

1.15 Perceived health status

Self-reported, self-assessed health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Data sources

Data for this indicator come from the 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey and the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

The 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) collected information from 10,439 Indigenous Australians of all ages. This sample was considerably larger than the supplementary Indigenous samples in the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys. The survey was conducted in remote and non-remote areas of Australia and collected a range of information from Indigenous Australians. This included information on health-related actions, health risk factors, health status, socioeconomic circumstances and women's health. The survey provides comparisons over time in the health of Indigenous Australians. It is planned to repeat the NATSIHS at 6-yearly intervals, with the next NATSIHS to be conducted in 2010–11. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2004–05 National Health Survey (NHS).

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) between August 2002 and April 2003. The 2008 NATSISS was conducted between August 2008 and April 2009. The survey provides information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations of Australia for a wide range of areas of social concern including health, education, culture and labour force participation. The 2008 NATSISS included for the first time children aged under 15 years. The NATSISS will be conducted every six years, with the next survey planned for 2013.

The 2008 NATSISS collected information by personal interview from 13,300 Indigenous Australians across all states and territories of Australia, including those living in remote areas. The sample covered persons aged 15 years and over who are usual residents in selected private dwellings. It collected information on a wide range of subjects including family and culture, health, education, employment, income, financial stress, housing, and law and justice.

Analyses

Age-standardised rates and ratios have been used for this indicator as an indicator of morbidity in the Indigenous population relative to other Australians. Ratios of this type illustrate differences between the rates of morbidity among Indigenous people and those of other Australians, taking into account differences in age distributions.

Self-assessed health status

- In 2008, around 57% of the Indigenous population across all age groups reported their health as very good or excellent, 28% reported their health as good and 15% reported their health as fair or poor (Table 1.15.1).
- After adjusting for differences in age structure between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, Indigenous Australians were almost twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to report their health as fair or poor (Table 1.15.2).

Self-assessed health status by age and sex

- The proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15–24 years reporting fair or poor health was 10% compared with 47% of those aged 55 years and over (Table 1.15.1).
- Indigenous females and males reported similar levels of fair or poor health; however Indigenous males were more likely than Indigenous females to report excellent or very good health (40% compared with 36%) (Table 1.15.3).

Table 1.15.1: Indigenous self-assessed health status by age group, 2008

	0–14 ^(a)	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55 and over	Total non-age-standardised
	Per cent						
Self-assessed health status							
Excellent	46.4	25.2	16.4	12.7	10.6	5.7	27.4
Very good	32.2	32.8	33.4	26.1	19.0	16.4	29.3
<i>Subtotal excellent/very good</i>	<i>78.7</i>	<i>58.0</i>	<i>49.8</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>29.6</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>56.7</i>
Good	17.6	32.2	35.1	37.6	34.2	31.3	27.9
Fair	2.9	7.6	10.7	18.0	22.6	26.5	10.5
Poor	0.8	2.1	4.4	5.7	13.6	20.2	4.9
<i>Subtotal fair/poor</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>9.8</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>23.7</i>	<i>36.2</i>	<i>46.7</i>	<i>15.4</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total persons	193,249	103,780	69,931	63,851	46,912	42,627	520,350

(a) Self-assessed health status reported by parent/carer.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS.

Table 1.15.2: Self-assessed health status, by Indigenous status and age group, 2008

