

# WorkHealth checks

November 2010

## Selected findings

From 1 July 2009 to 21 July 2010, 200,000 workers from a broad range of industries across Victoria received a WorkHealth check as part of the WorkHealth program. A report of the findings from these checks has been compiled by Monash University.

The WorkHealth program, delivered by WorkSafe Victoria, gives every Victorian worker the opportunity to have a free, 15-minute WorkHealth check in their workplace.



Workers who participate in a check complete a lifestyle questionnaire and have their blood pressure, waist circumference, blood glucose and cholesterol measured by a health professional. Results and advice are given on the spot, including level of risk for developing two of the most preventable yet increasingly common chronic diseases – type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

In the dataset of 200,000 workers, 49% were male and 51% female. 82% of the checks took place in metropolitan areas, and 18% in rural areas.

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of some of the key findings. For a more comprehensive summary of the research, visit [workhealth.vic.gov.au](http://workhealth.vic.gov.au)

### Urgent GP referral

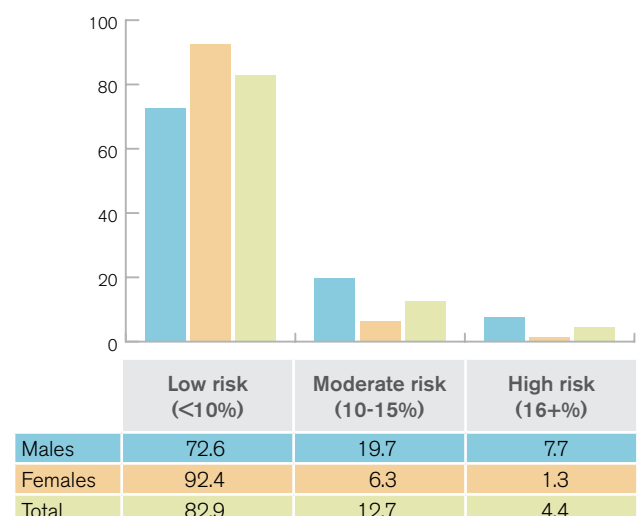
A total of 2,011 workers (1.0%) were advised to visit their GP urgently within 24 hours because they were found to have high blood pressure ( $\geq 180/110$ ) or high random blood glucose ( $\geq 15.0$  mmol/L), contributing to a **very high risk** of type 2 diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease.

### Risk of cardiovascular disease<sup>1</sup>

4.4% of workers had a **high risk** of developing cardiovascular disease (Absolute Cardiovascular Disease Risk Score  $\geq 16\%$ ), and a further 12.7% of workers had a **moderate risk** of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD Risk Score  $\geq 10\%$ ).

Men were 3.6 times more likely than women to have a **moderate or high risk** of cardiovascular disease – 27.4% of men had a CVD Risk Score of  $\geq 10\%$  compared with 7.6% of women.

#### Cardiovascular disease risk (45 years +)



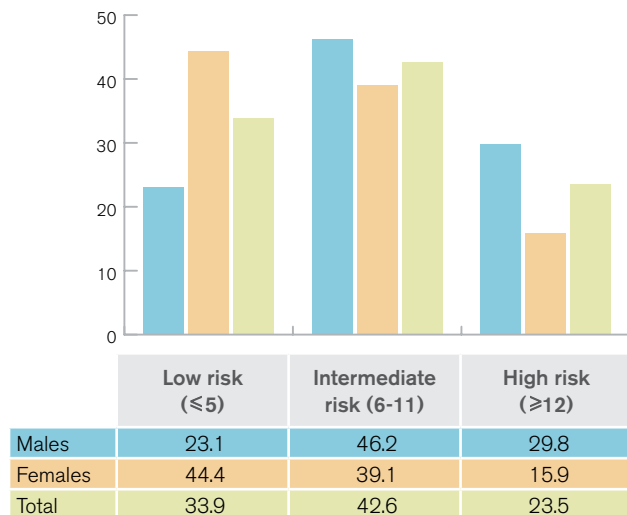
<sup>1</sup> Absolute Cardiovascular Disease Risk Score is provided to workers aged 45 years and over.

