

Monday, 19 August 2019

79 year olds have the best mental health

New data from Roy Morgan shows over 7.9 million Australians aged 14+ (38.4%) now suffer from a Mental Health condition according to the latest Roy Morgan health research based on a program of research that now spans over a decade into illnesses and medical conditions and derived from detailed in-depth interviews with over 50,000 Australians each year comprehensive health data is collected as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

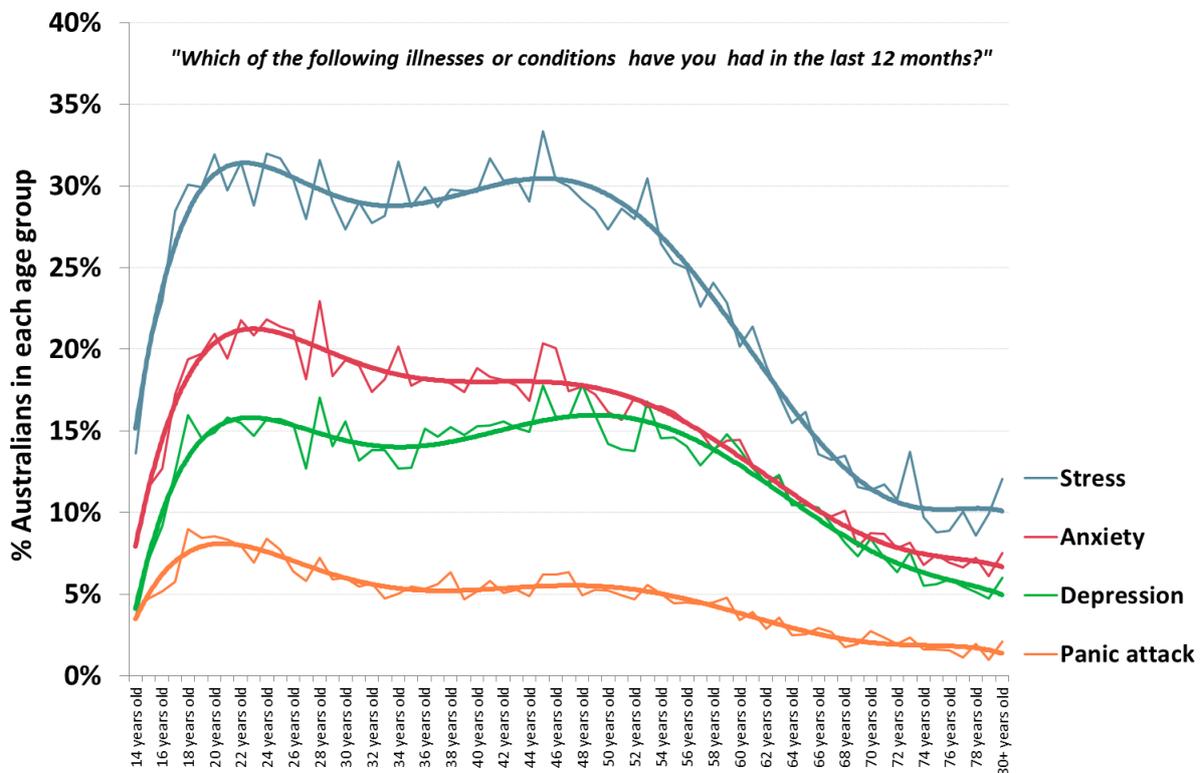
The 7.9 million Australians now suffering a Mental Health condition represents an increase of over 2.5 million from a decade ago. In 2009 5.4 million Australians aged 14+ (30.7%) suffered from a Mental Health condition.

The most common forms of Mental Health conditions are Stress which is experienced by 5.8 million Australians (28%), Anxiety suffered by over 4.3 million (21.1%), Depression which afflicts over 3.3 million (16.1%) and the nearly 1.3 million (6.2%) who have Panic Attacks.

To understand the prevalence of these Mental Health issues by age our data scientists analysed a decade of data on the health research into illnesses and medical conditions experienced by Australians. The data shows a dramatic increase from age 14 to 15, and again to age 16 and their 'twin peaks' for Mental Health conditions – in 2019 nearly half of 18-24 year olds (47%) and only slightly fewer 35-49 year olds (45.1%) reported having a Mental Health condition.

The most common form of Mental Health condition is Stress which peaks for Australians at the age of 45 (33.3%) but is generally above 30% for both 18-28 year olds and those aged 41-47 years old before declining substantially for Australians once they hit their mid-50s.

Leading Mental Health conditions by age in years



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, April 2009 – March 2019; n=average of 50,999 interviews per year.
 Base: Australians 14+.

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Anxiety follows a similar pattern peaking at 22.9% for 28 year olds and generally above 20% for those aged 20-28 years of age declining slightly for people in their 30s and then re-appearing above 20% for those in their mid-40s before gently trending downwards past that age.