	15–24		25–34		35–44		45–54		55 and over		Total age-standardised		Rate ratio
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
	Per cent												
Excellent	25.2	26.9	16.4	24.8	12.7	22.7	10.6	19.2	5.7	13.7	13.2	20.7	0.6*
Very good	32.8	40.8	33.4	39.4	26.1	38.5	19.0	36.3	16.4	28.3	24.7	35.9	0.7*
<i>Subtotal excellent/very good</i>	<i>58.0</i>	<i>67.7</i>	<i>49.8</i>	<i>64.2</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>61.2</i>	<i>29.6</i>	<i>55.6</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>37.9</i>	<i>56.6</i>	<i>0.7*</i>
Good	32.2	25.8	35.1	28.1	37.6	28.3	34.2	28.8	31.3	31.7	33.9	28.8	1.2*
Fair	7.6	5.3	10.7	6.6	18.0	7.8	22.6	11.5	26.5	18.0	18.0	10.6	1.7*
Poor	2.1	1.2	4.4	1.1	5.7	2.7	13.6	4.2	20.2	8.2	10.2	3.9	2.6*
<i>Subtotal fair/poor</i>	<i>9.8</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>7.7</i>	<i>23.7</i>	<i>10.5</i>	<i>36.2</i>	<i>15.7</i>	<i>46.7</i>	<i>26.2</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>14.5</i>	<i>1.9*</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total persons	103,780	2,783,949	69,931	2,819,126	63,851	2,987,518	46,912	2,864,016	42,627	4,919,592	327,101	16,374,202	..

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS.

Table 1.15.3: Self-assessed health status, persons aged 15 years and over, by sex and Indigenous status, 2008

Self-assessed health status	Non-age-standardised				Age-standardised					
	Males		Females		Males		Females		Ratio	Ratio
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		
Per cent				Per cent		Per cent				
Excellent	17.9	19.7	14.7	21.2	14.0	19.9	0.7*	12.4	21.6	0.6*
Very good	28.6	35.3	26.5	35.9	25.7	35.6	0.7*	23.8	36.2	0.7*
<i>Subtotal excellent/very good</i>	<i>46.5</i>	<i>55.1</i>	<i>41.2</i>	<i>57.1</i>	<i>39.7</i>	<i>55.4</i>	<i>0.7*</i>	<i>36.3</i>	<i>57.7</i>	<i>0.6*</i>
Good	32.0	29.5	35.9	28.4	32.2	29.4	1.1	35.4	28.3	1.3*
Fair	13.8	11.4	15.9	10.4	16.7	11.2	1.5*	19.1	10.1	1.9*
Poor	7.7	4.1	7.0	4.1	11.4	4.0	2.9*	9.2	3.9	2.4*
<i>Subtotal fair/poor</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>15.5</i>	<i>22.9</i>	<i>14.5</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>15.2</i>	<i>1.9*</i>	<i>28.3</i>	<i>14.0</i>	<i>2.0*</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	156,052	8,079,875	171,049	8,294,327	..	..	..	..	..	..

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS.

Self-assessed health status by state/territory and remoteness

- Indigenous Australians were approximately twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to report fair or poor health across all states and territories (Table 1.15.4).
- A higher proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over in non-remote areas reported fair or poor health (30%) than Indigenous Australians in remote areas (24%) (Table 1.15.5). Indigenous Australians were around twice as likely to report their health as fair or poor as non-Indigenous Australians across all remoteness categories (Table 1.15.5).

Table 1.15.4: Self-assessed health status^(a), by Indigenous status and state and territory, persons aged 15 years and over, 2008

