

# women's health *australia*

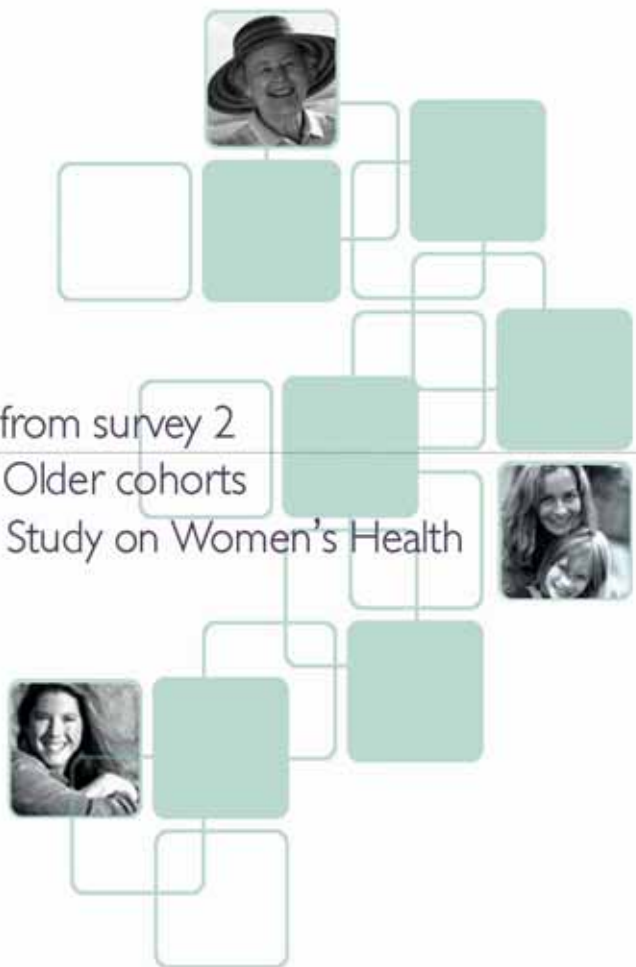
the australian longitudinal  
study on women's health

Jennifer Powers, Marc Howlett

Report on selected variables from survey 2  
of the Younger Mid age and Older cohorts  
of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health



Report prepared for Women's Health in the North  
July 2004





*The* UNIVERSITY  
of NEWCASTLE

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*Research Centre for Gender and Health*

**AUSTRALIAN LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON WOMEN'S HEALTH**

Report on selected variables from Survey 2 of the Younger, Mid-age and Older  
cohorts of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health  
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**Marc Howlett**

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## Introduction to the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health (ALSWH) – widely known as Women’s Health Australia - is a longitudinal population-based survey, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The project began in 1996 and examines the health of over 40,000 Australian women.

The ALSWH involves three large, nationally representative, cohorts of Australian women representing three generations:

- The Younger women, aged 18-23 when first recruited in 1996, are now in their late 20s, the peak years for relationship formation, childbearing, and establishing adult health habits (eg physical activity, diet) and paid and unpaid work patterns.
- The Mid-age women, initially aged 45-50, are now experiencing menopause, as well as changes in household structure, family caregiving, and impending retirement, which are common at this life stage. Some are showing early signs of age-related physical decline, while some are adopting new health behaviours in preparation for a healthy old age.
- The Older women, aged 70-75 when first recruited, are in their 80s and facing the physical, emotional and social challenges of old age.

Features of the study design include:

- Women were randomly selected from the Medicare database and invited to participate in the longitudinal study.
- Women in rural and remote areas of Australia were intentionally oversampled to ensure adequate numbers for statistical analysis.
- After the baseline survey in 1996, the three age cohorts have been surveyed sequentially, one cohort per year, on a rolling basis since 1998 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Timeline for main ALSWH Surveys



The study was designed to explore factors that influence health among women who are broadly representative of the entire Australian population. The study assesses:

- Physical and emotional health (including well-being, major diagnoses, symptoms)
- Use of health services (GP, specialist and other visits, access, satisfaction)
- Health behaviours and risk factors (diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol, other drugs)
- Time use (including paid and unpaid work, family roles, and leisure); socio-demographic factors (location, education, employment, family composition)
- Life stages and key events (such as childbirth, divorce, widowhood).

The project provides a valuable opportunity to examine associations over time between aspects of women's lives and their physical and emotional health. It provides an evidence base to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing – as well as other Commonwealth and State Departments – for the development and evaluation of policy and practice in many areas of service delivery that affect women. An overview of the study, research team and investigators, copies of the questionnaires, and abstracts of all publications and presentations can be located on the Study's website <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/wha>

The project has been able to retain a very high proportion of the original participants. Among the Younger women, 72% responded to Survey 2 in 2000, a retention rate which compares well with other surveys of this highly mobile age group. Retention rates have been much higher among the Mid-age women; 92% of Mid-age women responded to Survey 2 in 1998. Of the Older women, 91% responded to Survey 2 in 1999.

This report has been prepared on the basis of teleconferences between the research team and staff of Women's Health in the North (WHIN). It provides data on selected variables requested by WHIN from Survey 2 of the ALSWH cohorts.

***Younger Cohort***

***22-27 years***

## **Overview for younger women (22-27 years) living in Women's Health in the North localities (n=368) compared with women of the same age living in Australia in 2000.**

### **Access and satisfaction with health services**

Generally young women's level of satisfaction with their general practitioner (GP) was high with at least 80% of young women rating their last visit as good, very good or excellent. However, around 40% of young women rated the length of time spent in the waiting room as fair or poor. WHIN women tended to be less satisfied than other Australian women with the doctor's interest in how they felt about having tests or treatment or with the advice given (28% versus 22% fair or poor). Women living in WHIN localities were less likely to pay for their most recent visit to a GP than younger women living elsewhere in Australia (60% versus 47%).

While access to some health services was rated quite highly by WHIN and other women, access was rated fair or poor to other services such as after-hours medical care (36% versus 32%), ease of seeing the GP of your choice (28% versus 31%) and hours when a GP is available (25% versus 27%). The lack of knowledge about access to a Women's Health Centre or a Family Planning Centre (51% versus 42%) appears surprising considering 90% of these young women are or have been sexually active. With the high rates of depression and levels of stress reported amongst young women, it is perhaps disappointing that 40% of young women did not know about access to a counselling service.

### **Health behaviours**

The sexual and reproductive health of WHIN women was similar to Australian women of the same age. The majority of young women were heterosexual (94% versus 96%) and on average had had first sexual intercourse before their 18th birthday and their first baby before 22 years of age. WHIN women were less likely to have had a baby (10% versus 21%). The numbers of WHIN women who had had a baby were too small to draw any conclusions about how helpful the woman's partner, family, friends and health services had been in this regard.

Few young women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere had taken medications for their nerves, to help them sleep or for depression in the last four weeks. Around a quarter had taken other medication prescribed by the doctor, half had taken non-prescribed medications and a third had taken no medications in the last four weeks.

The pattern of licit and illicit drug use was similar for WHIN women and Australian women of the same age. Based on National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) guidelines, 17% of WHIN women were drinking alcohol at short-term risk. A third of WHIN women had used illicit drugs in the last year.



## **Life events and coping**

WHIN women had similar patterns of life events to other Australian women. The most common life events related to starting (20%) or breaking up of a personal relationship (24%), getting married or living with someone (15%) and change in some aspect of work (51%) for WHIN women in the last year. Almost a third of young women had left home for the first time more than a year ago.

