

Health Status of Tasmanians 60 Years and Over

Results from the 2009 Tasmanian Population Health Survey

Introduction

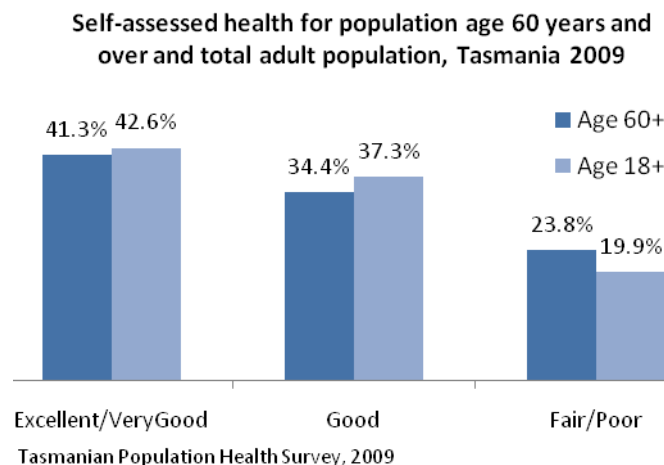
The 2009 Tasmanian Population Health Survey (TPHS) was conducted as a telephone survey of 6,300 Tasmanian adults aged 18 years and over during November-December 2009. The survey was carried out as an extension of the annual Victorian Population Health Survey.

This document brings together survey results on the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians aged 60 years and over, including chronic disease and associated risk factor prevalence, the use of health screening, as well as aspects of social integration and economic security. Additional detailed health data tables are included in the [Appendix](#). For further information about the TPHS and related publications please go to <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/pophealth/epidemiology>

Self-Assessed Physical and Mental Health

Self-assessed health measures a person's perception of their health, and captures physical health problems such as acute or chronic conditions. Self-assessed health status declines with advancing age and is adversely affected by lower socio-economic status.

Tasmanians 60 years and over generally reported very good health, with two thirds reporting either excellent, very good or good health (75.7%) and less than a quarter reporting fair or poor health (23.8%). Health perceptions of those over 60 years were similar to Tasmania's total adult population, except for fair and poor health, which was statistically significantly higher.



Psychological distress is an indicator of mental health and was measured with the Kessler 10. In the analysis of the results, various cut off scores define the level of psychological distress, which range from no distress to low level distress to high and very high levels of distress.

High and very high level of psychological distress were reported by 9.0% of older Tasmanians compared to 10.6% of all adult Tasmanians.

Psychological distress, population aged 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

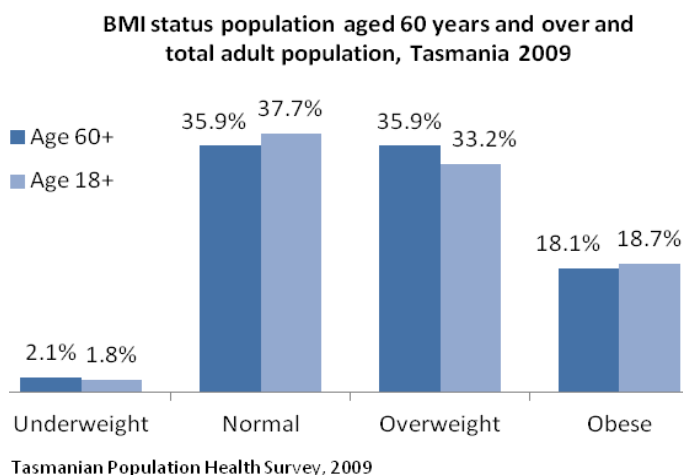
	≥60 years	18+
No distress/low level	91.0%	89.4%
High distress/very high	9.0%	10.6%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2009