Self-assessed health status	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT		Australia	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig ^(b)	Indig.	Non-Indig ^(b)
	Per cent																	
Excellent	14.3*	21.5*	15.1*	22.8*	12.9*	16.5*	11.5*	21.3*	11.0*	20.9*	17.5*	22.4*	15.0	18.7	11.5	16.0 ^(c)	13.2*	20.7*
Very good	22.7*	34.9*	28.5*	37.8*	24.8*	35.5*	23.7*	36.6*	20.3*	33.2*	30.9	35.1	27.8*	37.4*	28.2*	48.3*	24.7*	35.9*
<i>Total excellent/very good</i>	37.1*	56.4*	43.6*	60.6*	37.7*	52.1*	35.3*	57.9*	31.3*	54.1*	48.4*	57.5*	42.7	56.1	39.8*	64.3*	37.9*	56.6*
Good	30.7	29.1	26.4	26.0	37.7*	32.0*	38.3*	29.7*	34.5	28.8	23.3	26.4	30.5	31.1	36.0*	21.7*	33.9*	28.8*
Fair	18.9*	11.1*	20.0*	9.4*	17.8*	11.7*	17.8*	8.4*	23.3*	12.1*	17.9*	11.7*	14.8	n.p.	13.6	n.p.	18.0*	10.6*
Poor	13.4*	3.4*	10.0*	4.0*	6.8	4.2	8.6*	4.0*	10.9*	4.9*	10.4*	4.4*	12.0 ^(c)	n.p.	10.6	n.p.	10.2*	3.9*
<i>Total fair/poor</i>	32.3*	14.6*	30.0*	13.4*	24.6*	15.9*	26.4*	12.4*	34.2*	17.1*	28.3*	16.1*	26.9*	12.9*	24.2	14.0 ^(c)	28.2*	14.5*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Data are age-standardised.

(b) Households in collection districts defined as *Very remote* were excluded from the National Health Survey 2007–08. This has only a minor impact on aggregate estimates for non-Indigenous data, except in the Northern Territory where such households account for approximately 22% of the population.

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

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS and 2007–08 NHS.

Table 1.15.5: Self-assessed health status^(a), by Indigenous status and remoteness, persons aged 15 years and over, 2008

Self-assessed health status		Excellent	Very good	Total excellent/ very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total fair/poor	Total
				Per cent					
Major cities	Indigenous.	14.4	22.8	37.2	31.4	18.4	13.0	31.4	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	21.5	35.6	57.1	28.9	10.2	3.7	13.9	100.0
	Rate ratio	0.7*	0.6*	0.7*	1.1	1.8*	3.5*	2.3*	..
Inner regional	Indigenous.	14.1	27.8	41.9	29.5	20.2	8.4	28.7	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	20.1	35.9	56.1	28.5	11.3	4.2	15.5	100.0
	Rate ratio	0.7*	0.8*	0.7*	1.0	1.8*	2.0*	1.9*	..
Outer regional	Indigenous.	11.1	23.4	34.5	36.4	18.5	10.6	29.1	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	16.1	37.2	53.3	30.2	11.9	4.6	16.6	100.0
	Rate ratio	0.7*	0.6*	0.6*	1.2*	1.6*	2.3*	1.8*	..
<i>Total non-remote</i>	Indigenous.	13.2	24.4	37.7	32.7	18.8	10.8	29.7	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	20.8	35.9	56.6	28.9	10.6	3.9	14.5	100.0
	Rate ratio	0.6*	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.8*	2.8*	2.0	..
Remote	Indigenous.	11.7	22.4	34.1	38.0	16.8	11.2	28.0	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	18.3	38.9	57.2	25.5	12.5	4.8	17.3	100.0
	Rate ratio	0.6	0.6*	0.6*	1.5*	1.3	2.3*	1.6*	..
Very remote	Indigenous.	13.7	27.3	41.0	37.2	15.0	6.8	21.8	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Rate ratio	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<i>Total remote</i>	Indigenous.	13.0	25.4	38.4	37.4	15.7	8.5	24.2	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Rate ratio	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

(continued)

Table 1.15.5 (continued): Self-assessed health status^(a), by Indigenous status and remoteness, persons aged 15 years and over, 2008

Self-assessed health status		Excellent	Very good	Total excellent/ very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total fair/poor	Total
		Per cent							
Australia	Indigenous.	13.2	24.7	37.9	33.9	18.0	10.2	28.2	100.0
	Non-Indigenous.	20.7	35.9	56.6	28.8	10.6	3.9	14.5	100.0
	<i>Rate ratio</i>	<i>0.6*</i>	<i>0.7*</i>	<i>0.7*</i>	<i>1.2*</i>	<i>1.7*</i>	<i>2.6*</i>	<i>1.9*</i>	<i>..</i>

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Data are age-standardised.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS and 2007–08 NHS.