WHIN and other Australian women were stressed about similar areas of their lives. The major areas of stress were employment and money, with a quarter of young women finding each of these areas very or extremely stressful. Few were very or extremely stressed about their relationships or their own health.

A quarter of young women stated their sleep was restless, one in five women said they could not 'get going', 18% felt depressed and 17% felt lonely on three or more days of the week. The results were similar for WHIN and other Australian women.

## **Abuse**

Almost 40% of young women living in WHIN localities or elsewhere in Australia had experienced some form of abuse or violence in their lives. The most common forms were emotional (25%), physical (22%) and sexual abuse (17%). This was consistent with the finding that almost a quarter of WHIN women reported that someone close to them had called them names, put them down or made them feel bad.

## **Overall satisfaction with life**

The majority of WHIN (73% to 90%) and other Australian women (72% to 91%) were satisfied or very satisfied with what they had achieved in the areas of work, career, study, relationships, friendships and social activities. Few women with children were dissatisfied with motherhood.



**Survey 2 of the Younger Cohort in 2000**  
**Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health**

**Requested Items Only**  
**368 WHIN participants**  
**Data presented as Frequency (% of responses)**  
**Exception: Q27b & c presented as means**

[Note: Actual denominators vary as missing responses are not used]

**6 Here are some questions about your MOST RECENT VISIT to a general practitioner. In terms of your SATISFACTION, how would you rate each of the following?**

(Mark one on each line)

		Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>a</b>	How long you waited to get an appointment	99 (27.4)	103 (28.5)	92 (25.5)	53 (14.7)	14 (3.9)
<b>b</b>	Length of time you waited in the waiting room	29 (8.0)	83 (23.0)	91 (25.2)	101 (28.0)	57 (15.8)
<b>c</b>	The amount of time you spent with the doctor	49 (13.6)	117 (32.5)	134 (37.2)	46 (12.8)	14 (3.9)
<b>d</b>	The doctor's explanation of your problem and treatment	67 (18.6)	129 (35.8)	97 (26.9)	44 (12.2)	23 (6.4)
<b>e</b>	The doctor's interest in how you felt about having the tests, treatment or the advice given	73 (20.3)	101 (28.1)	84 (23.4)	73 (20.3)	28 (7.8)
<b>f</b>	Your opportunity to ask all the questions you wanted	101 (27.9)	120 (33.1)	83 (22.9)	49 (13.5)	9 (2.5)
<b>g</b>	The <i>technical</i> skills (thoroughness, carefulness, competence) of the doctor	93 (25.8)	130 (36.0)	81 (22.4)	43 (11.9)	14 (3.9)
<b>h</b>	The <i>personal manner</i> (courtesy, respect, sensitivity, friendliness) of the doctor	120 (33.2)	108 (29.9)	80 (22.2)	43 (11.9)	10 (2.8)
<b>i</b>	The cost <i>to you</i> of the visit (Mark here if <b>No Cost</b> → 216 (59.7))	9 (2.5)	25 (6.9)	65 (18.0)	42 (11.6)	9 (2.5)
<b>j</b>	The visit overall	56 (15.5)	133 (36.8)	119 (33.0)	43 (11.9)	10 (2.8)

**8 Thinking about YOUR OWN HEALTH CARE, how would you rate the following now:**  
(Mark one on each line)

		Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
<b>a</b>	Access to medical specialists if you need them	43 (11.9)	110 (30.5)	108 (29.9)	44 (12.2)	7 (1.9)	49 (13.6)
<b>b</b>	Access to a hospital if you need it	55 (15.2)	101 (27.9)	106 (29.3)	40 (11.0)	12 (3.3)	48 (13.3)
<b>c</b>	Access to after-hours medical care	32 (8.9)	76 (21.1)	83 (23.1)	92 (25.6)	36 (10.0)	21 (11.4)
<b>d</b>	Access to a GP who bulk bills	112 (31.0)	90 (24.9)	72 (19.9)	43 (11.9)	23 (6.4)	21 (5.8)
<b>e</b>	Access to a female GP	78 (21.6)	90 (24.9)	91 (25.2)	53 (14.7)	19 (5.3)	30 (8.3)
<b>f</b>	Hours when a GP is available	26 (7.3)	88 (24.6)	141 (39.4)	77 (21.5)	14 (3.9)	12 (3.4)
<b>g</b>	Number of GPs you have to choose from	57 (15.8)	97 (26.9)	125 (34.6)	53 (14.7)	16 (4.4)	13 (3.6)
<b>h</b>	Ease of seeing the GP of your choice	39 (10.8)	92 (25.6)	105 (29.2)	73 (20.3)	28 (7.8)	23 (6.4)
<b>i</b>	Ease of obtaining a Pap test	105 (29.2)	105 (29.2)	69 (19.2)	17 (4.7)	6 (1.7)	58 (16.1)
<b>j</b>	Access to a counselling service if you need it	32 (8.9)	49 (13.6)	73 (20.2)	41 (11.4)	13 (3.6)	153 (42.4)
<b>k</b>	Access to a Women's Health Centre or a Family Planning Centre	36 (10)	41 (11.4)	58 (16.1)	37 (10.2)	6 (1.7)	183 (50.7)

**27 What age were you when you had:**  
(Write age or mark one on each line)

		Mean age	Not applicable
<b>b</b>	Your first sexual intercourse	17.8 yrs	40 (10.9%)
<b>c</b>	Your first baby	21.7 yrs	329 (89.6%)

The next question applies only if you have ever had a baby.

28 How would you rate the help you had in the first three months, with your first baby, from the following: (Mark one on each line)

		Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Available	Not needed
a	Partner	14 (3.9)	5 (1.4)	3 (0.8)	4 (1.1)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	6 (1.7)
b	Family	16 (4.4)	8 (2.2)	3 (0.8)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	0 (0)	6 (1.7)
c	Friends	7 (1.9)	7 (1.9)	6 (1.7)	2 (0.6)	4 (1.1)	3 (0.8)	7 (1.9)
d	Health Services	5 (1.4)	9 (2.5)	10 (2.8)	4 (1.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (1.7)

30 Which of these most closely describes your sexual orientation?  
(Mark one only)

I am exclusively heterosexual	312 (86.4)
I am mainly heterosexual	29 (8.0)
I am bisexual	4 (1.1)
I am mainly homosexual (lesbian)	2 (0.6)
I am exclusively homosexual (lesbian)	2 (0.6)
I don't know	5 (1.4)
I don't want to answer	7 (1.9)

32 Which of the following apply to you NOW:  
(Mark all that apply)

	Yes
f I use condoms (or other barrier methods) for prevention of infection	40 (11.3)

35 How many times have you had each of the following:  
(Mark all that apply)

	One	Two or more
e Termination (abortion)	41 (11.1)	7 (1.9)

36 When did you last have a Pap test?

A Pap test (for cervical cancer) is a routine test carried out by a doctor or nurse during an internal (vaginal) examination,  
(Mark one only)

I have never had a Pap test	84 (23.0)
Less than 2 years ago	229 (62.7)
2 - 5 years ago	51 (14.0)
More than 5 years ago	1 (0.3)
Not sure	0 (0)

**52 During the PAST 4 WEEKS, how many different types of medication (eg. tablets or medicine) have you used which were:**  
(Mark all that apply)

