

Discover your edge

Monday, 14 July 2014

When it comes to your health, getting older is fine — just don't be poor

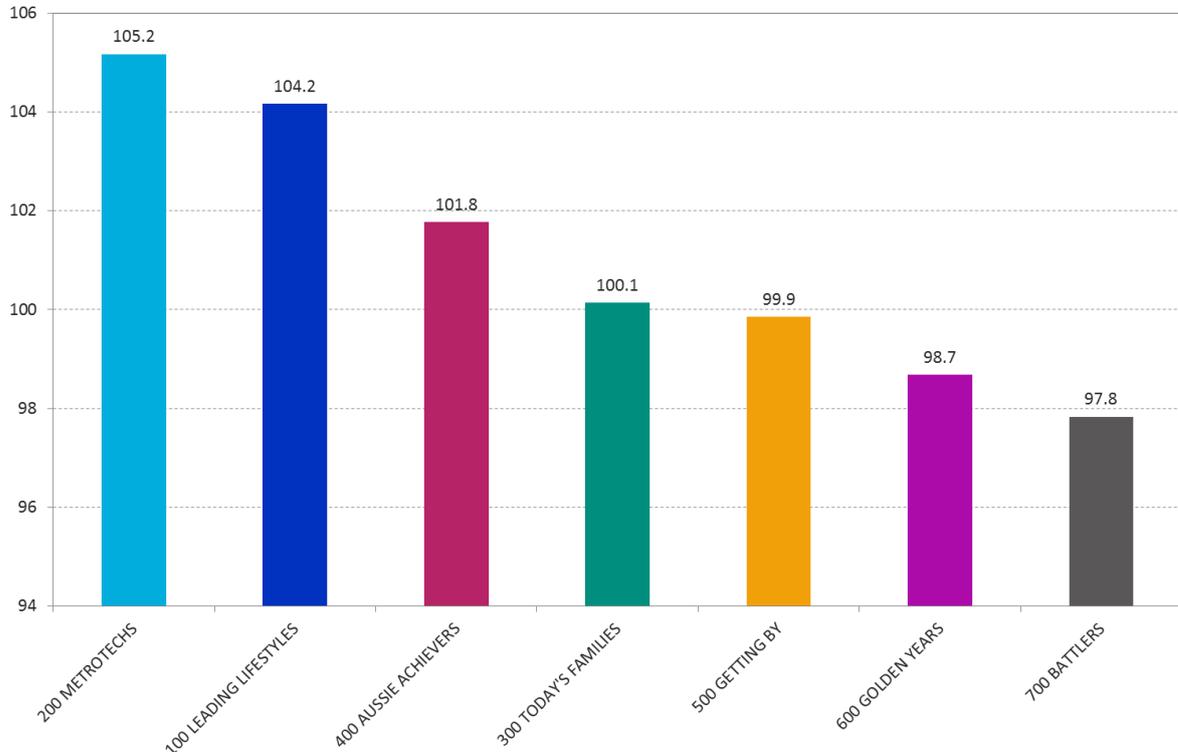
The latest Australian State of the Nation Report (No. 19) from Roy Morgan Research has revealed the winners and losers when it comes to the nation's health, and despite all the talk about our ageing population, an account balance may trump date of birth when it comes to being healthy.

The Alere Wellness Index, powered by Roy Morgan Research, tracks Australia's health over time. From a starting score of 100 in 2007, we now score 101.47 as of March 2014. The Wellness Index monitors seven key health areas: smoking rates, alcohol consumption, nutrition, activity and fitness levels, medical conditions, body mass index (BMI), and mental health.

From these scores, Roy Morgan's [Helix Personas](#) segmentation tool has pinpointed just who is healthy, who is not, who might be falling behind in one or two areas—and where they all live.

The younger, well-paid inner city Metrotech community gets the top overall score on the Wellness Index (105.2), just ahead of the older, high net-worth Leading Lifestyles (104.2). As can be seen in the chart below, these two wealthier, predominantly metropolitan communities have a substantial edge over the rest of the country in terms of overall health.

Wellness Index Scores for Helix Communities



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, April 2012 – March 2014, sample n = 99,231 Australians 14+

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Of the two 'Middle Australian' communities, Aussie Achievers is above the norm at 101.8 while Today's Families falls just below it with 100.1. The hardworking and ethnically diverse outer suburban families in Getting By score an average of 99.9.

Although ageing naturally affects our health, it seems a lower socio-economic status has an even stronger negative impact: with a score of 98.7 the Golden Years community of retirees actually fares better than the low-paid or unemployed Battlers on just 97.8.

