

# KNOWLEDGE, PREVALENCE AND CLUSTERING OF THE 'BIG 6' RISK BEHAVIOURS AMONG FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN AUSTRALIA

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**Introduction/Issues:** Alcohol, smoking, physical activity, diet, recreational screen time and sleep are the "Big 6" behavioural risk factors for chronic disease, the leading cause of death worldwide. To reduce chronic disease, a greater understanding of adolescents' knowledge of, and engagement with, the Big 6 is needed.

**Method/Approach:** Females ( $N=687$ ,  $M_{age}=13.82$  yrs) from three high schools completed an online survey. Regression and latent class analyses were used to identify clustering of the Big 6 and relationships between knowledge and adherence to national guidelines.

**Results:** Many students reported insufficient moderate-vigorous physical activity (MVPA; 89%), vegetable intake (89%) and sleep (40%) and engaged in excessive recreational screen time (63%). Twenty percent did not eat enough fruit, 14% consumed alcohol within the past 6 months, and 2% had tried tobacco. Knowledge of guidelines predicted adherence to guidelines for MVPA, vegetable intake, and sleep, and was associated with not consuming alcohol in the past 6 months. Three classes emerged: 'relatively active, healthy eaters'; 'moderately risky'; and 'excessive screen users'. The first group had the lowest overall risk score and highest perceptions of their own health, while the moderately risky class had higher perceptions of health than the excessive screen users.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Many adolescent females are not meeting national guidelines for key health behaviours, putting them at risk for chronic disease. Knowledge of national guidelines was associated with better health behaviours, suggesting educational interventions should increase awareness. Clusters of behaviours were evident, highlighting the importance of targeting multiple health behaviours concurrently, rather than in isolation.

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