Risk Factors

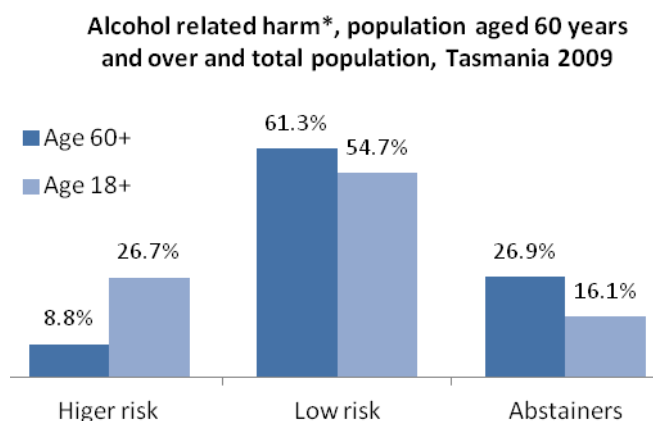
Health risk factors are behavioural characteristics that are associated with an increased risk of developing a chronic condition. The major behavioural risk factors included here are Body Mass Index (BMI), alcohol consumption causing short term harm, and smoking.

Body mass index values, based on self-reported height and weight, show no significant differences between those aged 60 years and over and 18 years and over. Overweight and obesity combined were 54% for Tasmanian's older population, compared to 51.9% for the total adult population.



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

According to the 2009 Alcohol Guidelines, consuming more than four standard alcoholic drinks on a single occasion increases the risk of short term harm. Falls and other accidents as well as the risks of adverse interaction with medications are of particular concern for older people, who are more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol and may have complex medication needs.



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009; harm caused by consuming 5 or more standard drinks on any single occasion

There is a statistically significantly lower rate of daily smokers among Tasmania’s population aged 60 years and over at 8.5% compared to the rate of daily smokers in the general adult population (16.1%)

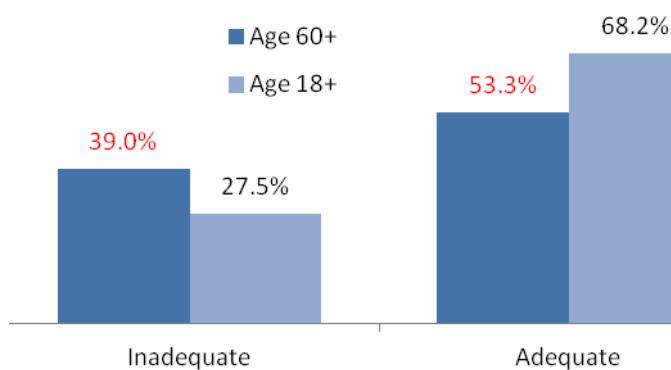
Daily smokers, population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

	≥60 years	18+
Daily smoking	8.5%	16.1%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Compared to the total population, people aged 60 years and over engage in less physical activity, with 39% engaged in inadequate physical activity compared to 27.5% of the population aged 18 years and over. This difference is statistically significant.

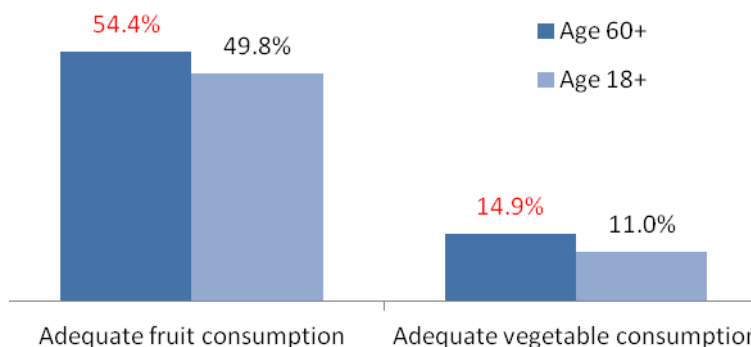
Level of physical activity, population aged 60 years and over and total population, Tasmania 2009



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

The NHMRC recommends a minimum daily intake of five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit. The graph below shows that older people were more likely to report adequate fruit and vegetable consumption, with 54.4% and 14.9% reporting adequate fruit and vegetable consumption respectively compared to 49.8% and 11% for Tasmanians aged 18 years and over. These differences were statistically significant.