The Seven Sides of Health

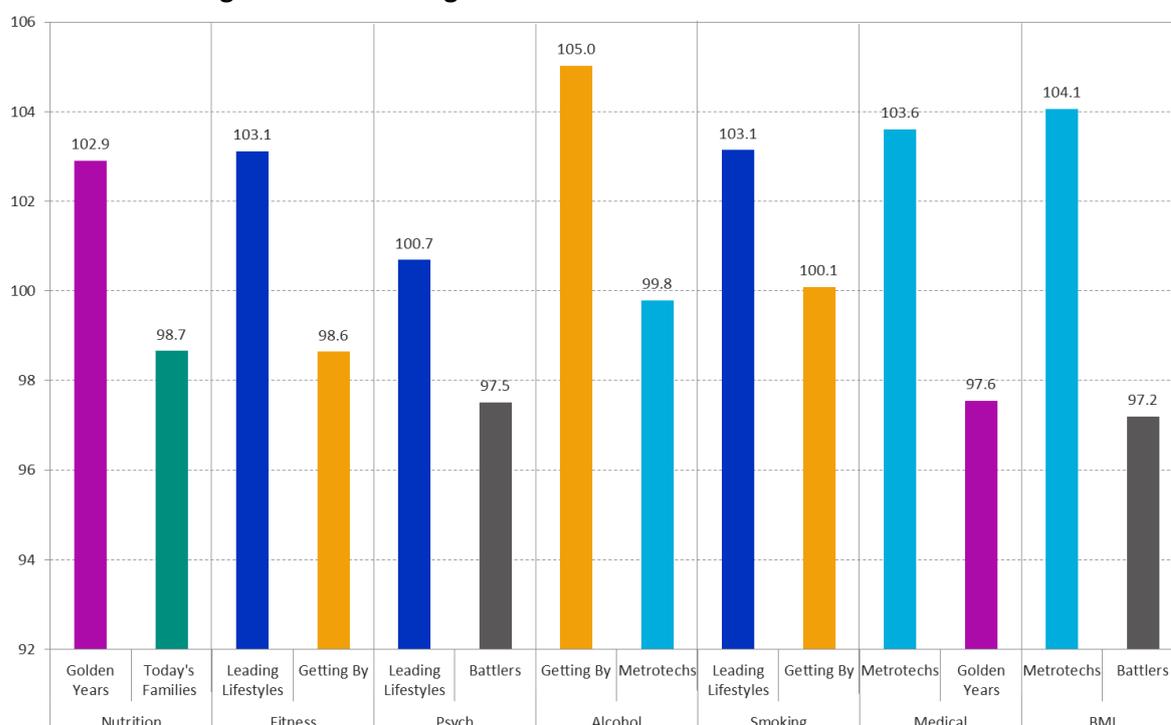
Across all seven indices, a higher score always means more positive health in that area: that is, a higher Smoking or Alcohol score comes from *less* smoking and drinking, while a higher Fitness score comes from doing *more* sport and exercise.

No single community does well (or poorly) in all health areas. For example, Metrotechs have the healthiest BMI and fewest medical conditions but score the worst on alcohol consumption. Those in the Getting By community drink the least but smoke the most—and so the community receives the highest Alcohol and lowest Smoking score. Getting By also has the lowest Fitness score thanks to a low sport or exercise participation rate. Leading Lifestyles are indeed leading healthy lifestyles, coming out on top in the areas of Fitness, Psych and Smoking.

Golden Years are the winners in Nutrition but, unsurprisingly, they are more likely to report on-going medical conditions, which hands them the lowest Medical score.

Battlers, however, get the lowest mean scores in two areas: BMI and Psych. This community doesn't fare much better in the areas Fitness, Smoking or Medical (second from the bottom in each) or Nutrition (third last).

High and Low-Scoring Communities across the Seven Health Areas



Higher scores indicate positive health

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, April 2012 – March 2014, sample n = 99,231 Australians 14+

Geoffrey Smith, General Manager – Consumer Products, says:

“With 56 Personas across Seven Communities, Helix Personas enables policy-makers, insurance and pharmaceutical companies, and health professionals to pinpoint both the healthiest and unhealthiest Australians, and where they live down to a few square blocks.

“Updated quarterly, the Alere Wellness Index provides the health industry with an unprecedented degree of timeliness in tracking changes to national, local and demographic health across the seven key health indices.

“When combined with Helix Personas, we can therefore measure the effectiveness of health and marketing campaigns.”

For comments or more information please contact:

Geoffrey Smith, General Manager — Consumer Products
Office: +61 (2) 9261 8233
Mobile: +61 413 844 732
Email: Geoffrey.Smith@roymorgan.com

To discuss the full State of the Nation Report (19) with the Spotlight on Australians’ Health, please contact:

Vaishali Nagaratnam, Online Store Manager
Office: +61 (3) 9224 5309
Mobile: + 61 402 700 258
Email: Vaishali.Nagaratnam@roymorgan.com

About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

In Australia, Roy Morgan Research is considered to be the authoritative source of information on financial behaviour, readership, voting intentions and consumer confidence. Roy Morgan Research is a specialist in recontact customised surveys which provide invaluable and effective qualitative and quantitative information regarding customers and target markets.

About Roy Morgan’s State of the Nation Reports

Roy Morgan’s State of the Nation Reports provide a long-term perspective on Australian society. Released quarterly, the Reports measure a broad range of issues affecting the nation, plot them over time, and explore in more detail the impacts on Society, Technology, Economy, Politics and the Environment.

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