## Risk of type 2 diabetes

23.5% of workers had a **high risk** of developing type 2 diabetes (AUSDRISK<sup>2</sup> score  $\geq 12$ ), and a further 42.6% of workers had an **increased risk** of type 2 diabetes (AUSDRISK score 6-11).

Men were twice more likely to have a **high risk** of type 2 diabetes than women, with 29.8% of men and 15.9% of women with an AUSDRISK score  $\geq 12$ .

### Type 2 diabetes risk



## Combined risk

15.6% of workers had a **high risk** of developing both type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

## Self assessment of health<sup>3</sup>

Half of workers with the **highest risk** of type 2 diabetes considered themselves in good health.

Half of workers assessed their health as **excellent** or **very good**, and less than one in ten assessed their health as **fair** or **poor**.

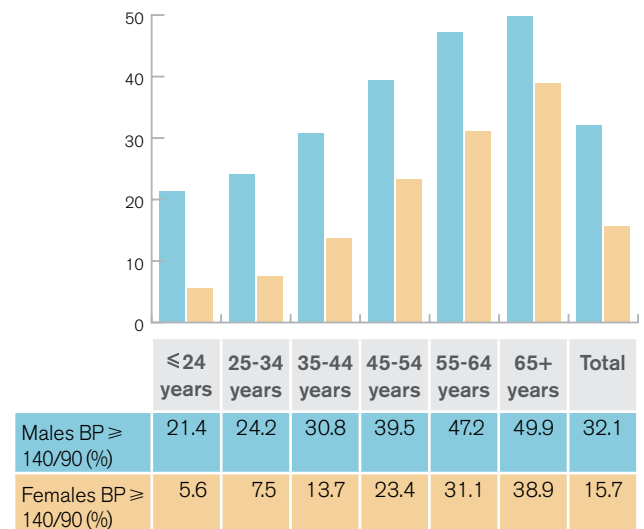
## Physical risk factors

25.5% of workers had a waist measurement indicating a **greatly increased risk** ( $\geq 102$ cm in men and 88cm in women) of cardiovascular disease and an **increased or greatly increased risk** of type 2 diabetes, and this was 1.4 times more common in women (29.6%) than men (21.3%).

23.8% had **elevated blood pressure** ( $\geq 140/90$ ), and this was 2 times more common in men (32.1%) than women (15.7%).



### Workers with elevated blood pressure



## Biomedical risk factors

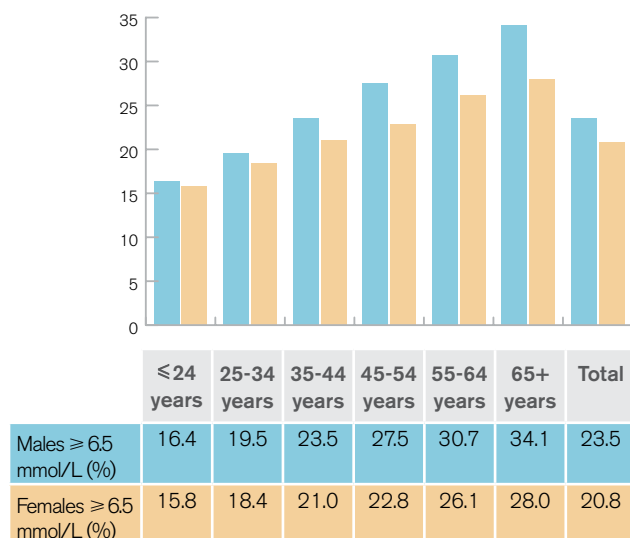
More than 1 in 5 workers had **high to very high blood glucose levels** ( $\geq 6.5$  mmol/L). Out of this group, 0.9% of men (883) and 0.5% of women (490) had levels greater than 11.0 mmol/L (which is indicative of type 2 diabetes).

25.8% of workers had **high random blood cholesterol** (above 5.5 mmol/L), and overall the results didn't vary much between men (25.2%) and women (26.5%). However older women (aged 55+) were 1.5 times more likely to have high cholesterol than men.