		None	One	Two	Three	Four or more
<b>a</b>	Prescription medication for your nerves (eg Valium, Serapax, Ducene etc)	345 (98.3)	3 (0.9)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
<b>b</b>	Prescription medication to help you sleep (eg Normison, Mogadon etc)	345 (98.3)	4 (1.1)	2 (0.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>c</b>	Prescription medication for depression (eg Prozac, Aropax etc)	337 (96.0)	13 (3.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>d</b>	Other medication prescribed by a doctor (excluding the oral contraceptive pill)	258 (73.5)	71 (20.2)	15 (4.3)	2 (0.6)	5 (1.4)
<b>e</b>	Other medication bought without a prescription at the chemist, supermarket or health food shop	165 (47.0)	98 (27.9)	45 (12.8)	18 (5.1)	25 (7.1)
<b>f</b>	None of these medications				119 (33.9)	

**61 How often do you have five or more standard drinks of alcohol on one occasion? (Mark one only)**

Never	68 (18.7)
Less than once a month	123 (33.8)
About once a month	78 (21.4)
About once a week	52 (14.3)
More than once a week	5 (2.5)

**62 The following question asks about the use of drugs for NON-MEDICINAL purposes.**

We want to know about general patterns of use. Please do not give details of specific instances of use.

Never used illicit drugs	143 (39.7)
Only ever used marijuana, -not in the last year	72 (20.0)
Only ever used marijuana, -used in the last year	41 (11.4)
Used multiple drugs or single drug other than marijuana -not used in last year	24 (6.7)
Used multiple drugs or single drug other than marijuana -used in last year	80 (22.2)

**70 Have you experienced any of the following events?***(Mark all that apply)*

		<b>A</b> Yes - in the last 12 months	<b>B</b> Yes - more than 12 months ago
<b>a</b>	Major personal illness	36 (9.9)	40 (11.0)
<b>b</b>	Major personal injury	16 (4.4)	28 (7.7)
<b>c</b>	Major surgery (not including dental work)	17 (4.7)	37 (10.2)
<b>d</b>	Birth of your first child	4 (1.1)	22 (6.1)
<b>e</b>	Birth of your second or later child	6 (1.7)	5 (1.4)
<b>f</b>	Having a child with a disability or serious illness	2 (0.6)	3 (0.8)
<b>g</b>	Starting a new, close personal relationship	74 (20.4)	140 (38.7)
<b>h</b>	Getting married (or starting to live with someone)	54 (14.9)	65 (18.0)
<b>i</b>	Problem or break-up in a close personal relationship	87 (24.0)	73 (20.2)
<b>j</b>	Divorce or separation	4 (1.1)	6 (1.7)
<b>k</b>	Becoming a sole parent	4 (1.1)	6 (1.7)
<b>m</b>	Serious conflict between members of your family	47 (13.0)	36 (9.9)
<b>o</b>	Death of partner or close family member	25 (6.9)	53 (16.6)
<b>p</b>	Death of a child	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)
<b>q</b>	Stillbirth of a child	0 (0)	2 (0.6)
<b>r</b>	Miscarriage	5 (1.4)	7 (1.9)
<b>s</b>	Death of a close friend	21 (5.8)	36 (9.9)
<b>t</b>	Leaving home for the first time	34 (9.4)	107 (29.6)
<b>u</b>	Difficulty finding a job	58 (16.0)	40 (11.0)
<b>v</b>	Return to study	45 (12.4)	39 (10.8)
<b>w</b>	Beginning/resuming work outside the home	32 (8.8)	51 (14.1)
<b>x</b>	Change in your type of work/hours/conditions/responsibilities at work	183 (50.6)	46 (12.7)
<b>y</b>	Distressing harassment at work	28 (7.7)	13 (3.6)
<b>z</b>	Loss of job	22 (6.1)	17 (4.7)
<b>aa</b>	Partner losing a job	11 (3.0)	8 (2.2)
<b>cc</b>	Decreased income	66 (18.2)	32 (8.8)
<b>hh</b>	Being pushed, grabbed, shoved, kicked or hit	30 (8.3)	25 (6.9)
<b>ii</b>	Being forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity	6 (1.7)	30 (8.3)

**71 Over the LAST 12 MONTHS, how stressed have you felt about the following areas of your life:**  
(Mark one on each line)

		Not applicable	Not at all stressed	Somewhat stressed	Moderately stressed	Very stressed	Extremely stressed
<b>a</b>	Own health		134 (36.6)	138 (37.7)	68 (18.6)	20 (5.5)	6 (1.5)
<b>b</b>	Health of family members	11 (3.0)	89 (24.7)	138 (38.2)	64 (17.7)	39 (10.8)	20 (5.5)
<b>c</b>	Work/employment	10 (2.8)	45 (12.5)	121 (33.5)	95 (26.3)	69 (19.1)	21 (5.8)
<b>d</b>	Living arrangements	15 (4.2)	136 (37.7)	93 (25.8)	65 (18.0)	42 (11.6)	10 (2.8)
<b>e</b>	Study	153 (42.9)	65 (18.2)	58 (16.2)	34 (9.5)	36 (10.1)	11 (3.1)
<b>f</b>	Money	2 (0.5)	47 (12.9)	134 (36.7)	85 (23.3)	71 (19.5)	26 (7.1)
<b>g</b>	Relationship with parents	14 (3.8)	220 (60.3)	80 (21.9)	30 (8.2)	16 (4.4)	5 (1.4)
<b>h</b>	Relationship with partner/spouse	69 (19.2)	121 (33.6)	84 (23.3)	42 (11.7)	31 (8.6)	13 (3.6)
<b>i</b>	Relationship with other family members	19 (5.2)	219 (59.8)	82 (22.4)	27 (7.4)	13 (3.6)	6 (1.6)
<b>j</b>	Relationship with friends	9 (2.5)	193 (52.6)	112 (30.5)	35 (9.5)	14 (3.4)	4 (1.1)

**72 Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way DURING THE LAST WEEK.**

(Mark one on each line)

		Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	Occasionally or a moderate amount of the time (3-4 days)	Most or all of the time (5-7 days)
<b>c</b>	I felt depressed	184 (51.3)	109 (30.4)	39 (10.9)	27 (7.5)
<b>f</b>	I felt fearful	237 (66.9)	75 (21.2)	32 (9.0)	10 (2.8)
<b>g</b>	My sleep was restless	156 (43.8)	120 (33.7)	52 (14.6)	28 (7.9)
<b>i</b>	I felt lonely	191 (53.2)	109 (30.4)	48 (13.4)	11 (3.1)
<b>j</b>	I could not 'get going'	136 (38.0)	152 (42.5)	52 (14.5)	18 (5.0)

**86 These questions are about getting on with other people. (Mark all that apply)**

		Yes
<b>a</b>	Has anyone close to you tried to hurt you or harm you recently?	22 (6.2)
<b>b</b>	Are you sad or lonely often?	77 (21.6)
<b>c</b>	Do you feel that nobody wants you around?	34 (9.6)
<b>d</b>	Does anyone in your family drink a lot of alcohol?	49 (13.8)
<b>e</b>	Are you afraid of anyone in your family?	18 (5.1)
<b>f</b>	Do you have enough privacy at home?	149 (41.9)
<b>g</b>	Have you ever been in a violent relationship with a partner/spouse?	28 (7.9)
<b>h</b>	Has anyone close to you called you names or put you down or made you feel bad recently?	87 (24.4)



