



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2014 report

Measure 46 of 68

Detailed analyses

2.22 Overweight and obesity

This measure reports on the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and children

Introduction

This is no. 46 of 68 measures in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2014 report: detailed analyses*. This report provides information on a range of measures of health status, determinants of health and the health system performance relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Framework comprises 3 tiers:

Tier 1—Health status and outcomes

Tier 2—Determinants of health

Tier 3—Health system performance.

The full report, including a comprehensive description of all data sources used in the report, and notes about the data quality is available from
[<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129550779>](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129550779).

Tables referenced are available from

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/indigenous-data/health-performance-framework/>.

Data sources

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
- Australian Health Survey.

For more information, see 'Data sources and quality' at the end of this measure.

Data analyses

For more information related to overweight and obesity, see measures 2.18 and 2.19. See also 'Other related information' at the end of this measure.

The following data are presented for this measure:

- Obesity in people with selected socioeconomic characteristics, see tables 2.22.1–2
- Rates of overweight/obesity by state/territory and remoteness, see Table 2.22.3.

Current period

In 2012–13:

- Two thirds (66%) of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over had a measured Body Mass Index (BMI) score in the overweight or obese range (29% overweight and 37% obese). After adjusting for age, Indigenous adults were 1.6 times as likely to be obese as non-Indigenous Australians (ABS 4727.0.55.006 Table 8.3, Figure 2.22.1).
- Rates of obesity in Indigenous Australians were highest in *Inner regional* areas (40%) and lowest in *Very remote* areas (32%). Rates were similar in *Major cities* (37%) and in *Outer regional* and *Remote* areas (38%) (ABS 4727.0.55.006 Table 2.3).
- Indigenous women had higher rates of obesity (40%) and were overweight at lower rates (26%) than Indigenous men (34% and 31% respectively) (ABS 4727.0.55.006 Table 8.3).
- Rates of being overweight or obese increased with age, from 35% of Indigenous Australians aged 15–17, to 80% of Indigenous Australians aged 55 and over. A similar pattern was seen in non-Indigenous Australians (ABS 4727.0.55.006 Table 8.3).
- About 30% of Indigenous children aged 2–14 were overweight or obese, compared with 25% of non-Indigenous children (ABS 4727.0.55.006 Table 9.3).

Trend

Trend data are not available. It is not possible to compare 2012–13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey results with previous surveys as the latest results are based on measured Body Mass Index (BMI) rather than self-reported height and weight (as was done before).