Rates of Depression are generally above 15% for those aged 18-30 years old and 36-49 years old with the condition peaking slightly later than for Stress or Anxiety at 48 years of age (17.8%).

In contrast, Panic Attacks are most common amongst younger Australians and peak in the first year of adulthood for 18 year olds (9%) before declining gently by age thereafter.

Perhaps surprisingly the Australians with the lowest rate of Mental Health conditions are in their late 70s before a slight uptick for those aged at least 80 years old.

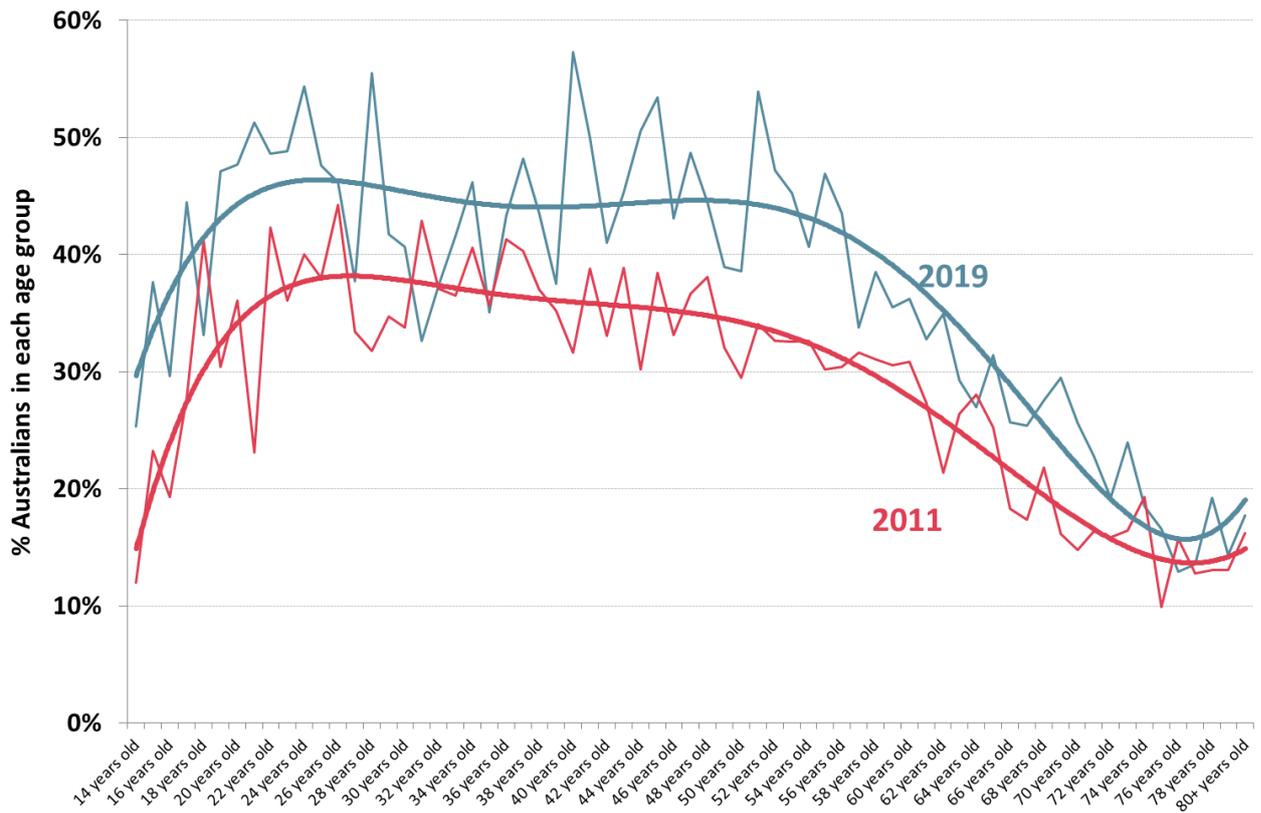
Mental Health issues increasingly impacting younger Australians

A comparison of the prevalence of Mental Health conditions by age in years today with 2011 shows increases right across the age range.

The increases have been particularly steep amongst younger Australians with the 2019 'Mental Health conditions' trend-line crossing the 40% mark at only 17 years of age.

As well as being increasingly prevalent at younger ages Mental Health conditions are also a lingering problem for significantly more Australians in their 40s and 50s. The 2019 trend-line only dips back below 40% for those aged over 58 years of age.

Mental Health conditions by age in years: 2011 cf. 2019



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, April – March 2011, n=51,172, April – March 2019, n=51,362.
Base: Australians 14+.