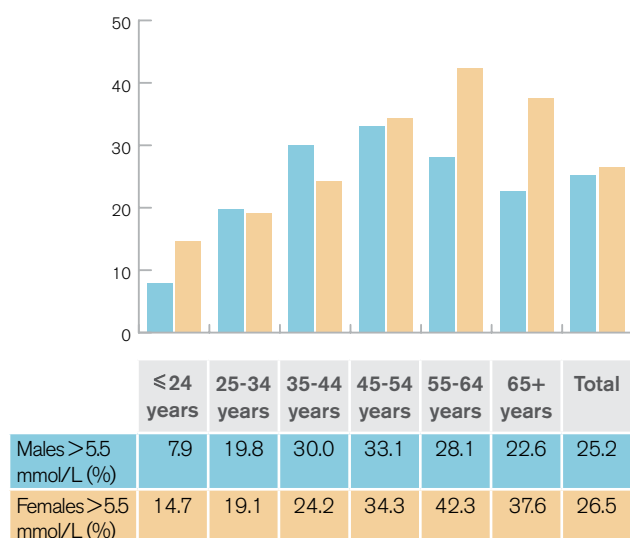
<sup>2</sup> Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool.

<sup>3</sup> In the lifestyle questionnaire, workers are asked: 'In general, is your health excellent/very good/good/fair/poor?'

### Workers with high blood glucose levels



### Workers with high random blood cholesterol



## Lifestyle risk factors

93.1% of workers reported eating less than the daily recommended intake of **fruit and vegetables** (less than five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit per day). Results for men were worse than women – 95.8% versus 90.6%.

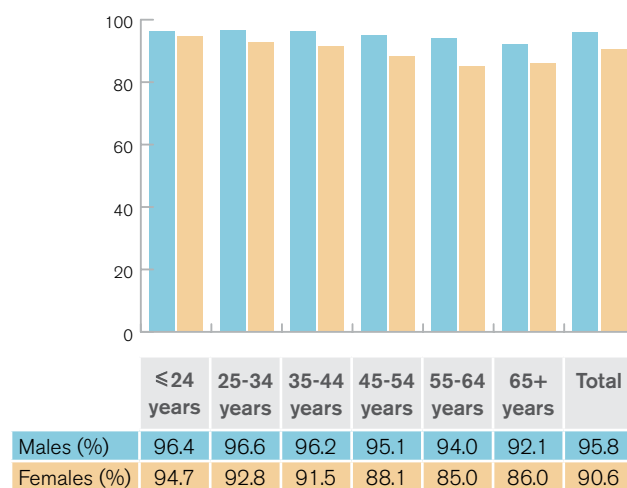
70.3% of workers reported **inadequate physical exercise** (less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day). Results were similar for women (70.9%) compared with men (69.6%).

32.8% of workers reported **risky alcohol consumption** (on average, more than 2 standard drinks per day for women and more than 4 for men). At their respective risk levels, women were more likely than men to drink alcohol at risky levels (40.1% of women compared with 26.0% of men).



18.0% of those tested were **current smokers**, and smoking was found to be more common among men (20.3%) than women (15.8%).

### Inadequate fruit and vegetable intake



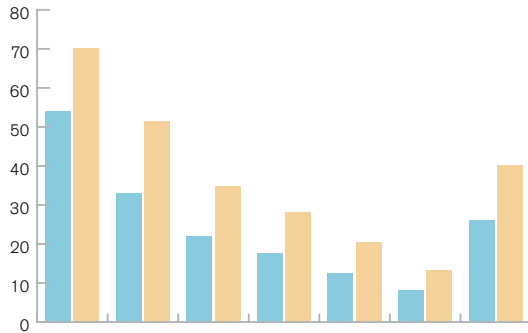
## Age group comparisons

Workers aged under 25 are more likely than older workers (aged 45-54) to:

- **Drink alcohol at risky levels:** 70.0% of younger women and 53.9% of younger men compared with 28.1% of older women and 17.5% of older men
- **Smoke:** 20.7% of younger women and 26.8% of younger men compared with 14.6% of older women and 17.4% of older men
- **Eat insufficient fruit and vegetables:** 94.7% of younger women and 96.4% of younger men compared with 88.1% of older women and 95.1% of older men.