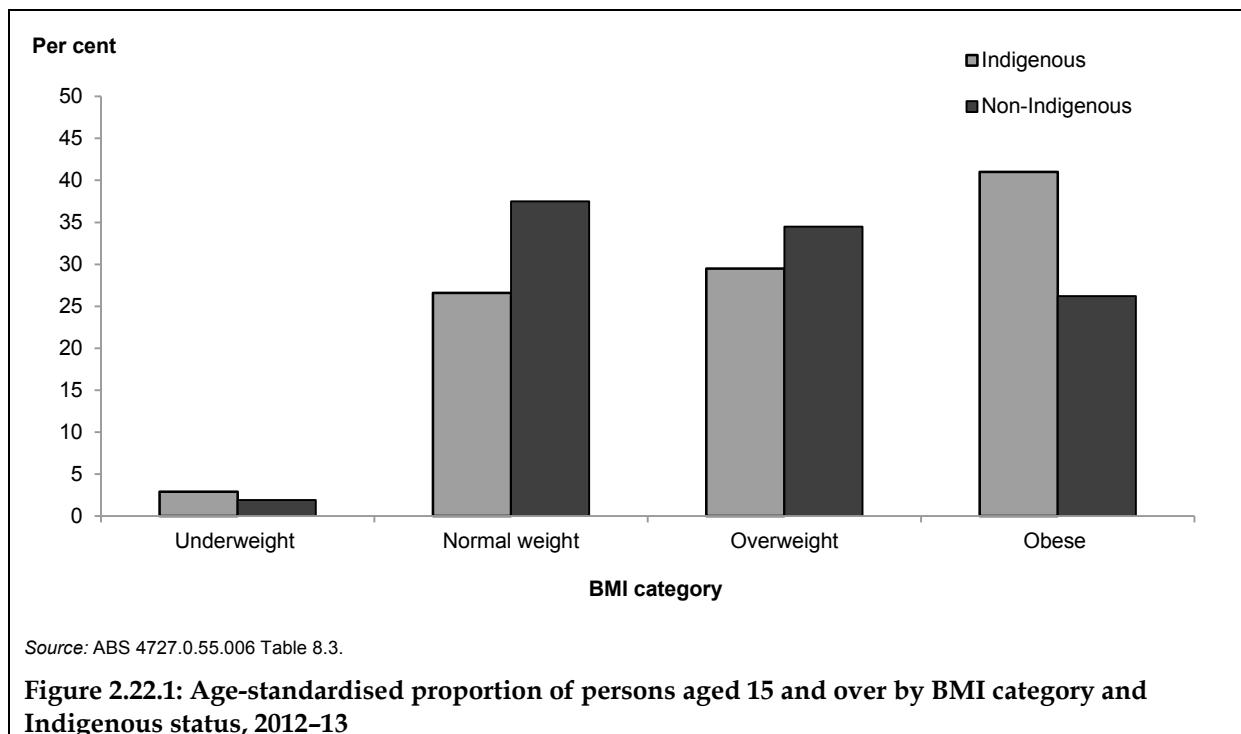


Table 2.22.1: Selected health and socioeconomic characteristics by Indigenous persons (15 years and over) reporting obesity, 2012–13

| | Obese ^(a) | | Not obese | | Total ^(b) | Total persons 15 years and over |
|--|----------------------|---------|-----------|---------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Number | Number |
| SEIFA^(c) | | | | | | |
| 1st quintile (most disadvantaged) | 37.3 | 68,024 | 62.7 | 114,281 | 182,305 | 214,140 |
| 5th quintile (most advantaged) | 40.4 | 5,854 | 59.6 | 8,642 | 14,496 | 17,168 |
| Ratio most disadvantaged/most advantaged | 0.9 | 11.6 | 1.1 | 13.2 | 12.6 | 12.5 |
| Employment | | | | | | |
| Employed | 37.7 | 60,912 | 62.3 | 100,532 | 161,444 | 186,246 |
| Unemployed | 33.4 | 13,931 | 66.6 | 27,720 | 41,650 | 48,692 |
| Not in the labour force | 38.2 | 53,303 | 61.8 | 86,387 | 139,689 | 174,003 |
| Ratio unemployed/employed | 0.9 | 0.2 | 1.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Has non-school qualification^(d) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 41.6 | 58,642 | 58.4 | 82,385 | 141,027 | 166,000 |
| No | 34.4 | 69,503 | 65.6 | 132,254 | 201,757 | 242,941 |
| Ratio no/yes | 0.8 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| Highest year of school completed | | | | | | |
| Year 12 | 36.0 | 31,144 | 64.0 | 55,361 | 86,505 | 101,295 |
| Year 9 or below ^(e) | 38.3 | 38,130 | 61.7 | 61,520 | 99,650 | 121,511 |
| Ratio Year 9 or below/Year 12 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Smoker status | | | | | | |
| Current smoker ^(f) | 32.4 | 49,888 | 67.6 | 103,875 | 153,763 | 178,720 |
| Non-smoker ^(g) | 41.4 | 78,257 | 58.6 | 110,763 | 189,020 | 230,221 |
| Ratio smoker/non-smoker | 0.8 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Adequate daily vegetable intake^(h) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 36.7 | 5,782 | 63.3 | 9,966 | 15,748 | 19,633 |
| No | 37.4 | 122,363 | 62.6 | 204,673 | 327,036 | 389,308 |
| Ratio no/yes | 1.0 | 21.2 | 1.0 | 20.5 | 20.8 | 19.8 |
| Adequate daily fruit intake⁽ⁱ⁾ | | | | | | |
| Yes | 37.8 | 54,020 | 62.2 | 88,796 | 142,815 | 171,847 |
| No | 37.1 | 74,125 | 62.9 | 125,843 | 199,968 | 237,094 |
| Ratio no/yes | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Self-assessed health status | | | | | | |
| Excellent/very good/good | 33.8 | 87,783 | 66.2 | 172,185 | 259,968 | 309,881 |
| Fair/poor | 48.7 | 40,361 | 51.3 | 42,454 | 82,815 | 99,060 |
| Ratio fair, poor/excellent, very good, good | 1.4 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |

(continued)

Table 2.22.1 (continued): Selected health and socioeconomic characteristics by Indigenous persons (15 years and over) reporting obesity, 2012–13

| | Obese ^(a) | | Not obese | | Total ^(b) | Total persons 15 years and over |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Number | Number |
| Heart/circulatory problems^(j) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 53.1 | 33,046 | 46.9 | 29,182 | 62,229 | 72,597 |
| No | 33.9 | 95,098 | 66.1 | 185,456 | 280,555 | 336,344 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Kidney disease^(k) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 49.5 | 4,191 | 50.5 | 4,272 | 8,463 | 9,993 |
| No | 37.1 | 123,954 | 62.9 | 210,367 | 334,320 | 398,948 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Diabetes^(l) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 58.6 | 23,227 | 41.4 | 16,425 | 39,652 | 48,255 |
| No | 34.6 | 104,917 | 65.4 | 198,214 | 303,131 | 360,686 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.7 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Measured high blood pressure^(m) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 56.2 | 34,452 | 43.8 | 26,830 | 61,282 | 64,236 |
| No | 35.4 | 85,334 | 64.6 | 156,036 | 241,371 | 251,053 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.6 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Total number⁽ⁿ⁾ | 39.6 | 119,786 | 60.4 | 182,867 | 302,653 | 315,288 |
| Total persons 15 years and over | 37.4 | 128,145 | 62.6 | 214,639 | 342,783 | 408,941 |

(a) Body Mass Index greater than 30.0 for people aged 18 years and over. For information on the calculation of BMI scores for people aged 15–17, see the Glossary in AATSIHS First Results 2012–13 (4727.0.55.001) or AATSIHS Updated Results 2012–13 (4727.0.55.006).

(b) Total excludes measurement not taken.

(c) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage 2011.

(d) Non-school qualifications classified to the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) (includes e.g. Bachelor degree or higher, diploma, advanced diploma, certificate).

(e) Year 9 or below includes never attended school.

(f) Includes persons who smoke daily, persons who smoke at least once a week but not daily, and those who smoked less than weekly.

(g) Includes ex-smoker and those who have never smoked.

(h) As the 2012–13 AATSIHS only collected information on whole serves of vegetables, the 2013 NHMRC Australian Dietary Guidelines have been applied as follows: 5 serves of vegetables for persons aged 9 years and over, with the exception of 18–49 year old males who eat 6 serves.

(i) According to 2013 NHMRC Australian Dietary Guidelines, which recommend 2 serves of fruit per day for persons aged 9 years and over.

(j) Self reported data consisting of persons reporting they have a current heart or circulatory condition which has lasted, or is likely to last, for 6 months or more.

(k) Self-reported data consisting of persons reporting kidney disease which has lasted or is expected to last, for six months or more.

(l) Self-reported data consisting of persons reporting diabetes which has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more. Includes type 1 and type 2 diabetes, type unknown, and persons who reported they had diabetes but that it was not current at the time of interview.

(m) Persons aged 18 years and over measured blood pressure data; high blood pressure is a measurement of 140/90 mmHg or higher.

(n) Total excludes persons for whom a blood pressure measurement not taken (due to refusal for medical reasons or other reasons).

Note: Percentages add within rows. Estimates have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. Data excludes not stated responses.

Sources: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2012–13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.