<b>90</b>	<b>Have you EVER experienced any form of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse or violence, either as a child, in an adult relationship, or at any other time? (Mark <u>one only</u>)</b>	Yes	135 (37.6)
		No	210 (58.5)
		Don't want to answer	14 (3.9)

<b>91</b>	<b>If yes, was the violence/abuse you experienced: (Mark <u>all that apply</u>)</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>Physical abuse</b> (eg pushed, grabbed, kicked, hit, shoved, slapped, shaken, restrained)	67 (18.5)
<b>b</b>	<b>Severe physical violence</b> (eg beaten up, thrown, choked, burnt, threatened or attacked with a fist, knife or gun)	12 (3.3)
<b>c</b>	<b>Emotional abuse</b> (eg called names, threats to harm or kill, humiliated, bullied, criticised, locked up/isolated, refused access to work, medical care or money, told that your children or pets would be harmed)	92 (25.3)
<b>d</b>	<b>Sexual abuse</b> (eg rape or attempted rape, sexual assault, fear of sexual assault, forced to engage in unwanted sexual practices)	63 (17.4)
<b>e</b>	<b>Harassment</b> (eg stalking, loitering, interfering with property, offensive mail or telephone calls)	38 (10.5)

**106** In general, how satisfied are you with what you have achieved in each of the following areas of your life? (Mark one on each line)

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<b>a</b>	Work	91 (25.3)	201 (55.8)	58 (16.1)	10 (2.8)
<b>b</b>	Career	84 (23.5)	178 (49.7)	73 (20.4)	23 (6.4)
<b>c</b>	Study	86 (24.0)	205 (57.3)	55 (15.4)	12 (3.4)
<b>d</b>	Family relationships	155 (43.2)	167 (46.5)	34 (9.5)	3 (0.8)
<b>e</b>	Partner/closest personal relationship	155 (43.2)	122 (34.0)	65 (18.1)	17 (4.7)
<b>f</b>	Friendships	126 (34.9)	188 (52.1)	45 (12.5)	2 (0.6)
<b>g</b>	Social activities	81 (22.5)	211 (58.6)	67 (18.6)	1 (0.3)
<b>h</b>	Motherhood/children	Not applicable 315 (89.2)	19 (5.4)	15 (4.2)	3 (0.8)

***Mid-age Cohort***

***47-52 years***

## **Overview for mid-age women (47-52 years) living in Women's Health in the North localities (n=224) compared with women of the same age living in Australia in 1998.**

### **Access to health services**

The majority of mid-age women living in WHIN localities rated their access to health services as good, very good or excellent. Nevertheless, a quarter of mid-age women rated access to after-hours medical care as fair or poor. Approximately one in five felt that access was only fair or poor for: hours when a GP is available; ease of seeing the GP of your choice; a GP who bulk bills; medical care in an emergency. Many mid-age women did not know about the availability of medical information or advice by phone (31%) or about access to a counselling service (45%) or a Women's Health Centre (51%). These results were consistent with those obtained for other Australian women.

### **Health behaviours**

During the past four weeks 56% of WHIN women had taken medications prescribed by a doctor and 61% had taken non-prescribed medications. The women were using medications for a long-term illness (23%), to help them sleep (11%), for their nerves (5%) or for depression (5%). The pattern of medication use was similar for Australian women of the same age.

Although WHIN women were just as likely to have had a PAP test or to have had their breasts examined by a doctor, they were less likely than Australian women of the same age to have had a mammogram (56% versus 63%) or to have examined their breasts regularly (45% versus 54%).

Based on NH&MRC guidelines, few mid-age women were drinking alcohol at short-term risk. In WHIN localities and across Australia, 7% were taking five or more alcoholic drinks once a week or more.

### **Life events and coping**

The pattern of life events was similar for WHIN women and other Australian women. In the last year, the most common life events for women in this age group were major decline in health of a close family member or friend (30%), going through menopause (24%), changes related to work (24%), decreased income (18%) and a child or family member leaving home (17%).

Approximately a third of mid-age WHIN women felt tired or worn out at least a good bit of the time and more than a quarter had restless sleep at least three days a week. About one in ten felt depressed. The pattern was similar for other Australian women.

Mid-age women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere in Australia had similar patterns of stress. Women were very or extremely stressed about work (20%), money (14%) and the health of other family members (15%).

### **Abuse**

Regardless of where they live in Australia, more than a third of mid-age women had experienced some form of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse in their life time.

## **Overall satisfaction with life**

Overall satisfaction with life was similar for WHIN women and those living elsewhere in Australia. The majority of women were satisfied with their achievements in terms of friendships, relationships, social activities and work (77% to 89% for WHIN and 79% to 90% for elsewhere). Women were not as satisfied with their achievements in terms of career (70% versus 73%) and study (63% versus 66%). It is probable that these areas are less important in mid-age women's lives.



**Survey 2 of the Mid-age Cohort in 1998**  
**Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health**

**Requested Items Only**  
**224 WHIN participants**  
**Data presented as Frequency (% of responses)**

[Note: Actual denominators vary as missing responses are not used]

For each question, please give the one answer that comes closest to the way you have been feeling. How much of the time during the PAST FOUR WEEKS:

*(Mark one circle on each line)*

		<b>all of the time</b>	<b>most of the time</b>	<b>a good bit of the time</b>	<b>some of the time</b>	<b>a little of the time</b>	<b>none of the time</b>
<b>b</b>	Have you been a very nervous person	8 (3.6)	8 (3.6)	14 (6.3)	40 (17.9)	63 (28.3)	89 (39.9)
<b>c</b>	Have you felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up	2 (0.9)	8 (3.6)	10 (4.5)	26 (11.7)	55 (24.7)	122 (54.7)
<b>f</b>	Have you felt down	2 (0.9)	12 (5.4)	20 (9.0)	55 (24.7)	93 (41.7)	41 (18.4)
<b>g</b>	Did you feel worn out	7 (3.1)	25 (11.2)	36 (16.1)	61 (27.4)	65 (29.1)	29 (13.0)
<b>i</b>	Did you feel tired	18 (8.1)	26 (11.7)	43 (19.4)	68 (30.6)	58 (26.1)	9 (4.1)

