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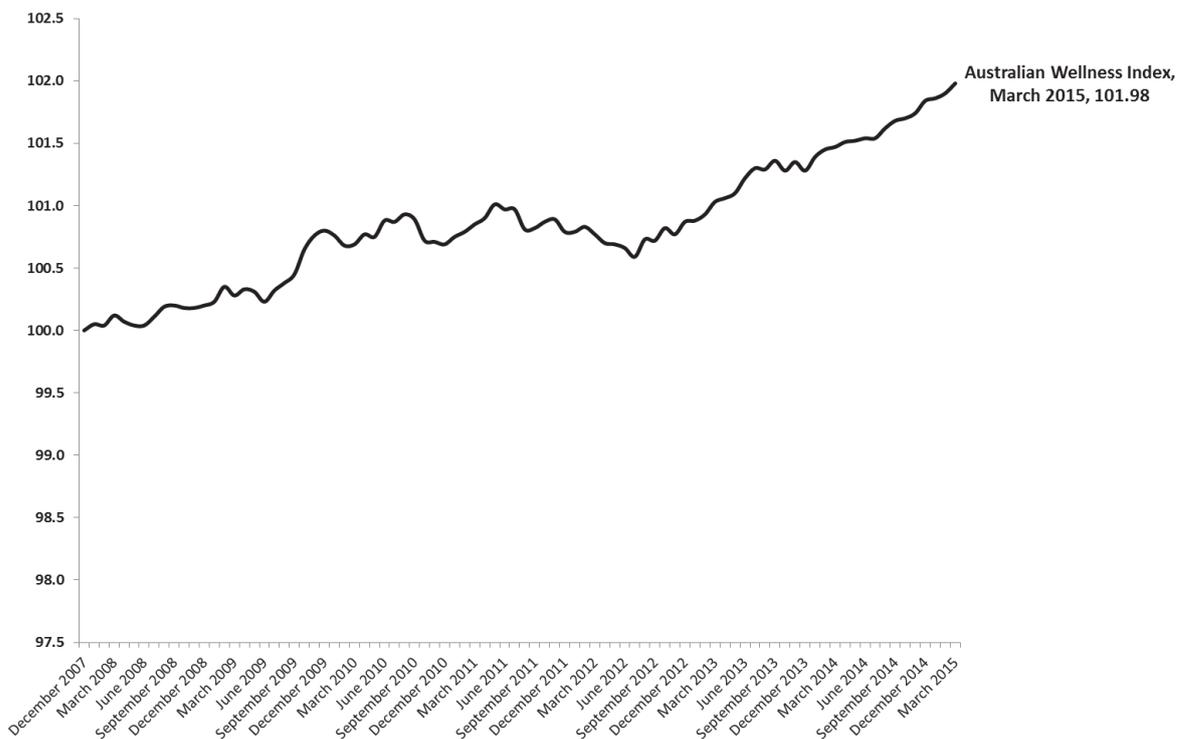
Thursday, 4 June 2015

Australian Wellness Index: health improves, but young women suffer sharp decline in psychological wellbeing

The nation's health continues to improve, with the Australian Wellness Index reaching a new peak in March 2015, Roy Morgan Research shows. However while we're smoking and drinking less, eating better, being more active and suffering from fewer medical conditions, our psychological health—especially among young women—is in freefall.

From a base of 100 at the start of tracking in December 2007, the Australian Wellness Index—powered by Roy Morgan Research data collected across seven key health areas—has now risen for 15 consecutive months to a new high of 101.98 in March 2015.

Australian Wellness Index Trend



Source: Roy Morgan *Single Source*, January 2007 – March 2015.
12-month samples rolling monthly; average sample n = 49,071 Australians 18+