Table 2.22.2: Selected household and health risk factors by Indigenous persons (18 years and over) reporting obesity, 2012–13

| | Obese ^(a) | | Not obese | | Total ^(b) | Total persons 18 years and over |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Number | Number |
| Equivalised gross household income^(c) | | | | | | |
| 1st quintile (lowest) | 39.0 | 40,797 | 61.0 | 63,888 | 104,685 | 124,518 |
| 4th/5th quintile (highest) | 43.2 | 19,000 | 56.8 | 24,996 | 43,997 | 51,676 |
| Ratio lowest/highest | 0.9* | 2.1 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| Total number | 39.5 | 97,767 | 60.5 | 149,945 | 247,712 | 292,747 |
| Financial stress—whether household could raise \$2,000 in an emergency^(c) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 39.9 | 53,119 | 60.1 | 79,988 | 133,107 | 158,276 |
| No | 38.7 | 60,454 | 61.3 | 95,586 | 156,040 | 184,641 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.03* | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Total number | 39.3 | 113,572 | 60.7 | 175,574 | 289,146 | 342,917 |
| Household had day/s without money for basic living expenses in last 12 months^(d) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 39.8 | 49,388 | 60.2 | 74,593 | 123,982 | 147,199 |
| No | 38.8 | 70,371 | 61.2 | 111,179 | 181,549 | 216,909 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.02* | 0.7 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Total number | 39.2 | 119,759 | 60.8 | 185,772 | 305,531 | 364,108 |
| Housing tenure type^{(d)(e)} | | | | | | |
| Owner | 44.0 | 39,808 | 56.0 | 50,751 | 90,558 | 110,215 |
| Renter | 37.2 | 79,736 | 62.8 | 134,536 | 214,272 | 252,547 |
| Ratio renter/owner | 0.8* | 2.0 | 1.1 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 2.3 |
| Total number | 39.2 | 119,828 | 60.8 | 185,772 | 305,600 | 364,177 |
| Lives in overcrowded household^{(f)(d)} | | | | | | |
| Yes | 30.1 | 18,158 | 69.9 | 42,163 | 60,321 | 71,380 |
| No | 41.4 | 101,601 | 58.6 | 143,609 | 245,210 | 292,728 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Total number | 39.2 | 119,759 | 60.8 | 185,772 | 305,531 | 364,108 |
| Alcohol consumption | | | | | | |
| Abstained from alcohol in last 12 months ^(g) | 40.3* | 27,340 | 59.7 | 40,436 | 67,776 | 83,184 |
| Short-term/single occasion risk^(h) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 37.3* | 66,879 | 62.7 | 112,368 | 179,247 | 208,979 |
| No | 43.4 | 23,926 | 56.6 | 31,211 | 55,137 | 67,136 |
| Ratio yes/no | 0.9* | 2.8 | 1.1 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.1 |

(continued)

Table 2.22.2 (continued): Selected household and health risk factors by Indigenous persons (18 years and over) reporting obesity, 2012–13

