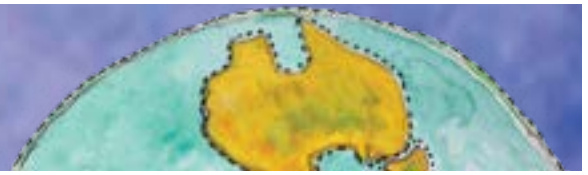


7.3 How healthy are Indigenous Australians?

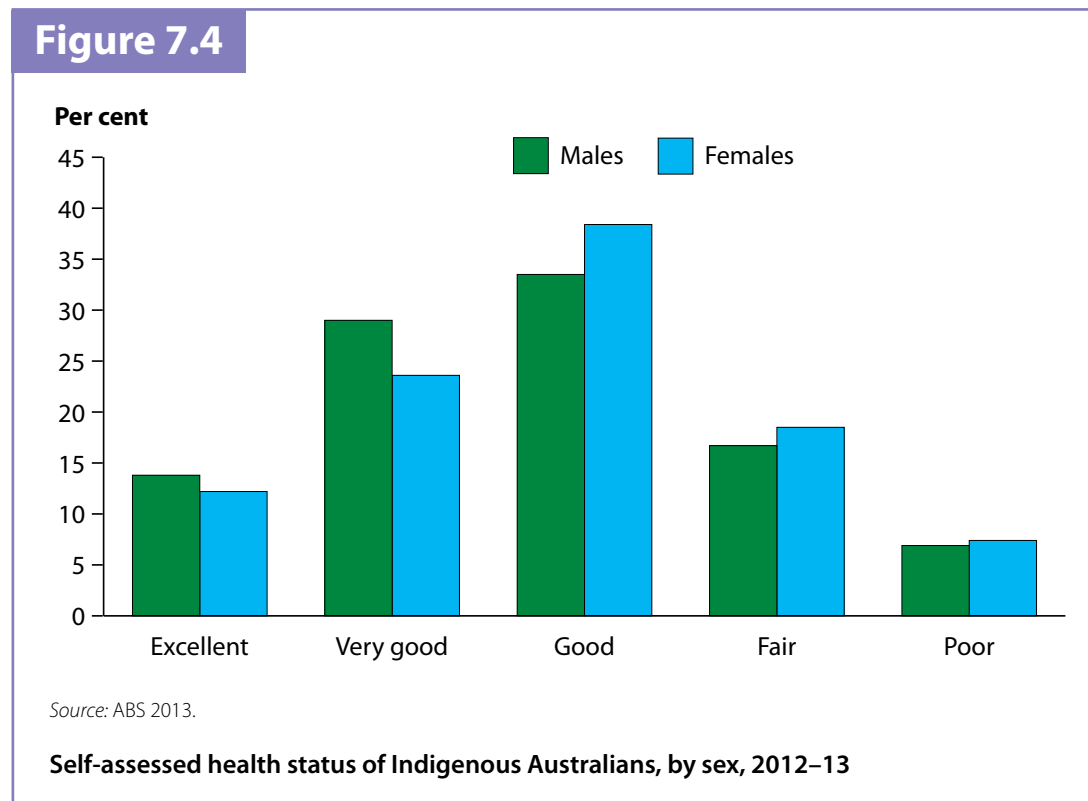


Indigenous Australians have poorer health than other Australians. They are more likely to die at younger ages, experience disability and report their health as fair or poor. The reasons for the differences are explored throughout this chapter and include disparities in social and economic factors, in health behaviours and in access to health services (see Chapter 7 'Social determinants of Indigenous health' and Chapter 7 'The size and causes of the Indigenous health gap').

Self-assessed health

- About 2 in 5 Indigenous Australians aged over 15 (39%) rated their health as excellent or very good, 36% as good and 25% as fair or poor in 2012–13 (Figure 7.4).
- Indigenous Australians were at least twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to rate their health as fair or poor, and almost half as likely to rate their health as excellent or very good.
- Compared with 2004–05, Indigenous Australians were 10% less likely to rate their health as excellent or very good in 2012–13 and 13% more likely to rate their health as fair or poor (ABS 2013).

Figure 7.4

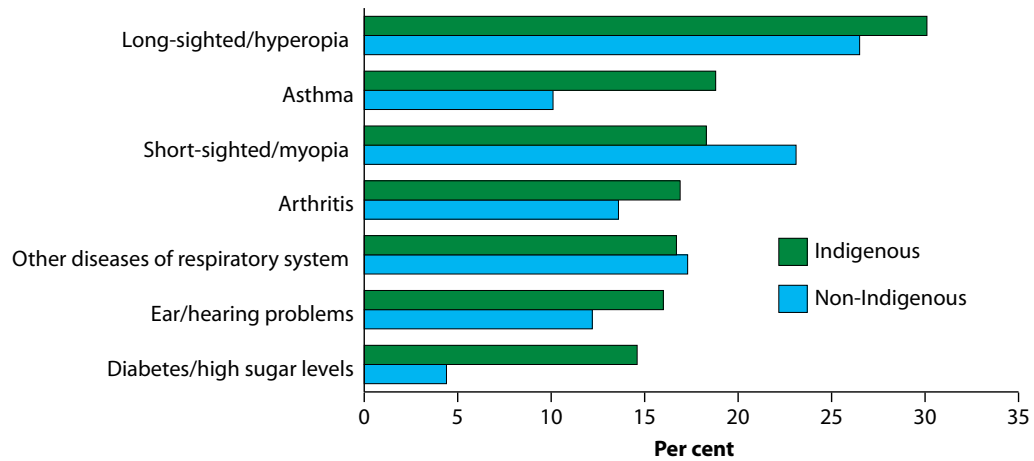




Long-term health conditions

- About 2 in 3 Indigenous Australians (67%) reported that they had at least 1 long-term condition in 2012–13. After adjusting for differences in the age structure of the populations, the rate was similar to that for non-Indigenous Australians in 2011–12.
- One-third (33%) of Indigenous Australians reported having 3 or more long-term conditions.
- The most commonly reported long-term conditions among Indigenous Australians were vision problems, respiratory diseases (including asthma), back pain and arthritis, ear and hearing problems, circulatory disease and diabetes. Indigenous Australians were nearly twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to report having asthma and 3.3 times as likely to report having diabetes (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5



Source: ABS 2013.

Most common long-term conditions reported by Indigenous Australians, 2012–13, and corresponding proportion among non-Indigenous Australians, 2011–12

Disability

- About 6% of Indigenous Australians reported needing assistance with daily activities in the 2011 Census.
- After adjusting for differences in age structure and response rates, Indigenous Australians aged under 65 were more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to require assistance with daily activities.
- The difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians was most pronounced in the 40–59 age group, with Indigenous people almost 3 times as likely to require assistance with daily activities as non-Indigenous people of that age.

What is missing from the picture?

The latest published information on the burden of disease experienced by Indigenous Australians is based on data from 2003. The AIHW is working on a study that uses 2011 data to measure the burden of disease experienced by the Indigenous and total Australian populations. This study will provide updated information on the impact of diseases and injuries on Indigenous Australians, and is expected to be released in early 2016.

Where do I go for more information?

More information on the health status of Indigenous Australians is available at www.aihw.gov.au/indigenous-australians. Recent AIHW reports and publications available for free download include [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2012: detailed analyses](#) and [Australia's welfare 2013](#).

Reference

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2013. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: first results, Australia, 2012–13. ABS cat. no. 4727.0.55.001. Canberra: ABS.