**17 Thinking about your own health care, how would you rate the following:**  
(Mark one circle on each line)

		<b>excellent</b>	<b>very good</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>	<b>don't know</b>
<b>a</b>	Access to medical specialists if you need them	63 (30.3)	74 (35.6)	36 (17.3)	17 (8.2)	5 (2.4)	13 (6.3)
<b>b</b>	Access to a hospital if you need it	62 (30.1)	59 (28.6)	41 (19.9)	16 (7.8)	13 (6.3)	15 (7.3)
<b>c</b>	Access to medical care in an emergency	45 (22.0)	59 (28.8)	33 (16.1)	28 (13.7)	10 (4.9)	30 (14.6)
<b>d</b>	Access to after-hours medical care	26 (12.6)	49 (23.7)	43 (20.8)	32 (15.5)	20 (9.7)	37 (17.9)
<b>e</b>	Access to a GP who bulk bills	71 (34.6)	43 (21.0)	28 (13.7)	16 (7.8)	20 (9.8)	27 (13.2)
<b>f</b>	Access to a female GP	49 (23.9)	49 (23.9)	46 (22.4)	21 (10.2)	11 (5.4)	29 (14.1)
<b>g</b>	Hours when a GP is available	31 (15.5)	62 (31.0)	57 (28.5)	33 (16.5)	8 (4.0)	9 (4.5)
<b>h</b>	Number of GPs you have to choose from	47 (23.2)	75 (36.9)	47 (23.2)	24 (11.8)	3 (1.5)	7 (3.4)
<b>i</b>	Ease of seeing the GP of your choice	45 (21.8)	62 (30.1)	55 (26.7)	30 (14.6)	10 (4.9)	4 (1.9)
<b>j</b>	The outcomes of your medical care ( <i>how much you are helped?</i> )	39 (19.6)	77 (38.7)	56 (28.1)	21 (10.6)	3 (1.5)	3 (1.5)
<b>k</b>	Ease of obtaining a mammogram	82 (39.6)	56 (27.1)	27 (13.0)	8 (3.9)	5 (2.4)	29 (14)
<b>l</b>	Ease of obtaining a Pap test	91 (44.4)	65 (31.7)	26 (12.7)	10 (4.9)	2 (1.0)	11 (5.4)
<b>m</b>	Availability of medical information or advice by phone	32 (15.5)	38 (18.4)	32 (15.5)	23 (11.2)	18 (8.7)	63 (30.6)
<b>n</b>	Services available for getting doctor's prescriptions filled	89 (43.2)	65 (31.6)	26 (12.6)	8 (3.9)	3 (1.5)	15 (7.3)
<b>o</b>	Access to a counselling service if you need it	24 (11.7)	34 (16.5)	30 (14.6)	13 (6.3)	12 (5.8)	93 (45.1)
<b>p</b>	Access to a Women's Health Centre or a Family Planning Centre	18 (8.7)	27 (13.1)	34 (16.5)	15 (7.3)	7 (3.4)	105 (51.0)

**22 During the PAST FOUR WEEKS, how many different types of medication (eg tablets/ medicine) have you used which were: (Mark one circle on each line)**

		<b>none</b>	<b>one</b>	<b>two</b>	<b>three</b>	<b>four or more</b>
<b>a</b>	Prescribed by a doctor	90 (43.9)	57 (27.8)	33 (16.1)	14 (6.8)	11 (5.4)
<b>b</b>	Bought without a prescription at the chemist, supermarket or health food shop	79 (38.7)	71 (34.8)	31 (15.2)	7 (3.4)	16 (7.8)

**23 During the PAST FOUR WEEKS have you taken any medications:**  
(Mark one circle on each line)

		Yes	No
<b>a</b>	For your nerves (eg Valium, Serapax, Ducene, etc)	10 (5.0)	191 (95.0)
<b>b</b>	To help you sleep (eg Normison, Mogadon, etc)	23 (11.4)	178 (88.6)
<b>c</b>	For depression (eg Prozac, Aropax)	10 (5.0)	189 (95.0)
<b>d</b>	For any chronic (long-term) illness or condition	46 (22.9)	155 (77.1)

**24 In the LAST TWO YEARS, have you:**  
(Mark one circle on each line)

		Yes	No
<b>a</b>	Had a Pap test?	144 (70.6)	60 (29.4)
<b>b</b>	Had a mammogram?	116 (55.8)	92 (44.2)
<b>c</b>	Had your breasts examined by a doctor?	132 (63.8)	75 (36.2)
<b>d</b>	Carried out <i>regular monthly</i> breast self examination?	93 (44.7)	115 (55.3)
<b>e</b>	Used a condom for STD/HIV prevention?	7 (3.4)	200 (96.6)

**30 Over the LAST TWELVE MONTHS, how stressed have you felt about the following areas of your life: (Mark one circle on each line)**

		not applicable	not at all stressed	somewhat stressed	moderately stressed	very stressed	extremely stressed
<b>a</b>	Own health	9 (4.6)	74 (37.6)	58 (29.4)	39 (19.8)	11 (5.6)	6 (3.0)
<b>b</b>	Health of other family members	8 (3.9)	67 (33.0)	64 (31.5)	33 (16.3)	25 (12.3)	6 (3.0)
<b>c</b>	Work/Employment	38 (19.0)	33 (16.5)	53 (26.5)	37 (18.5)	22 (11.0)	17 (8.5)
<b>d</b>	Living arrangements	22 (11.0)	118 (59.0)	36 (18.0)	13 (6.5)	7 (3.5)	4 (2.0)
<b>e</b>	Study	135 (68.5)	45 (22.8)	10 (5.1)	5 (2.5)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)
<b>f</b>	Money	12 (5.9)	66 (32.5)	65 (32.0)	32 (15.8)	19 (9.4)	9 (4.4)
<b>g</b>	Relationship with parents	67 (33.5)	79 (39.5)	29 (14.5)	14 (7.0)	7 (3.5)	4 (2.0)
<b>h</b>	Relationship with partner/spouse	29 (14.4)	83 (41.3)	52 (25.9)	20 (10.0)	10 (5.0)	7 (3.5)
<b>i</b>	Relationship with children	32 (16.0)	81 (40.5)	53 (26.5)	22 (11.0)	10 (5.0)	2 (1.0)
<b>j</b>	Relationship with other family members	23 (11.3)	109 (53.7)	45 (22.2)	16 (7.9)	5 (2.5)	5 (2.5)



**31 Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way DURING THE LAST WEEK.**

*(Mark one circle on each line)*

		rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)	some or a little of the time (1-2 days)	occasionally or a moderate amount of the time (3-4 days)	most or all of the time (5-7 days)
<b>c</b>	I felt depressed	128 (62.7)	53 (26.0)	16 (7.8)	7 (3.4)
<b>f</b>	I felt fearful	144 (71.6)	34 (16.9)	13 (6.5)	10 (5.0)
<b>g</b>	My sleep was restless	80 (39.4)	66 (32.5)	30 (14.8)	27 (13.3)
<b>i</b>	I felt lonely	131 (64.9)	42 (20.8)	20 (9.9)	9 (4.5)
<b>j</b>	I could not "get going"	99 (48.5)	71 (34.8)	21 (10.3)	13 (6.4)