Areas of improvement and decline

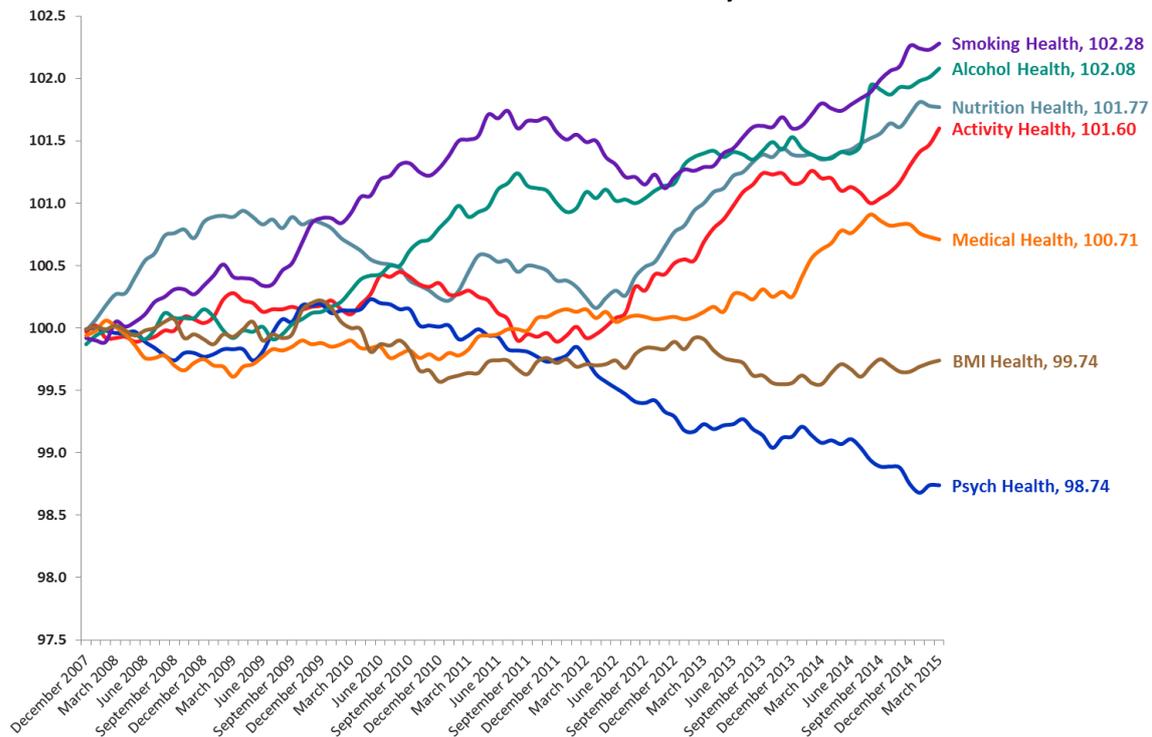
Smoking rates have declined consistently over the last two years, driving the Smoking Health index up to 102.28 and making this the country's best-performing health area. We also continued to make gains over the past year in our Alcohol, Nutrition and Activity Health, while our national BMI has steadied. Our medical health, incorporating incidence rates of various severe or chronic illnesses, eased back from a peak in mid-2014, but is still performing well given our ageing population.

However the national Psych Health score, integrating a range of attitudes and incidence of mental health issues, has now declined every year since 2009.

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National results across the seven Key Health Areas



Source: Roy Morgan *Single Source*, January 2007 – March 2015.
12-month samples rolling monthly; average sample n = 49,071 Australians 18+

Young women more anxious, depressed, and less optimistic

Closer examination of the Psych Health Index by men and women across different ages reveals that *all* groups are down on their initial 2007 scores. However, it is young women aged 18-24 who have suffered the greatest decline psychological wellbeing—and this has been noticeably sharp over the past 18 months, plummeting to just 90.96.

This acute decrease in the psychological health of young women is being driven by numerous factors within the index: rising rates of anxiety, depression, panic attacks and stress combined with a diminishing proportion who agree they are optimistic about the future (69%, down from 85% in mid-2013) or lead a 'full and busy life' (now 56%, down from 62% in mid-2013).

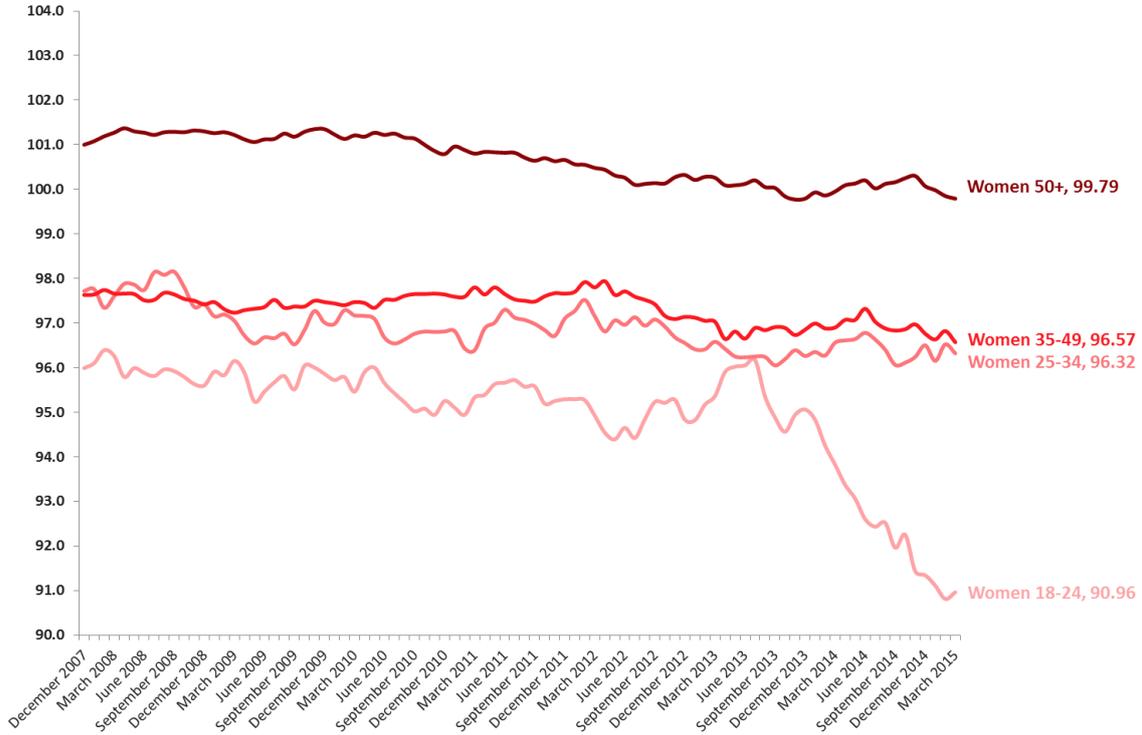
Men of all ages typically score higher than women in the same bracket, which may in part be due to a greater reluctance to acknowledge mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and stress.