| | Obese ^(a) | | Not obese | | Total ^(b) | Total persons 18 years and over |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Number | Number |
| Physical activity⁽ⁱ⁾ | | | | | | |
| Met guidelines ^(j) | 36.0 | 35,725 | 64.0 | 63,457 | 99,182 | 117,125 |
| Did not meet guidelines ^(k) | 44.2 | 59,893 | 55.8 | 75,608 | 135,501 | 165,910 |
| Ratio did not meet/met guidelines | 1.2* | 1.7 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Total number | 40.7 | 95,618 | 59.3 | 139,065 | 234,683 | 283,035 |
| Disability status^(l) | | | | | | |
| Has profound, severe or moderate core activity limitation | 48.1* | 18,698 | 51.9 | 20,208 | 38,906 | 48,886 |
| Has schooling/employment restriction only | 40.7* | 13,847 | 59.3 | 20,186 | 34,033 | 40,050 |
| Has unspecified limitation or restriction | 42.0* | 29,446 | 58.0 | 40,646 | 70,092 | 82,325 |
| Total disability/long-term health condition | 43.3 | 61,990 | 56.7 | 81,040 | 143,031 | 171,261 |
| No disability/long-term health condition | 35.5 | 58,142 | 64.5 | 105,470 | 163,612 | 194,607 |
| Ratio disability/no disability | 1.2* | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Psychological distress (Kessler 5)^(m) | | | | | | |
| Low/moderate | 39.3 | 83,852 | 60.7 | 129,340 | 213,191 | 252,230 |
| High/very high | 39.1 | 35,741 | 60.9 | 55,591 | 91,332 | 109,134 |
| Ratio high, very high/low, moderate | 1.0 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Total number | 39.3 | 119,592 | 60.7 | 184,931 | 304,524 | 361,364 |
| Stressors experienced in last 12 months⁽ⁿ⁾ | | | | | | |
| No stressors | 37.9 | 28,189 | 62.1 | 46,221 | 74,410 | 91,344 |
| Experienced one or more stressor | 39.5 | 91,518 | 60.5 | 139,902 | 231,420 | 273,389 |
| Ratio one or more/no stressors | 1.0 | 3.2 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.0 |
| Total number | 39.2* | 120,064 | 60.8 | 186,432 | 306,496 | 365,429 |
| Long term health conditions^(o) | | | | | | |
| No current long term health condition | 24.2* | 12,512 | 75.8 | 39,258 | 51,770 | 63,950 |
| One | 33.9* | 18,483 | 66.1 | 35,981 | 54,464 | 64,247 |
| Two | 39.7* | 19,150 | 60.3 | 29,047 | 48,197 | 57,094 |
| Three or more | 46.0 | 69,988 | 54.0 | 82,225 | 152,213 | 180,577 |
| Ratio three or more/no conditions | 1.9* | 5.6 | 0.7 | 2.1 | 2.9 | 2.8 |
| Respiratory disease^(p) | | | | | | |
| Yes | 45.1 | 52,253 | 54.9 | 63,721 | 115,974 | 137,406 |
| No | 35.6 | 67,879 | 64.4 | 122,790 | 190,669 | 228,462 |
| Ratio yes/no | 1.3* | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 |

(continued)

Table 2.22.2 (continued): Selected household and health risk factors by Indigenous persons (18 years and over) reporting obesity, 2012–13

| | Obese ^(a) | | Not obese | | Total ^(b) | Total persons 18 years and over |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Number | Number |
| Has diabetes related eye/sight problem^{(q)(r)} | | | | | | |
| Yes | 49.1 | 4,764 | 50.9 | 4,939 | 9,704 | 11,966 |
| No | 60.7 | 15,018 | 39.3 | 9,728 | 24,746 | 30,614 |
| Ratio yes/no | 0.8* | 0.3 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Total number | 57.4 | 19,782 | 42.6 | 14,668 | 34,450 | 42,580 |
| Total persons 18 years and over | 39.2 | 120,133 | 60.8 | 186,511 | 306,643 | 365,868 |

* Represents statistically significant differences at the p < 0.05 level. Rate ratios in the 'Obese column' were tested. For Alcohol consumption, 'Abstained' was also tested against those who did not have 'Short term/single occasion risk'. For those with disability or a long-term health condition, level of disability/long-term health condition was also tested with 'Total with disability/long-term health condition' used as the reference category. Number of long term health conditions were also tested with 'Three or more' as the reference category.