Time series analysis

- There was an increase in Indigenous Australians reporting their health as fair or poor between 1994 (18%) and 2002 (23%) followed by a slight decrease in 2008 (22%) (Figure 1.15.1; Table 1.15.6).
- Indigenous Australians were more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to report their health as fair or poor for every survey time period (Table 1.15.7).

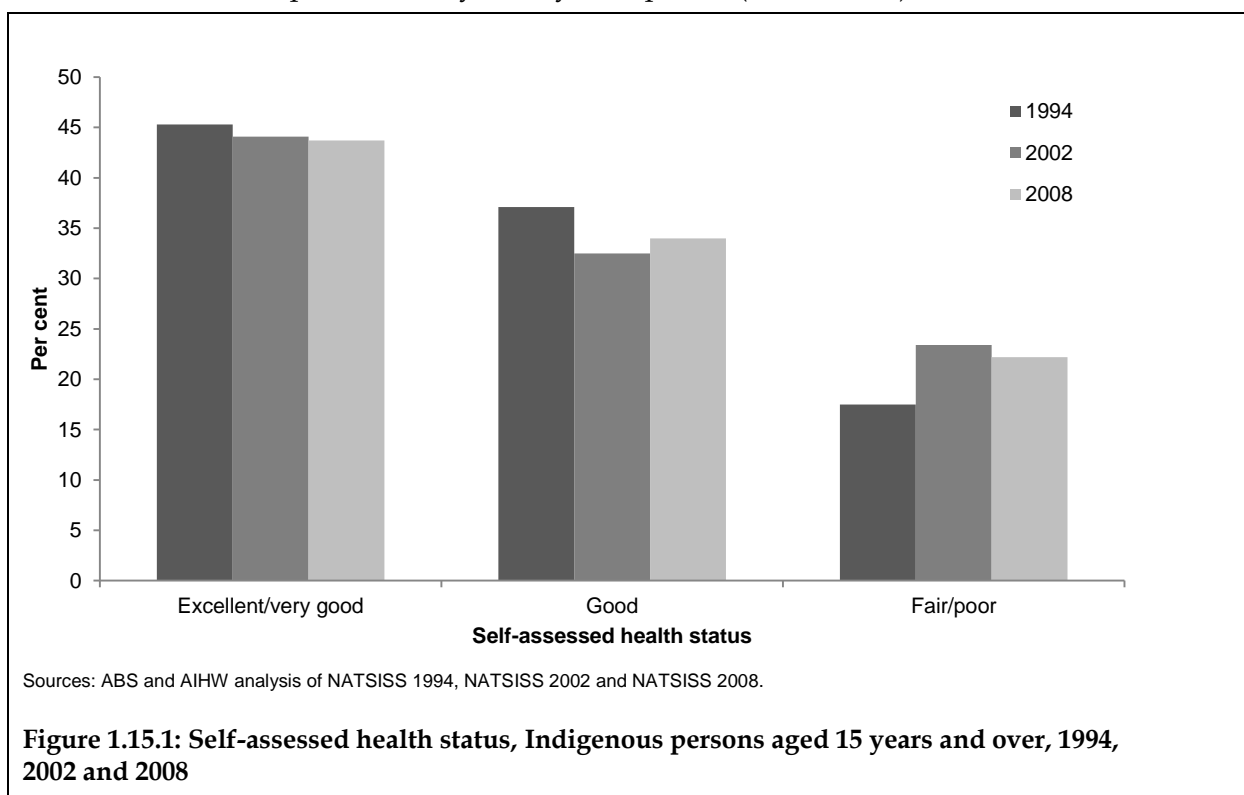


Table 1.15.6: Self-assessed health status, Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over, 1994, 2002 and 2008

	1994	2002	2008
Excellent/very good	45.3	44.1	43.7
Good	37.1	32.5	34.0
Fair/poor	17.5	23.4	22.2
Total^(a)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total persons^(a)	214,626	282,205	327,101

(a) Totals for 1994 and 2002 include health status not stated.