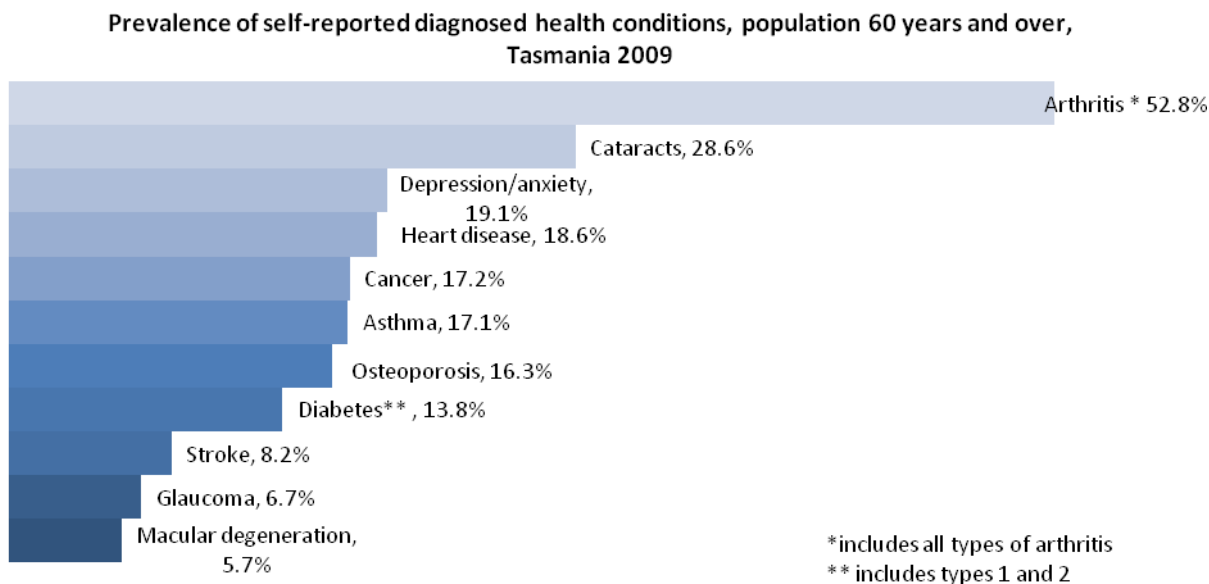
Adequate consumption of fruit and vegetables, population 60 years and over and total population, Tasmania 2009



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

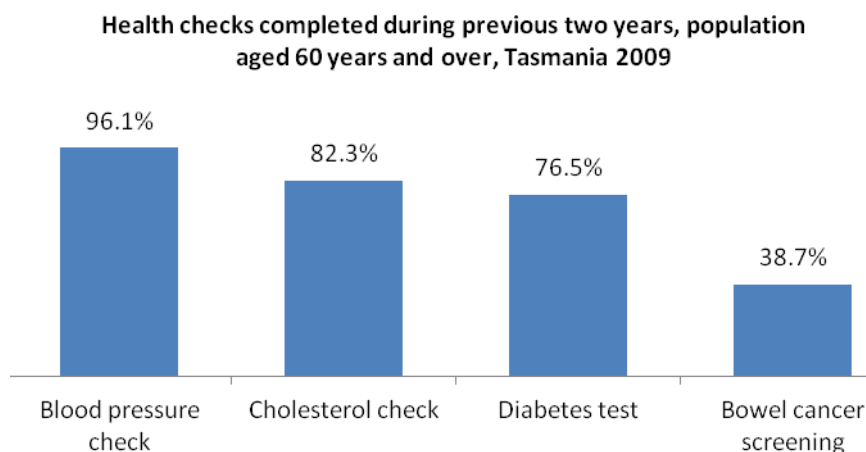
Health Conditions and Health Screening

Arthritis (52.8%) was the most frequently reported diagnosed health condition by Tasmanians aged 60 years and over, followed by cataracts (28.6%) and depression/anxiety (19.1%). Asthma was reported by 17.1% and 13.8% reported to have been diagnosed with diabetes.



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Almost all Tasmanians aged 60 and over had their blood pressure checked (96.1%) during the preceding two years, but only 76.5% reported a diabetes test (76.5%), and more than a third of older Tasmanians reported bowel cancer screening.



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Social Integration, Participation and Economic Security

The majority of Tasmanians aged 60 and over can rely on assistance from friends, family and neighbours when needed, with friends reported as the most reliable assistance.