**32 Which of the following events have you experienced:**

*(Mark as many as applicable, leave blank if not experienced)*

		in the last 12 months	1-2 years ago	more than 2 years ago
<b>a</b>	Major personal illness	17 (8.2)	10 (4.8)	44 (21.2)
<b>b</b>	Major personal injury	4 (1.9)	1 (0.5)	24 (11.5)
<b>c</b>	Major surgery (not including dental work)	11 (5.3)	10 (4.8)	51 (24.5)
<b>d</b>	Going through menopause	50 (24.0)	19 (9.1)	30 (14.4)
<b>e</b>	Major decline in health of spouse or partner	10 (4.8)	5 (2.4)	16 (7.7)
<b>f</b>	Major decline in health of other close family member or close friend	63 (30.3)	25 (12.0)	28 (13.5)
<b>g</b>	Starting a new, close personal relationship	8 (3.8)	5 (2.4)	26 (12.5)
<b>h</b>	Infidelity of spouse or partner	2 (1.0)	3 (1.4)	16 (7.7)
<b>i</b>	Break-up of a close personal relationship	9 (4.3)	4 (1.9)	22 (10.6)
<b>j</b>	Divorce	2 (1.0)	1 (0.5)	22 (10.6)
<b>k</b>	Major conflict with teenage or older children	22 (10.6)	5 (2.4)	16 (7.7)
<b>l</b>	Child or family member leaving home (due to marriage, to attend university etc)	35 (16.8)	4 (1.9)	34 (16.3)
<b>m</b>	Death of spouse or partner	1 (0.5)	0 (0)	6 (2.9)
<b>n</b>	Death of child	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (2.4)
<b>o</b>	Death of other close family member	28 (13.5)	14 (6.7)	53 (25.5)
<b>p</b>	Death of close friend	16 (7.7)	4 (1.9)	15 (7.2)
<b>q</b>	Changing your type of work/hours/conditions/responsibilities at work	50 (24.0)	19 (9.1)	24 (11.5)
<b>r</b>	Your spouse or partner ceasing work outside the home	13 (6.3)	10 (4.8)	17 (8.2)
<b>s</b>	Decreased income	37 (17.8)	17 (8.2)	23 (11.1)
<b>t</b>	Moving house	15 (7.2)	11 (5.3)	30 (14.4)
<b>y</b>	Being pushed, grabbed, shoved, kicked or hit	3 (1.4)	2 (1.0)	12 (5.8)
<b>z</b>	Being forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (5.8)

<b>41</b>	<b>How often do you have five or more drinks of alcohol on one occasion?</b> <i>(Mark one circle only)</i>	Non drinker	27 (13.0)
		Never	115 (55.6)
		Less than once a month	34 (16.4)
		About once a month	17 (8.2)
		About once a week	9 (4.3)
		More than once a week	5 (2.4)

<b>73</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>Have you ever experienced any form of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse or violence, either as a child, in an adult relationship, or at any other time?</b>	no, never	132 (63.8)
			yes	75 (36.2)

**90** In general, are you satisfied with what you have achieved in your life so far in the areas of:  
*(Mark one circle on each line)*

		<b>very</b> <b>satisfied</b>	<b>satisfied</b>	<b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>very</b> <b>dissatisfied</b>
<b>a</b>	Work	39 (19.2)	121 (59.6)	33 (16.3)	10 (4.9)
<b>b</b>	Career	38 (19.2)	101 (51.0)	45 (22.7)	14 (7.1)
<b>c</b>	Study	25 (13.2)	95 (50.0)	55 (28.9)	15 (7.9)
<b>d</b>	Family relationships	70 (34.5)	105 (51.7)	24 (11.8)	4 (2.0)
<b>e</b>	Partner/closest personal relationship	83 (40.7)	73 (35.8)	38 (18.6)	10 (4.9)
<b>f</b>	Friendships	72 (34.8)	112 (54.1)	20 (9.7)	3 (1.4)
<b>g</b>	Social activities	41 (20.0)	123 (60.0)	32 (15.6)	9 (4.4)

***Older Cohort***

***73-78 years***

## **Overview for older women (73-78 years) living in Women's Health in the North localities (n=179) compared with women of the same age living in Australia in 1999.**

### **Access to health services**

Around 80% of older women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere in Australia rated their access to health services as good, very good or excellent. The exception was access to after-hours medical care where one in five women rated their access as poor or fair and a further 24% did not know about access to this service.

### **Falls**

In the last year, more than one in five older WHIN women had had a fall, with 16% injured due to the fall and 13% requiring medical attention. Although more than half the women had had no accidents, 12% had had injuries such as burns, cuts or bruises resulting from an accident at their home and 8% had had broken or fractured bones. The pattern was similar for older women across Australia.

### **Health behaviours**

Approximately 90% of older women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere in Australia had taken at least one prescribed medication in the last four weeks. More than half had taken three or more different types of prescribed medications and two thirds had taken at least one non-prescription medication in the last four weeks. The women were using medications for long-term illness (28%), to help them sleep (18%), for their nerves (11%) and for depression (5%). WHIN women were less likely to be taking HRT than women living elsewhere in Australia (5% versus 12%).

Over half the women from WHIN and elsewhere, take three or more medications every day (52%) and nearly half eat alone most of the time (48% versus 44%). Almost all the women had enough money to buy food (98%) and were able to shop, cook and feed themselves (95%).

### **Service use, social and support groups and need of help**

Similar patterns were seen for WHIN and other women. One in eight WHIN women regularly needed help with daily tasks because of long-term illness, disability or frailty compared with one in ten Australia wide. For WHIN and other women, the most common services used were home maintenance services such as odd jobs, gardening and lawn mowing (30% versus 23%), home care and laundry services (12% versus 9%) and community nurses and health services (9% versus 8%). Women also attended social groups such as the Country Women's Association, Senior Citizen's Centre, church groups and so on (16% versus 13%).

### **Life events and coping**

The patterns of life events were similar for WHIN women and other Australian women. The major life events related to death of a close friend (24%) or family member (17%), major decline in health of a close friend or family member (16%) or spouse (15%) and major surgery (18%).

Few older women in WHIN localities or elsewhere were very or extremely stressed about any areas of their lives. One in nine women was stressed about her own health or that of a family member.

The prevalence obtained from question 19 (depression, fearfulness, etc) are likely to be underestimates due to large amounts of missing data for women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere in Australia. Of those who answered these questions, almost half stated that their sleep was restless, 31% that they could not get going, 23% felt lonely and 21% felt depressed.

Women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere in Australia gave similar answers to the questions about getting on with other people. Some women felt uncomfortable with someone in their family (13% versus 9%), others felt that nobody wanted them around (5% versus 2%) and that someone had put them down (4%), but they trusted most of the people in their family (88%).

### **Social support and neighbourhood satisfaction**

Most WHIN and other women had good social support from their family and friends. Overall the level of social support was slightly but not significantly lower for WHIN women. There were significant differences for two questions: whether the woman had a definite role among her family and friends most of the time (74% versus 82%) and the percentage of women who had been to a meeting or group in the last week (57% versus 67%).

Women were generally satisfied with their neighbours, although WHIN women were less likely to feel they had a lot in common with their neighbours (51% versus 62%). Less than a third of women stated that they got involved with most local issues. Compared with women living elsewhere in Australia, women living in WHIN localities were less likely to agree that it was safe to walk around the neighbourhood at night (19% versus 34%).

### **Providing care**

Around half the older women living in WHIN localities and elsewhere provide unpaid care for grandchildren or other people's children and approximately one in five provide care or assistance to another person because of their long-term illness, disability or frailty. In WHIN localities 5% of women provide care for grandchildren on a daily basis, another 5% weekly and 44% occasionally. In addition, 17% of WHIN women provide care or assistance to someone who lives with them or lives elsewhere.

### **Personal traits**

The personal traits of WHIN women and those living elsewhere were similar. The majority of older women felt they were quite self-sufficient sometimes or often (98% versus 97%) and independent enough to do the things they wanted to do (84% versus 81%). Although older women felt they could depend on others sometimes or often (93% versus 90%), they were not so certain about being in control of their health (61% versus 58%) and could feel lonely even when there were others around them (38% versus 31%).