- (a) Body Mass Index greater than 30.0 for people aged 18 years and over.
- (b) Totals and population distributions exclude measurement not taken.
- (c) Excludes 'not stated' and 'not known'.
- (d) Excludes 'not stated'.
- (e) Total includes 'other' and 'life tenure scheme'.
- (f) Households requiring at least one additional bedroom, based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard for Housing Appropriateness.
- (g) Abstainer includes those who have never consumed alcohol.
- (h) Includes those who drank. Risk level calculated on exceeding the NHMRC Australian Alcohol Guidelines (NHMRC 2009). For short-term/single occasion risk this is 5 or more standard drinks on any day over last 12 months.
- (i) Physical activity data collected from persons 18 years and over; and non-remote areas only.
- (j) 150 minutes of moderate/vigorous physical activity from five or more sessions over a week.
- (k) Includes 'don't know'.
- (l) Self-reported data consisting of persons who reported having a disability or restrictive long-term health condition where a limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder has lasted, or is expected to last for six months or more, and restricts everyday activities. Levels of activity limitation (profound, severe, moderate, and school/employment restriction only) are based on whether, and how often, a person needs help, has difficulty, or uses aids or equipment with any core activities (self-care, mobility or communication). A person's overall level of core activity limitation is determined by their highest level of limitation in any of these activities. Only current difficulties with education and/or employment were collected. Respondents aged 65 years and over were not asked about employment restrictions and so some may be categorised as not having a specific limitation or restriction that would otherwise have been assigned 'schooling/employment restriction only' had they been asked the question.
- (m) Based on the Kessler-5 (K5) measure of psychological distress. Overall levels of distress are based on how often respondents reported experiencing each feeling. Low/moderate is a score of 5–11. High/very high is a score of 12–25.
- (n) Stressors experienced by self, family or friends. Excludes 'refused'.
- (o) Self-reported data consisting of persons reporting a current medical condition which has lasted, or is expected to last, for six months or more.
- (p) Self reported data consisting of persons reporting they have a current respiratory condition which has lasted, or is expected to last, for 6 months or more. Includes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, chronic sinusitis, and other diseases of the respiratory system.
- (q) Self-reported data consisting of persons who reported having an eye/sight problem due to diabetes/HSL.
- (r) Excludes 'not known'.

Note: Percentages add within rows. Estimates have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2012–13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.

Table 2.22.3: Rates of overweight or obese people aged 18 years or over, by state and territory by remoteness, 2012–13 (age-standardised rate per 100 population)^{(a)(b)}

| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Rate of overweight or obese people per 100 people aged 18 years or over | | | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | | | | | | | | | |
| Major cities | 77.4 | 71.8 | 69.7 | 76.7 | 73.9 | .. | 72.8 | .. | 74.4 |
| Inner regional | 75.5 | 72.3 | 79.8 | 71.5 | 84.2† | 65.8 | .. | .. | 75.6 |
| Outer regional | 75.5 | 62.0 | 69.3 | 76.2 | 67.9 | 70.8 | .. | 76.0 | 72.4 |
| Remote | 79.2 | .. | 73.8 | 71.2 | 78.5 | 69.7 | .. | 65.8 | 71.6 |
| Very remote | 82.1 | .. | 71.8 | 71.0 | 69.6 | .. | .. | 54.1 | 64.6 |
| Non-Indigenous | | | | | | | | | |
| Major cities | 59.3 | 59.2 | 62.5 | 63.9 | 64.1 | .. | 62.5 | .. | 60.8 |
| Inner regional | 67.9 | 69.0 | 67.2 | 68.9 | 71.4 | 62.4 | .. | .. | 67.7 |
| Outer regional | 63.9 | 61.5 | 70.2 | 72.9 | 68.0 | 67.2 | .. | 61.9 | 67.6 |
| Remote | n.p. | .. | 70.4 | 68.3 | 76.0 | 68.8 | .. | 62.4 | 69.7 |
| Very remote | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 95% confidence intervals for rates (±) | | | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | | | | | | | | | |
| Major cities | 4.6 | 7.5 | 4.7 | 5.9 | 5.4 | .. | 8.4 | .. | 2.3 |
| Inner regional | 4.9 | 9.5 | 7.6 | 16.0 | 48.4 | 7.3 | .. | .. | 3.3 |
| Outer regional | 9.7 | 16.3 | 7.9 | 6.1 | 10.0 | 6.3 | .. | 9.6 | 4.0 |
| Remote | 6.3 | .. | 5.8 | 7.1 | 15.6 | 16.5 | .. | 8.2 | 3.6 |
| Very remote | 10.0 | .. | 6.6 | 8.3 | 9.1 | .. | .. | 8.9 | 4.4 |
| Non-Indigenous | | | | | | | | | |
| Major cities | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.2 | .. | 2.9 | .. | 1.2 |
| Inner regional | 4.0 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 6.3 | 7.2 | 2.6 | .. | .. | 1.8 |
| Outer regional | 6.6 | 6.9 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 8.8 | 4.3 | .. | 3.3 | 3.1 |
| Remote | n.p. | .. | 22.8 | 13.1 | 17.5 | 22.8 | .. | 7.7 | 5.2 |
| Very remote | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

† Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

(a) Directly age-standardised to the 2001 Australian Estimated Resident Population based on the 2001 Census, using 10 year age groups up to 55+.