Sources: ABS and AIHW analysis of NATSISS 1994, NATSISS 2002 and NATSISS 2008.

Table 1.15.7: Self-assessed health status^(a), by Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, 2002, 2004–05 and 2008

	2001–2002 ^(b)		2004–05 ^(c)		2008 ^(d)	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	Per cent					
Excellent/very good	37.1*	51.7*	36*	56.8*	37.9*	56.6*
Good	31.6	30.3	34.8*	27.7*	33.9*	28.8*
Fair/poor	31.1*	18*	29.1*	15.5*	28.2*	14.5*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Data are age-standardised.

(b) Indigenous data from 2002 NATSISS; non-Indigenous data from 2001 NHS.

(c) Indigenous data from 2004–05 NATSIHS; non-Indigenous data from 2004-05 NHS.

(d) Indigenous data from 2008 NATSISS; non-Indigenous data from 2008 NHS.

Sources: ABS and AIHW analysis of NATSISS 2002 and 2008; NATSIHS 2004–05; NHS 2001, 2004–05 and 2007–08.

Self-assessed health status by population, health and social/cultural characteristics

Table 1.15.8 presents data on the association between the self-assessed health status of Indigenous Australians and a number of summary population characteristics.

- In 2008, Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over who reported their highest year of schooling was Year 9 or below were more likely to report their health as fair or poor (47%) than Indigenous Australians who had completed Year 12 (14%) as their highest year of schooling (Table 1.15.8).
- Indigenous Australians who have a non-school qualification were less likely (31%) than Indigenous Australians who do not have a non-school qualification (69%) to report fair or poor health.
- A higher proportion of Indigenous Australians who were employed reported their health as excellent or very good (61%) than Indigenous Australians who were unemployed (7%) or not in the labour force (32%).
- Indigenous Australians who were in the lowest (1st) quintile of household income and index of disparity were more likely to report their health as fair or poor (62% and 52%) than Indigenous Australians in the highest (5th) quintile for these characteristics (both 3%).

Table 1.15.8: Self-assessed health status, by selected population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, age-standardised rates, 2008

	Excellent/very good			Good			Fair/poor			Total		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio
	Per cent			Per cent			Per cent			Per cent		
Main language spoken at home												
English	85.4	90.6	0.9	86.2	88.7	1.0	89.6	89.1	1.0	86.6	89.3	1.0
Indigenous language	13.2	..	..	12.8	..	..	9.5	..	..	12.3	..	..
Other	1.5 ^(a)	..	..	1.0 ^(a)	..	..	0.9 ^(a)	..	..	1.2	..	..
Total other	14.6	9.4	1.5	13.8	11.3	1.2	10.5	10.9	1.0	13.4	10.7	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	143,004	9,185,375	..	111,368	4,737,396	..	72,729	2,451,431	..	327,101	16,374,202	..
Highest year of school completed^(b)												
Year 12	22.3	58.3	0.4	18.4	48.2	0.4	13.6	38.9	0.3	18.9	52.6	0.4
Year 11	12.2	10.0	1.2	11.6	10.4	1.1	10.7	9.6	1.1	11.2	9.8	1.1
Year 10	28.2	21.1	1.3	30.5	25.6	1.2	28.3	28.1	1.0	28.8	22.9	1.3
Year 9 or below ^(c)	37.3	10.6	3.5	39.5	15.8	2.5	47.4	23.3	2.0	41.1	14.7	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	124,961	8,666,839	..	103,333	4,589,253	..	71,395	2,423,332	..	299,689	15,679,425	..
Whether has non-school qualification												
Has a non-school qualification	38.8	56.6	0.7	32.3	51.8	0.6	31.1	43.7	0.7	33.5	53.0	0.6
Does not have a non-school qualification	61.2	43.4	1.4	67.7	48.2	1.4	68.9	56.3	1.2	66.5	47.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	143,004	9,185,375	..	111,368	4,737,396	..	72,729	2,451,431	..	327,101	16,374,202	..