**Survey 2 of the Older Cohort in 1999**  
**Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health**

**Requested Items Only**  
**179 WHIN participants**  
**Data presented as Frequency (% of responses)**

[Note: Actual denominators vary as missing responses are not used]

**5 Thinking about YOUR OWN HEALTH CARE, how would you rate the following (now)?**  
(Mark one on each line)

		Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
<b>a</b>	Access to medical specialists if you need them	34 (21.7)	50 (31.8)	38 (24.2)	14 (8.9)	2 (1.3)	18 (11.5)
<b>b</b>	Access to a hospital if you need it	27 (18.0)	45 (30.0)	33 (22.0)	11 (7.3)	8 (5.3)	26 (17.3)
<b>c</b>	Access to after-hours medical care	12 (8.6)	26 (18.6)	41 (29.3)	13 (9.3)	15 (10.7)	33 (23.6)
<b>d</b>	Access to a GP who bulk bills	62 (40.5)	53 (34.6)	21 (13.7)	4 (2.6)	1 (0.7)	12 (7.8)
<b>e</b>	Hours when a GP is available	25 (17.0)	53 (36.1)	45 (30.6)	13 (8.8)	3 (2.0)	8 (5.4)
<b>f</b>	Number of GPs you have to choose from	26 (17.8)	54 (37.0)	46 (31.5)	11 (7.5)	2 (1.4)	7 (4.8)
<b>g</b>	Ease of seeing the GP of your choice	47 (29.9)	69 (43.9)	32 (20.4)	7 (4.5)	2 (1.3)	0 (0)

**8 In the LAST 12 MONTHS, have you:**  
(Mark all that apply to you)

		Yes
<b>a</b>	Slipped, tripped, or stumbled? (not including falls to the ground)	49 (29.0)
<b>b</b>	Had a fall to the ground? (does <i>not</i> include stumbles/trips)	38 (22.5)
<b>c</b>	Been injured as a result of a fall?	27 (16.0)
<b>d</b>	Needed to seek medical attention (eg. doctor, hospital) for an injury from a fall?	22 (13.0)
<b>e</b>	Had any other injury from an accident at your home? (eg. burns, cuts, bruises)	21 (12.4)
<b>f</b>	Broken or fractured any bone/s?	13 (7.7)
<b>g</b>	None of these accidents	95 (56.2)

**13 How many different types of medication (eg. tablets or medicine) have you used during the PAST 4 WEEKS which were:**  
(Mark one on each line)

		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
<b>a</b>	Prescribed by a doctor	18 (10.3)	32 (18.3)	30 (17.1)	28 (16.0)	35 (20.0)	32 (18.3)
<b>b</b>	Bought without a prescription at the chemist, supermarket or health food shop (eg aspirin, vitamins, cough mixtures)	53 (37.9)	41 (29.3)	27 (19.3)	7 (5.0)	8 (5.7)	4 (2.9)

**14 Have you taken any of these medications during the PAST 4 WEEKS:**

*(Mark all that apply to you)*

		<b>Yes</b>
<b>a</b>	For your nerves (eg. valium, serapax, ducene, murelex, etc.)	18 (10.5)
<b>b</b>	To help you sleep (eg. normison, mogadon, euhygnos, temaze, etc.)	30 (17.5)
<b>c</b>	For depression (eg. prozac, aropax, zoloft, aurorix, etc.)	8 (4.7)
<b>d</b>	Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)	9 (5.3)
<b>e</b>	For any chronic (long-term) illness	48 (28.1)
<b>f</b>	None of these medications	87 (50.9)

**15 In the LAST THREE YEARS, have you experienced any of the following events?**

*(Mark all that apply to you)*

		<b>Yes- in the last 3 years</b>
<b>a</b>	Major personal illness	23 (14.3)
<b>b</b>	Major personal injury	7 (4.3)
<b>c</b>	Major surgery (not including dental work)	9 (18.0)
<b>d</b>	Major decline in health of spouse or partner	24 (14.9)
<b>e</b>	Major decline in health of other close family member or family friend	26 (16.1)
<b>f</b>	Starting a new, close personal relationship	2 (1.2)
<b>g</b>	Break-up of a close personal relationship	1 (0.6)
<b>h</b>	Major conflict with children	6 (3.7)
<b>i</b>	Death of spouse or partner	13 (8.1)
<b>j</b>	Death of child	0 (0)
<b>k</b>	Death of other close family member	27 (16.8)
<b>l</b>	Death of close friend	38 (23.6)
<b>n</b>	Decreased income	15 (9.3)
<b>o</b>	Moving house	10 (6.2)
<b>r</b>	Being robbed	5 (3.1)
<b>s</b>	Involvement in a serious accident	1 (0.6)
<b>t</b>	A fall which caused serious injury	11 (6.8)
<b>u</b>	Being pushed, grabbed, shoved, kicked or hit	1 (0.6)
<b>v</b>	Being forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity	0 (0)
<b>y</b>	Moving into institutionalised care	0 (0)



**z** Spouse/partner moving into institutionalised care 2 (1.2)

**19** Below is a list of ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way **DURING THE LAST WEEK**.

(Mark one on each line, but don't spend too much time on each question)

		None of the time (less than 1 day)	Rarely (1 - 2 days)	Sometimes (3 - 4 days)	Most of the time (5 - 7 days)
<b>c</b>	I felt depressed	54 (58.1)	19 (20.4)	17 (18.3)	3 (3.2)
<b>f</b>	I felt fearful	54 (69.2)	14 (17.9)	8 (10.3)	2 (2.6)
<b>g</b>	My sleep was restless	37 (37.8)	13 (13.3)	33 (33.7)	15 (15.3)
<b>i</b>	I felt lonely	51 (52.6)	24 (24.7)	16 (16.5)	6 (6.2)
<b>j</b>	I could not "get going"	38 (39.6)	28 (29.2)	25 (26.0)	5 (5.2)

**25** Are the following statements true or false for you?

(Mark one on each line)

		True	False
<b>h</b>	I always have enough money to buy food	157 (97.5)	4 (2.5)
<b>i</b>	I eat alone most of the time	76 (47.8)	83 (52.2)
<b>j</b>	I take 3 or more different prescribed or over-the-counter medicines every day	82 (51.6)	77 (48.4)
<b>l</b>	I am always able to shop, cook and/or feed myself	153 (95.0)	8 (5.0)

**29** How stressed have you felt about the following areas of your life during the **LAST 12 months**:

(Mark one on each line)

		Not applicable	Not at all stressed	Somewhat stressed	Moderately stressed	Very stressed	Extremely stressed
<b>a</b>	Own health		72 (49.3)	41 (27.7)	18 (12.2)	13 (8.8)	3 (2.0)
<b>b</b>	Living arrangements		116 (87.9)	10 (7.6)	1 (0.8)	3 (2.3)	2 (1.5)
<b>c</b>	Money		103 (76.9)	18 (13.4)	10 (7.5)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.7)
<b>d</b>	Health of family members	9 (6.3)	72 (50.0)	36 (25.0)	11 (7.6)	12 (8.3)	4 (2.8)
<b>e</b>	Relationship with spouse/partner	72 (51.8)	56 (40.3)	5 (3.6)	3 (2.2)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)
<b>f</b>	Relationship with children	23 (15.9)	98 (67.6)	10 (6.9)	10 (6.9)	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)
<b>g</b>	Relationship with other family members	24 (16.4)	106 (72.6)	11 (7.5)	3 (2.1)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)

**36 What do you think about the neighbourhood that you live in? How much do you agree with the following statements?**  
(Mark one on each line)