(b) Population excludes persons for whom BMI could not be calculated.

Sources: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2012–13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey and 2011–12 Australian Health Survey.

Data sources and quality

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

The 2012–13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS) included a sample of 12,000 Indigenous Australians for the core sample and sub-samples for various components of the survey such as voluntary biomedical data for adults. The AATSIHS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Indigenous Australians and therefore overcome the problem inherent in most national surveys (that is, small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples).

Survey results are subject to sampling errors as only a small proportion of the population is used to produce estimates that represent the whole population. Non-sampling errors may occur where there is non-response to the survey or questions in the survey, misunderstanding of questions or errors in recording, coding or processing the survey. Information recorded in this survey is 'as reported' by respondents. Responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions. Any data that are self-reported are also likely to under-estimate circumstances about which the respondent is unaware, or may be reluctant to report (for example, certain health conditions, weight, drug use).

Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available from the 2011–13 Australian Health Survey (AHS). The AHS was conducted in *Major cities, Regional and Remote areas*, but *Very remote areas* were excluded from the sample.

Further information on AATSIHS data quality issues can be found in the user guide for the survey (ABS 2013). Time series comparisons for some indicators are available from the 2004–05 NATSIHS, 2008 NATSISS, 2002 NATSISS, 2001 NHS and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS).

Australian Health Survey

The Australian Health Survey (AHS) combines the existing ABS National Health Survey (NHS) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) together with 2 new elements: a National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (NNPAS) and a National Health Measures Survey (NHMS).

For more information see:

- National Health Survey
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4363.0.55.001Main+Features12011-13?OpenDocument>.
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4715.0/>.
- National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.007~2011-12~Main%20Features~About%20the%20National%20Nutrition%20and%20Physical%20Activity%20Survey~731>.
- National Health Measures Survey
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.005Chapter1102011-12>.

Overweight and obesity data

The quality of BMI as a measure of overweight and obesity has a number of issues: the reliability of self-reported height and weight; under-reporting; mixed methods of collection of weight and height; and interpretation of BMI cut-offs in children.

Self-reported height and weight has been found to over-estimate height and under-estimate weight, thus under-estimating the resultant BMI. An analysis of the 1995 National Health Survey and 1995 National Nutrition Survey (ABS 1998), in which both self-reported and measured height and weight data were collected, found that 27% of males and 28% of females would have been classified to a different, predominately heavier, BMI category. This analysis did not explore data from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents; however, there was little difference between different ethnic and socioeconomic groups. The report concludes:

Based on the findings from this study, there may be grounds for questioning the reliability, and hence the use and interpretation, of BMI results based on self-reported height and weight.

In the 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 National Health Survey, height and weight information could not be obtained for approximately 16% of Indigenous Australians and 8% of non-Indigenous Australians. With a large non-response rate there may be issues with bias. In the 1994 NATSIHS an assessment of potential bias due to non-measurement concluded that there would have been only small differences if the whole population was measured; however, this assessment was based on an imputation method that assumed that people with similar characteristics had similar weight and height (Cunningham & Mackerras 1998).

Height and weight were self-reported in the 2004–05 National Health Survey except in remote areas where respondents to the Indigenous survey were offered the opportunity to be weighed or measured if they were unsure of their weight or height (ABS 2006). Given the known problems with self-reporting of height and weight, care needs to be exercised in interpretation of results given the mixed methods used, especially when the analysis is split by remoteness.

List of symbols used in tables

- .. not applicable
- n.p. not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated
- * represents results with statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.05$ level, between the categories specified in table footnotes
- † estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution

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