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## LSAY BRIEFING REPORTS

# Hoops, hurdles and high jumps : physical activity and bodyweight among 17 year-olds.

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#### Comments

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#### Abstract

The prevalence of children and adolescents who are overweight has recently increased in importance as a public health issue in Australia. The past two decades have seen a rapid rise in the number of children who are overweight or obese, with no sign that this trajectory will plateau. Children and adolescents who are overweight are more likely to be overweight as adults and thus to be at increased risk of future health problems. This increase in the proportion of overweight children has been attributed to dietary changes, a lack of physical activity, increased sedentary lifestyle, increased television viewing and the use of computers. In addition, with increased access to the Internet and mobile phones, children and adolescents need not even leave the home to maintain contact with their friends. In response to these issues, the Australian Government has recently developed Physical Activity Recommendations for Children and Young People. These state that children and young people should participate in at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity every day, and children and young people should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media for entertainment, particularly during daylight hours. This briefing uses data from a sample of 17 year-olds in 2005 to report on their participation levels in sport and exercise, their health, their body mass index (BMI) and associations between these and other characteristics. The sample was part of the 2003 cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), which comprised 10370 15 year-olds. In 2005, cohort members responded to questions about their height and weight, physical activity and general health as part of the annual interviews. This briefing is based on responses from 7 664 cohort members. Seven per cent of male and 16 per cent of female cohort members did not respond to questions about height and weight. [Author abstract]

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