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>b</b>	I have a lot in common with people in my neighbourhood	5 (3.2)	17 (11.0)	54 (34.8)	58 (37.4)	21 (13.5)
<b>g</b>	I have little to do with people in this neighbourhood	25 (16.3)	58 (37.9)	39 (25.5)	28 (18.3)	3 (2.0)
<b>h</b>	My neighbours treat me with respect	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	7 (4.4)	115 (72.8)	35 (22.2)
<b>j</b>	I get involved with most local issues	14 (9.2)	38 (24.8)	60 (39.2)	33 (21.6)	8 (5.2)
<b>l</b>	If I no longer lived here, hardly anyone around here would notice	18 (11.5)	67 (42.7)	34 (21.7)	30 (19.1)	8 (5.1)
<b>m</b>	It is safe to walk around the neighbourhood at night	27 (17.2)	55 (35.0)	45 (28.7)	19 (12.1)	11 (7.0)

		None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or more
<b>53</b>	About how often did you go to meetings of clubs, religious meetings, or other groups that you belong to in the past week?	69 (42.9)	36 (22.4)	24 (14.9)	22 (13.7)	6 (3.7)	3 (1.6)	0 (0)	1 (0.6)

		Hardly ever	Some of the time	Most of the time
<b>54</b>	Does it seem that your family and friends (people who are important to you) understand you?	4 (2.5)	25 (15.5)	132 (82.0)
<b>55</b>	Do you feel useful to your family and friends people important to you)?	6 (3.8)	38 (23.9)	115 (72.3)
<b>56</b>	Do you know what is going on with your family and friends?	8 (5.1)	35 (22.3)	114 (72.6)
<b>57</b>	When you are talking with your family and friends, do you feel you are being listened to?	7 (4.3)	36 (22.4)	118 (73.3)
<b>58</b>	Do you feel you have a definite role (place) in your family and among your friends?	5 (3.2)	35 (22.4)	116 (74.4)
<b>59</b>	Can you talk about your deepest problems with at least some of your family and friends?	20 (12.6)	37 (23.3)	102 (64.2)

<b>62</b>	<b>Do you regularly NEED help with daily tasks because of long-term illness, disability or frailty (eg. personal care, getting around, preparing meals etc.)?</b>	<b>Yes</b> 22 (12.6)	<b>No</b> 152 (87.4)
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**67** **These questions are about getting on with other people:**  
(Mark all that apply to you)

		<b>Yes</b>
<b>a</b>	Are you sad or lonely often?	23 (14.0)
<b>b</b>	Do you feel uncomfortable with anyone in your family?	22 (13.4)
<b>c</b>	Can you take your own medication and get around by yourself?	139 (84.8)
<b>d</b>	Do you feel that nobody wants you around?	8 (4.9)
<b>e</b>	Does someone in your family make you stay in bed or tell you you're sick when you know you're not?	0 (0)
<b>f</b>	Has anyone forced you to do things you didn't want to do?	2 (1.2)
<b>g</b>	Has anyone taken things that belong to you without your OK?	6 (3.7)
<b>h</b>	Do you trust most of the people in your family?	145 (88.4)
<b>i</b>	Do you have enough privacy at home?	146 (89.0)
<b>j</b>	Has anyone close to you tried to hurt you or harm you recently?	3 (1.8)
<b>k</b>	Has anyone close to you called you names or put you down or made you feel bad recently?	7 (4.3)
<b>l</b>	Are you afraid of anyone in your family?	1 (0.6)
<b>m</b>	None of the above	5 (3.0)

**68 Which of the following groups have you sought advice or help from in the LAST SIX MONTHS?**

*(Mark all that apply to you)*

		<b>Yes</b>
<b>a</b>	Food services (eg. Meals on Wheels)	7 (4.5)
<b>b</b>	Nurses (community or district), Community health services eg. rehabilitative services, providing equipment, etc.) or Respite services (in home, day centre, or inpatient)	14 (9.0)
<b>c</b>	Homemaking services (eg. home care service, heavy laundry service)	19 (12.3)
<b>d</b>	Home maintenance services (eg. odd jobs, gardening)	47 (30.3)
<b>e</b>	Counselling services	0 (0)
<b>f</b>	Ambulance service	6 (3.9)
<b>g</b>	Social groups (eg. CWA, Senior Citizen's Centre, friendship groups, craft or exercise groups, church groups)	24 (15.5)
<b>h</b>	Support and advisory groups (eg. Arthritis Foundation, Pensioner Advisory service, Older Women's Network)	6 (3.9)
<b>i</b>	None of these groups	80 (51.6)

**69 Do you regularly provide (unpaid) care for grandchildren or other people's children?**

*(Mark one only)*

Yes, daily	7 (4.5)
Yes, weekly	8 (5.1)
Yes, occasionally	69 (43.9)
No, never	73 (46.5)

**70 Do you regularly PROVIDE care or assistance (eg. personal care, transport) to any other person because of their long-term illness, disability or frailty?**

*(Mark all that apply to you)*

<b>a</b>	Yes, for someone who lives with me	12 (7.3)
<b>b</b>	Yes, for someone who lives elsewhere	16 (9.8)
<b>c</b>	No, I do not provide care	136 (82.9)

**77 Please indicate how much you agree with each statement.**

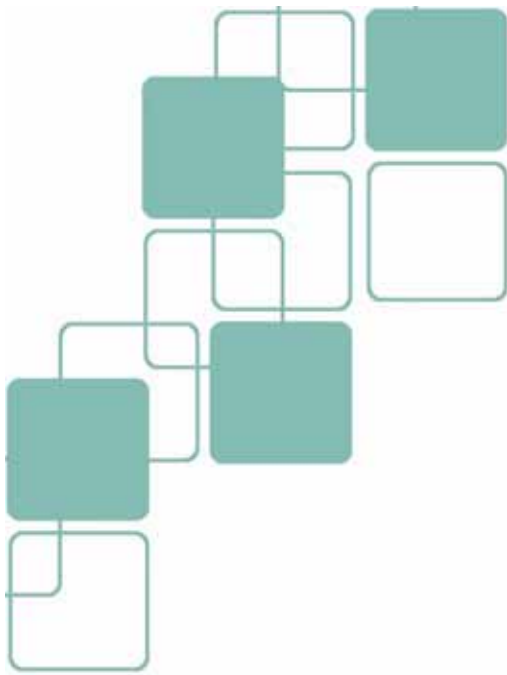
*(Mark one on each line)*

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>c</b>	I am in control of my health	3 (1.8)	12 (7.4)	7 (4.3)	42 (25.8)	82 (50.3)	17 (10.4)
<b>n</b>	I have little influence over my health	11 (7.2)	43 (28.1)	19 (12.4)	24 (15.7)	47 (30.7)	9 (5.9)
<b>o</b>	I feel I am independent enough to do the things I want to do	2 (1.3)	5 (3.1)	7 (4.4)	12 (7.5)	94 (58.8)	40 (25.0)

**78 Please indicate how often each of these statements apply to you:**

*(Mark one on each line)*

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Some times</b>	<b>Often</b>
<b>a</b>	I can usually depend on others	2 (1.3)	9 (5.6)	51 (31.9)	98 (61.3)
<b>c</b>	Sometimes I wonder who I really am	105 (70.0)	21 (14.0)	18 (12.0)	6 (4.0)
<b>j</b>	I am quite self-sufficient	2 (1.3)	1 (0.6)	37 (23.1)	120 (75.0)
<b>l</b>	I often feel lonely even when there are others around me	56 (35.7)	41 (26.1)	47 (29.9)	13 (8.3)



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