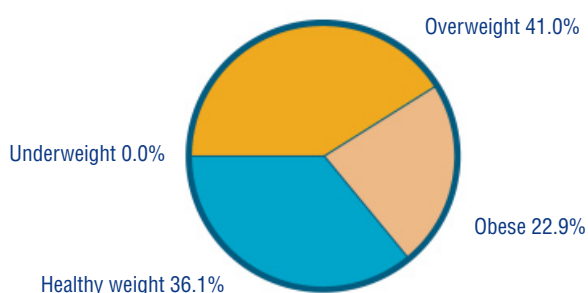
Overweight and Obesity

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 weight²:

- < 18.50 (underweight)
- 18.50-24.99 (healthy weight)
- 25.00-29.99 (overweight)
- ≥ 30.00 (obese)

The prevalence for each of these BMI categories in the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Levels of BMI



A lower proportion of Pilbara/Gascoyne adults were in the healthy weight range (36.1%) and higher proportions overweight (41%) and obese (22.9%) 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 2002³. This report and other useful resources can be obtained from the Physical Activity Taskforce website (www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au) or by contacting the PATF Secretariat on 9382 5980.

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¹ As defined by the Department of Health, WA

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

³ 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.