

Monday, 9 September 2019

Youth mental health impacted by social media, religious beliefs, living arrangements and team sport

Recent research from Roy Morgan showed the increase in the number of Australians suffering from Mental Health conditions over the past decade ([79 year olds have the best mental health – August 19, 2019](#)). Further analysis reveals not only the major growth areas, but what other characteristics that Australians with mental health issues have.

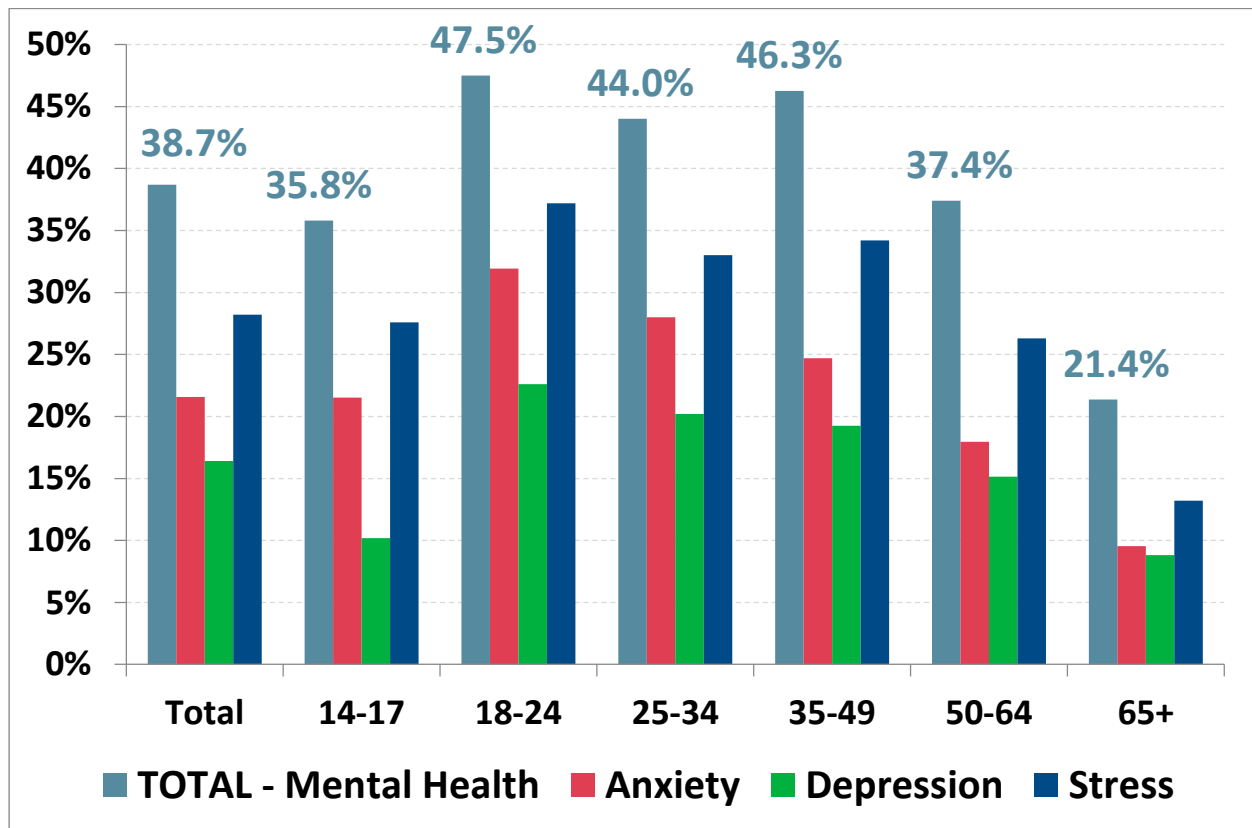
Amongst all mental health conditions, the big three are anxiety, depression and stress. Looking across the age groups, all three peak amongst 18-24 year olds.

These results are derived from detailed in-depth personal interviews in the homes of over 50,000 Australians each year as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

Stress is the most prevalent of mental health issues, the fastest growing condition is anxiety. This is particularly true of our young people, with 22% of 14-17 year olds now reporting that they suffer from anxiety (compared to just 6% nine years ago) and almost one third of 18-24 year olds suffering from anxiety (32%, compared to only 11% back in 2011).

