

Safety

Indicator overview

VicHealth Indicators Survey

VicHealth Indicators are used to measure community wellbeing with a focus on social determinants of health.

Survey topic areas include: wellbeing, healthy eating and sedentary behaviour, use of green space and safety, smoking policy, alcohol, using of social networking, participation in arts activities and the community, social attitudes, and work, life and time.

Introduction

Feelings of neighbourhood safety and security are important determinants of the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities (Baum et al. 2009). When individuals feel safe within their community, they are more likely to experience greater levels of social connection and trust, and are more likely to become engaged with other members of the community (Baum et al. 2009).

Health consequences

Perceptions of neighbourhood safety are linked with health outcomes (Macintyre and Ellaway 2000, Baum et al. 2009). When individuals perceive their neighbourhood as unsafe, they are less likely to engage with outdoor activities and exercise, and are more likely to experience increased anxiety (Middleton 1998), poor health outcomes (Macintyre and Ellaway 2000) and poor self-rated health (Chandola 2001).

Individuals' sense of neighbourhood safety is associated with their participation in and interaction with their communities (Sampson 2003). For example, individuals who feel safe in their community are more likely to engage in sport and physical recreation (ABS 2011).

Perceptions of safety are also tied to children's independent mobility. Parental fear, associated with traffic and stranger danger, is likely to play a large role in limiting children's ability to move freely in their communities (Zubrick 2010). This means that many of the current generation of children are missing out on gaining the physical and mental health benefits from active transport and connecting with their neighbourhoods (VicHealth 2011).

Find out more

Feelings of safety, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0-2010-Chapter-Feelings%20of%20safety%20\(4.4.4\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0-2010-Chapter-Feelings%20of%20safety%20(4.4.4))

Physical activity publications that look at Safety & Children's independent mobility, VicHealth.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Physical-Activity.aspx

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