Mental Health conditions this decade increase significantly across the board

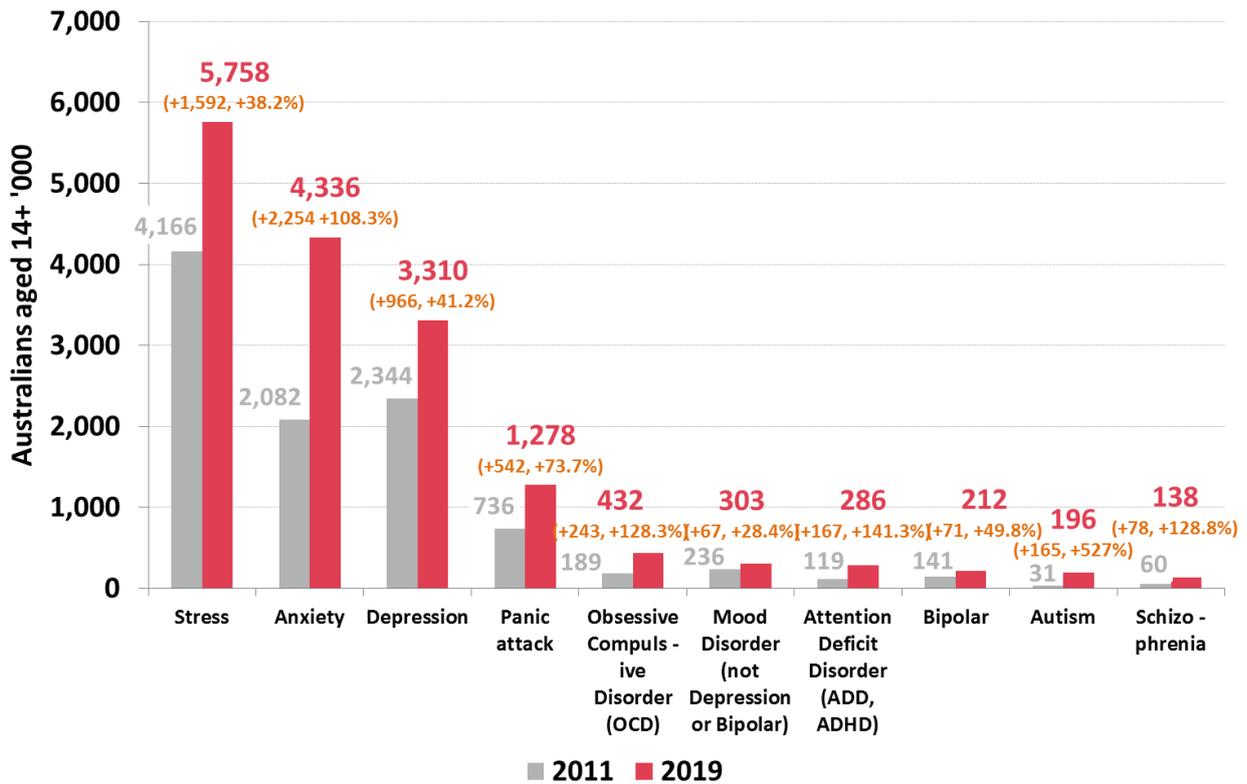
Analysing the full range of Mental Health conditions analysed by Roy Morgan shows substantial increases for all ten conditions measured during this decade.

The largest raw increase was for Anxiety which has more than doubled since 2011 with an increase of nearly 2.3 million to over 4.3 million Australians – an increase of 108.3%.

Stress increased by 1.6 million (+38.2%), Depression increased by almost 1 million (+41.2%) and Panic Attacks were up by over half a million (+73.7%).

Although from a smaller base there were even bigger percentage increases for Autism (+527%), Attention Deficit Disorder (+141.3%), Schizophrenia (+128.8%) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (+128.3%).

Mental Health conditions 2019 cf. 2011



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, April – March 2011, n=51,172, April – March 2019, n=51,362. **Base:** Australians 14+.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan, says Mental Health problems have increased significantly over the last decade with 7.9 million Australians now reporting having a condition such as Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Panic Attacks or other conditions:

“Roy Morgan’s extensive research into the health of Australians shows Mental Health conditions are increasing significantly across the spectrum, up over 2.5 million from a decade ago.

“By far the leading Mental Health conditions are Stress suffered by 5.4 million Australians (30.7%), Anxiety (21.1%), Depression (16.1%) and Panic Attacks (6.2%).

“A deep dive into the Roy Morgan data shows that Mental Health conditions increase significantly for older teenagers completing their secondary schooling and entering University, or the workplace, for the first time aged under 25 years old. There is a secondary peak for Australians in their 40s when many parents will themselves be living in a household with teenagers and dealing with living expenses including mortgage repayments and expensive secondary school fees.

“The good news is that once Australians hit their 50s rates of Mental Health conditions decline rapidly and Stress in particular is ‘lifted off the shoulders’ of Australians in their 50s and 60s.

“Our decade long research shows that rates of Mental Health conditions are lowest for Australians in their mid-late 70s with over 80% of Australians aged 74-79 years old reporting ‘No’ Mental Health conditions at all – a higher rate than any other age group.

“Contact Roy Morgan to learn more about how Mental Health conditions impact on Australians of all ages and what the increasing rates of Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Autism and other conditions is telling us about the health of the Australian community in 2019 and into the future.”

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