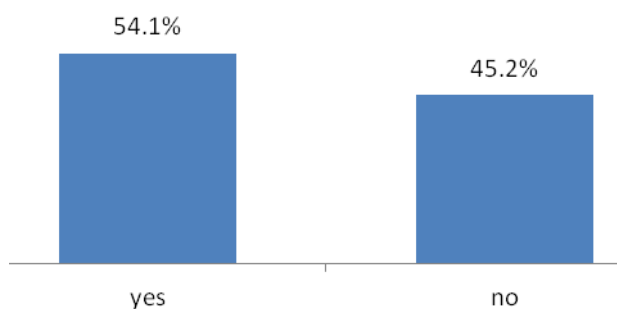
Sources of help when needed, population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

	Response			
	no, not at all	not often	sometimes	yes, definitely
Help from friends when needed	4.1%	2.4%	12.3%	80.4%
Help from family when needed	7.8%	3.0%	9.6%	78.8%
Help from neighbours when needed	12.1%	4.2%	14.5%	67.0%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

More than half (54.1%) of all Tasmanians aged 60 years and over reported to have participated in a community event during the last six months.

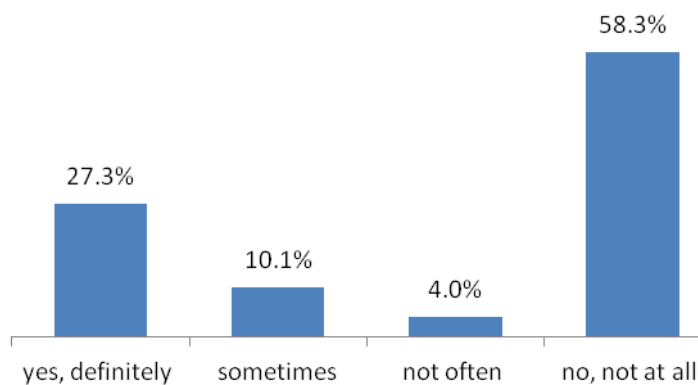
Community event participation, population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Volunteering is a great way for people, regardless of their age, cultural background, location or circumstances, to get involved in the community. A total of 41.4% of older Tasmanians participate in volunteer work at least occasionally.

Participation in volunteer work, population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

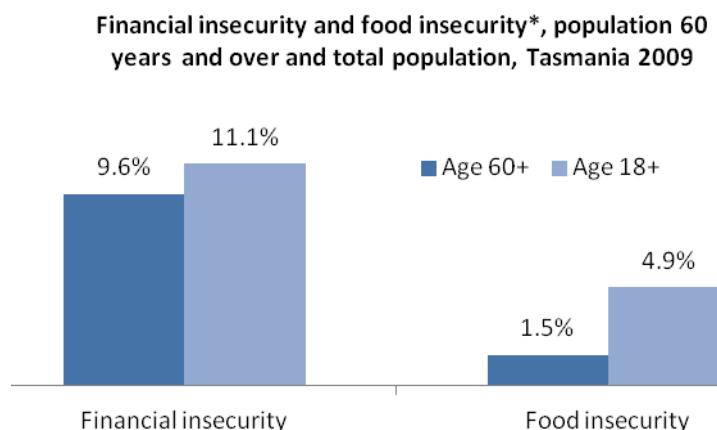
Access to community services did not appear to be a problem for the majority of older Tasmanians, but there was some uncertainty regarding feeling valued by society.

Community integration, population aged 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

	Response			
	no, not at all	not often	sometimes	yes, definitely
Access to community services	4.3%	1.6%	7.6%	83.5%
Feel valued by society	9.8%	5.4%	26.2%	52.0%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Almost one in ten Tasmanians aged 60 years and over reported to be unable to raise \$2000 in an emergency, which is a key measure for financial insecurity. Running out of food was less prevalent, with 1.5% of older Tasmanians unable to purchase more food after running out of food during the preceding year. For those reporting food insecurity, this situation occurred less than once a month (69.9%).



Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

*financial insecurity: unable to raise \$2000 in an emergency; food insecurity: ran out of food during the preceding 12 months and had no money to buy more

Of all Tasmanians aged between 60 and 70 years, more than half are retired (58.1%) and just under one-third (29%) are employed or self-employed. A further 5.7% are unable to work (e.g. core disability), and 4% report home duties (e.g. caring/domestic responsibilities).