(continued)

Table 1.15.8 (continued): Self-assessed health status, by selected population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, age-standardised rates, 2008

	Excellent/very good			Good			Fair/poor			Total		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio
	Per cent			Per cent			Per cent			Per cent		
Employment												
Employed	60.9	72.6	0.8	51.1	66.4	0.8	34.5	50.1	0.7	49.2	66.8	0.7
Unemployed	7.0	2.0	3.5	7.9	2.9	2.7	10.2	4.4	2.3	7.9	2.5	3.2
Not in the labour force	32.1	25.4	1.3	41.0	30.7	1.3	55.3	45.5	1.2	42.8	30.7	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	143,004	9,185,375	..	111,368	4,737,396	..	72,729	2,451,431	..	327,101	16,374,202	..
Household income^(d)												
1st quintile	44.0	11.1	4.0	50.6	15.0	3.4	61.7	27.9	2.2	51.6	15.4	3.4
5th quintile	6.1	25.1	0.2	4.8	18.6	0.3	2.5	14.1	0.2	4.6	21.3	0.2
Total excluding income not stated	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	114,934	7,758,877	..	87,853	4,034,621	..	58,325	2,128,393	..	261,112	13,921,890	..
Index of disparity^(e)												
1st quintile	49.8	13.7	3.6	51.2	17.1	3.0	51.6	27.1	1.9	50.9	16.7	3.0
5th quintile	4.3	26.0	0.2	3.3 ^(a)	20.0	0.2	3.1 ^(a)	13.8	0.2	3.8	22.4	0.2
Total excluding not stated	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..	100.0	100.0	..
Total persons	139,262	9,154,387	..	108,103	4,708,952	..	70,675	2,434,510	..	318,041	16,297,848	..

(continued)

Table 1.15.8 (continued): Self-assessed health status, by selected population characteristics and Indigenous status, persons aged 15 years and over, age-standardised rates, 2008

	Excellent/very good			Good			Fair/poor			Total		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Rate ratio
	Per cent			Per cent			Per cent			Per cent		
Location												
Remote	26.1	..	..	28.1	..	..	20.7	..	..	25.5	..	..
Non-remote	73.9	..	..	71.9	..	..	79.3	..	..	74.5	..	..
Total	100.0	..	..	100.0	..	..	100.0	..	..	100.0	..	..
Total persons	143,004	..	..	111,368	..	..	72,729	..	..	327,101	..	..

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

(b) Excludes those who are still attending secondary school.

(c) Includes persons who never attended school.

(d) Equivalised income of household.

(e) Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2008 NATSISS and 2007–08 NHS.

Additional information

Data on the association between self-assessed health status and other health and social/cultural characteristics are presented in a number of other health performance indicators included in this framework. These data come from the 2004–05 NATSIHS and the 2008 NATSISS and are summarised below.

- In 2008, approximately 40% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over who reported their health as fair/poor had been formally charged by the police compared with 30% of Indigenous Australians who reported their health as excellent or very good (Indicator 2.14).
- In 2004–05, the proportion of Indigenous Australians who reported that they usually went to the same GP or medical service was similar for those with reported excellent/very good/good health and those with fair/poor health (89% and 90% respectively) (Indicator 3.15).
- In 2008, approximately 19% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over who reported they did not recognise or live on their homeland/traditional country reported their health as fair/poor compared with 20% of Indigenous Australians who reported they recognised and lived on their homeland (Indicator 2.17).
- In 2004–05, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians who reported fair/poor health accessed health care in the last 12 months than Indigenous Australians who reported excellent/very good or good health (64% compared with 44%) (Indicator 3.12).
- In 2004–05, the proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years who drank at short-term or long-term risky/high-risk levels and reported their health as fair/poor was similar to the proportion of Indigenous Australians in the total population who reported their health as fair/poor (25% for both groups) (Indicator 2.20).
- Approximately 58% of Indigenous Australians in non-remote areas with fair/poor health status reported exercising at sedentary levels compared with 48% of Indigenous Australians with excellent/very good/good health status in 2004–05 (Indicator 2.22).
- In 2008, approximately 58% of Indigenous Australians aged 15–64 years with reported excellent/very good/good health were employed in the labour force compared with 45% of Indigenous Australians with reported fair/poor health (Indicator 2.07).
- A higher proportion of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians aged 18 years who could not get to places when needed reported fair/poor health status (38% and 55%) than Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who could easily get to places when needed (26% and 12%) (Indicator 2.16).