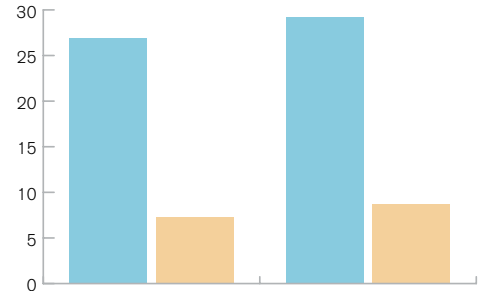
Overall, biomedical and physical risk factors, including blood pressure, blood glucose and waist measurement increased with age. Risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease also increased with age.

### Risky alcohol consumption



	≤24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years	Total
Males >4 (%)	53.9	33.0	21.9	17.5	12.5	8.1	26.0
Females >2 (%)	70.0	51.5	34.7	28.1	20.5	13.2	40.1

### Moderate to high risk of cardiovascular disease (45 years +) by location



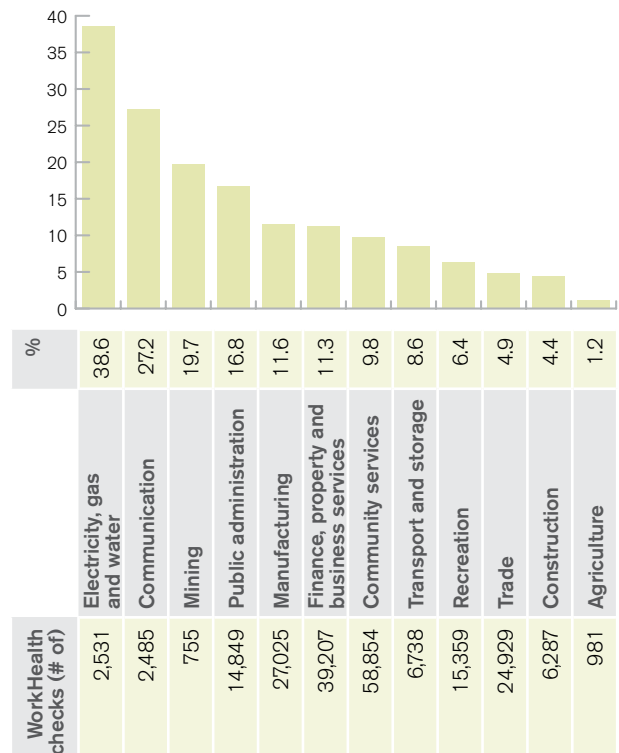
	Metropolitan	Rural
Males ≥ 10% (%)	26.9	29.2
Females ≥ 10% (%)	7.3	8.7

### Industry participation

Of the 200,000 WorkHealth checks the Monash University report is based on, the highest number of participants were from community services (29.4%), and finance, property and business services industries (19.6%).

As a percentage of industry, participation was greatest within the electricity, gas and water, and communication industries. By comparison, in other key industries such as community services and trade, which have a high number of workers, participation was low.

#### Participation in WorkHealth checks as a % of industry

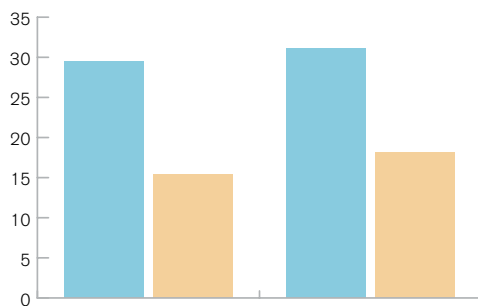


### City and country comparisons

Female workers in rural areas were more likely to have a **high risk** of type 2 diabetes than their metropolitan counterparts – 18.2% versus 15.4%.

Male workers in rural areas were 1.3 times more likely than those in metropolitan areas to report **risky alcohol consumption** – 31.8% versus 24.7%.

#### High risk of type 2 diabetes by location



	Metropolitan	Rural
Males ≥ 12 (%)	29.5	31.1
Females ≥ 12 (%)	15.4	18.2