Further information on the Mental Health illnesses and conditions of Australians are available to purchase as part of [Roy Morgan's Health and Wellbeing Profiles](#). These profiles provide a broad understanding of the people experiencing various health conditions in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities & media usage in Australia.

Mental health issues by age group



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2018 – June 2019, n=50,057. Base: Australians 14+.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What is driving the growing mental health issues like anxiety in Australia's youth?

So with anxiety the fastest growing issue in mental health, and with that condition peaking in the 18-24 year old age group with 32% reporting they suffer from anxiety, let's take a closer look at how these young adults compare to their peers of the same age.

Gender and living arrangements

The first quite significant thing to note is gender. Young women are almost twice as likely than their male peers to report suffering from anxiety. Nearly two-fifths (39.5%) of women in this age group are anxiety sufferers compared to only 21.5% of men.

While a majority of this age group are studying or employed, the small number who are not either working or studying are twice as likely to suffer from anxiety than the age group as a whole (52.5% cf. 30.5%).

Living arrangements appear to have an influence as well. The relatively small proportions of this age group who live with partners either with or without children are more likely to suffer from anxiety, while those who've moved out and live in shared households have significantly lower levels of anxiety.

Social media

With all the talk about the effects of social media, keeping up with the latest influencers on Instagram and who looks like they have the best life on Facebook, it's interesting to note that amongst young adults, those suffering from anxiety spend even more time than the average 18-24 year old on social media (764 minutes a week compared to 675 minutes a week of the general population in that age group).

Team sports

On the other hand, those playing a team sport report lower levels of anxiety (and stress and depression as well). This is particularly true of young adult men. Only 11.5% of men aged 18-24 years old who play team sports report suffering anxiety.

Socio-economics, income and geography play little role in influencing mental health

As well as factors that correlate with anxiety, it's important to look at what *doesn't* relate to it. It might seem income and socio-economic background would have an influence, but this is (perhaps surprisingly) not as relevant as you might think. Income shows very few trends, and those with the *lowest* Socio-Economic-Score actually show the *lowest* levels of anxiety.

Despite unemployment levels, housing costs and many other factors differing from State to State, anxiety levels amongst young adults show very little differences throughout the country. In terms of anxiety levels, there are no significant differences between Australia's capital cities compared to rural and regional areas amongst 18 to 24 year olds, and none between the different States.

Key demographics of 18-24 year olds suffering from anxiety

	% suffering from anxiety
All 18-24 year olds	32.0%
Female	39.5%
Male	21.5%
Not working or studying	52.5%
No religious beliefs	35.0%
AB quintile (highest SES)	32.5%
FG quintile (lowest SES)	24.0%
Lives with partner and no children	46.0%
Lives with parents	31.5%
Shared household	22.5%
Those who play a team sport	19.5%
Women who play a team sport	31.5%
Men who play a team sport	11.5%

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2017 – June 2019, n=9,051. **Base:** Australians aged 18-24.



Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says:

“Roy Morgan’s extensive research into the health of Australians allows us to be able to link mental health conditions with a range of other demographic, attitudinal and behavioural factors.

“Here at Roy Morgan, we don’t know if the chicken came first or the egg. Do young men who play sport suffer less from anxiety than their non-sporty peers because of the exercise or because their sporting clubs provide mate ship, community and a support network? Or do these men play sport because their lack of anxiety allows them to do that?”

“Those young adults living in shared households report much lower levels of stress than those living with their parents. Presumably that’s because young people who don’t suffer from anxiety are more likely to leave home, rather than living with your parents causes your anxiety. We don’t know the answers to these questions.

“What we do know at Roy Morgan is who suffers from mental health conditions, how and where they live, what media they consume, what activities they participate in, and a whole range of in-depth data collected from personal interviews with over 50,000 Australians per year.

“Contact Roy Morgan to learn more about the health issues impacting millions of Australians.”

Click here to purchase [Roy Morgan's Health and Wellbeing Profiles](#). These profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities & media usage in Australia.

Visit the [Roy Morgan Online Store](#) to access an extensive range of profiles on illnesses & conditions including: [Allergies/Cold and Flu](#), [Behavioural](#), [Blood](#), [Bones, Joints and Muscles](#), [Brain & Nervous System](#), [Cancers](#), [Digestive System](#), [People who are Pregnant](#), [People who Snore](#), and more.

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan illnesses and medical conditions data, please contact:

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About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 75 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