Data quality issues

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)

The NATSIHS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSIHS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It therefore overcomes the problem inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSIHS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to identify the accuracy of the estimates and differences.

Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions may nevertheless affect some responses.

Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the National Health Survey (NHS). The NHS was conducted in *Major cities, Inner and Outer regional* areas and *Remote and Very remote* areas, but *Very remote* areas were excluded from the sample. Time series comparisons are available through the 1995 and 2001 NHS.

In *Remote* and *Very remote* communities there were some modifications to the NATSIHS content in order to accommodate language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities and help respondents understand the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built-in edit checks and sequencing.

Further information on NATSIHS data quality issues can be found in the NATSIHS 2004-05 publication (ABS 2006).

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The NATSISS is conducted in all states and territories and includes remote and non-remote areas. The 2008 sample was 13,300 persons in 6,900 households, with a response rate of 82% of households. Up to three randomly selected Indigenous people were chosen from selected households to participate in the survey. Trained ABS interviewers conducted the survey using face-to-face interviews. In non-remote areas interviewers used a notebook computer to record responses, while in remote areas a paper questionnaire was used. Interviewers obtained the consent of a parent or guardian before interviewing those aged 15 to 17 years. Indigenous persons usually resident in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals, short-stay caravan parks, prisons and other correctional facilities were excluded.

The NATSISS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSISS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

As with other surveys, the NATSISS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Care has been taken to ensure that the results of this survey are as accurate as possible. Trained ABS officers conducted all interviews. However, some factors may affect the reliability of the data.

Information recorded in this survey is 'as reported' by respondents, and therefore may differ from information available from other sources or collected using different methodologies.

Data on health-related indicators have been age-standardised to the 2001 total Australian population to account for differences in the age structures of the states and territories and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Time series comparisons for the 2008 survey are available through the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the 2002 NATSISS. However not all data elements align across the three (1994, 2002 and 2008) NATSISS surveys, hence care is required when reviewing results across the three surveys. There are no strictly comparable non-Indigenous results available for the 2008 NATSISS because the latest General Social Survey (which has been used in the past to compare with Indigenous results from the NATSISS) was run in 2006, with the next being run in 2010–11. Data from other ABS surveys run in 2008 may, however, be used to obtain rough non-Indigenous comparisons for some data items. Where possible, the ABS has provided recommendations for non-Indigenous data comparisons and these have been adopted in this report.

The 2008 NATSISS has a relatively large level of under-coverage when compared to other ABS surveys. There was also an increase in under-coverage compared to previous ABS Indigenous surveys. For example, the estimated under-coverage in the 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) was 42%. The overall under-coverage rate for the 2008 NATSISS is approximately 53% of the in-scope population at the national level. This rate varies across the states and territories (ABS 2010).

Further information on NATSISS data quality issues can be found in the 2008 *NATSISS: User's guide* (ABS 2010).

List of symbols used in tables

- n.a. not available
- rounded to zero (including null cells)
- 0 zero
- .. not applicable
- n.e.c. not elsewhere classified
- n.f.d. not further defined
- n.p. not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2006. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004–05. ABS Cat. no. 4715.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2010. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey: Users' guide. ABS Cat. no. 4720.0. Canberra: ABS.

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