However while women's Psych Health improves consistently with age, men aged 35-49 fare worse than those 25-34. Mental or psychological wellbeing among younger men has been relatively flat since the start of the index, while the mid-life men have trended downward over the last six years.

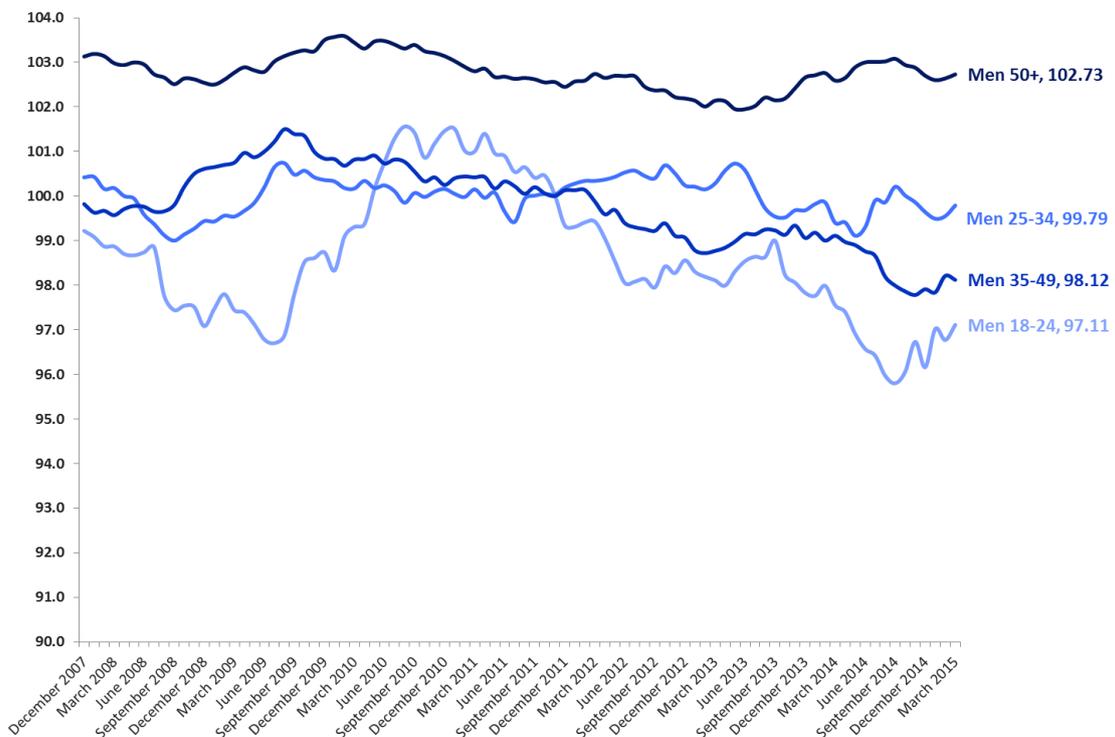
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Psych Health Scores by Women across Age Groups



Psych Health Scores by Men across Age Groups



Source: Roy Morgan *Single Source*, January 2007 – March 2015.
12-month samples rolling monthly; average sample n = 18,545 Australians 18+

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Michele Levine, CEO – Roy Morgan Research, says:

“The Australian Wellness Index is a powerful monitor to track changes in the country’s health across different areas. The Index is sensitive and comprehensive enough to provide quick responses, whether to measure the effectiveness of new policies (such as plain packaging laws for cigarettes) or to pinpoint at-risk groups.

“These latest results highlight the continuing need for national, targeted responses to address mental health issues. Australian women aged 18 to 24 have suffered the greatest decline in their Psychological health since 2007. We have found that there is a strong correlation between unemployment or underemployment and higher rates of anxiety and depression—so it is perhaps not surprising that this group is also among the most likely to be seeking work.”

To learn more about the Wellness Index, contact:

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About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices throughout Australia, as well as in Indonesia, 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.

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
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
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

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