Employment status, population age 60-70 years, Tasmania 2009

Employment status	%
Retired	58.1%
Employed or self-employed	29.0%
Unable to work	5.7%
Home duties	4.0%
Other	3.2%
Total	100.0%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Health plays an important part in retirement decisions, and older Tasmanians with several chronic conditions appear less inclined to stay in the workforce. Of all employed and self-employed Tasmanians aged 60-70 years, the majority (82.2%) have two or less chronic conditions with only 17.8% reporting three or more chronic conditions. Of those who had retired, almost twice as many Tasmanians in this age group reported three or more conditions.

Employment status by number of chronic conditions, population aged 60-70 years, Tasmania 2009

	2 or less conditions	3 or more conditions	
Employed or self employed	82.2%	17.8%	100.0%
Retired	67.1%	32.9%	100.0%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Statistical methods and interpretation

The Tasmanian Population Health Survey was undertaken using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) and used the 'list assisted' form of Random Digit Dialling (RDD) as the sample frame. The target population was defined as all non-institutionalised Tasmanian residents aged 18 years and over with access to a landline telephone.

The Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network approved the survey method and questionnaire content. The survey process was managed by the Menzies Research Institute on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services. The fieldwork data collection was outsourced to the Social Research Centre in Victoria.

The survey sample included a total of 6,300 respondents stratified into sub-samples of 2,100 in each of the three regions; North, North West and South. This sample allocation allowed for an oversampling of the North West region to obtain higher data reliability.

Interviewing was conducted between 5 November and 15 December 2009. No interviewing was undertaken in languages other than English. The average interview length was 20.7 minutes, and approximately 67% of all interviews were achieved within three call attempts.

Percentages and the corresponding confidence intervals in this document are weighted to the Tasmanian population, based on the stratified sampling design of the survey.

Trends and patterns in the data that are discussed are not necessarily statistically significant trends or patterns. Confidence intervals (CI) are provided to assist the reader in interpreting statistically significant results. Significant differences between estimates are deemed to exist where confidence intervals do not overlap.

In interpreting these data it should be noted that the survey may not be fully representative of the Tasmanian population as Tasmanians without access to a landline telephone, such as sole mobile phone users, were not included in the survey.

Appendix

Was tested for diabetes during previous two years, population age 60 years and over by gender, Tasmania 2009

Gender	%
Males	*79.6%
Females	73.7%
Total	76.5%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

***statistically significantly higher than females**

Prevalence of diagnosed depression/anxiety, population 60 years and over by gender, Tasmania 2009

Gender	%
Males	15.2%
Females	*22.5%
Total	19.1%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

***statistically significantly higher than males**

Prevalence of arthritis and/or osteoporosis, population 60 years and over by gender, Tasmania 2009

Gender	%
Males	44.6%
Females	*66.3%
Total	56.1%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

***statistically significantly higher than males**

Proportion of persons who are overweight or obese of those who have or do not have arthritis, population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

	overweight/obese
with arthritis	55.8%
without arthritis	51.8%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Self-assessed health for persons with arthritis and total population 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

	60+ with arthritis	total 60+
excellent/very good	33.5%	41.3%
good	36.4%	34.4%
fair/poor	29.6%	23.8%

Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

***statistically significantly different from total 60+**

Prevalence of chronic conditions which increase the risk of falls, 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

Condition	%
Hypertension*	54.1%
Arthritis	52.8%
Osteoporosis	16.3%
Eye problems**	31.9%

*if on medication

** eye problems include cataract, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease/retinopathy or macular degeneration

Source: TPHS 2009

Proportion of persons aged 60+ with eye problems who have osteoporosis, Tasmania, 2009

	Eye problem	
	No	Yes
osteoporosis		
No	59.0%	24.7%
Yes	9.1%	7.2%

Source: TPHS 2009

Prevalence of at least one chronic condition*which may increase the risk of falls, 60 years and over, Tasmania 2009

No	17.9%
Yes (see conditions below)	82.1%
Total	100.0%

*hypertension or arthritis or osteoporosis or eye problems such as cataract, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease/retinopathy or macular degeneration

Source: TPHS 2009