

10,000 Steps Working Paper Series

Paper 22: Awareness of the 10,000 Steps Program 2019

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	5
Background	5
Purpose of Study	5
Survey Method	5
Data Quality	6
Estimated Sampling Error	6
Data Treatment	6
Physical Activity Levels	6
Statistical Analyses	
RESULTS	
Sample	
National Awareness of the 10,000 Steps Program	
Gender	7
Age Group	
Level of Education	8
SEIFA	
Physical Activity Levels	
10,000 Steps Awareness compared to other health related initiatives	
10,000 Steps Awareness in Queensland	
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Future Recommendations	13
REFERENCES	14
APPENDIX: TABLES	16



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the awareness levels of the 10,000 Steps program within Australian adults in 2019. The report also examines associations between demographic variables and the level of awareness.

An omnibus survey of 2199 adults from the Life in Australia™ online panel was conducted by Social Research Centre, in February and March 2019.

- In 2019, 71.3% of the Australian adult population were aware of the 10,000 Steps program.
- In 2019, 76.5% of Queenslanders were aware of the 10,000 Steps program.
- Awareness was higher among women compared with men.
- Adults aged 45-54 years reported higher levels of awareness in comparison to 18-34 year old adults.
- Adults with higher levels of education reported higher levels of awareness in comparison to those with the lowest level of education.
- Individuals located in the least disadvantaged areas were more likely to be aware of 10,000 Steps than those in the most disadvantaged areas.
- Adults who were classified as active were more likely to be aware of 10,000 Steps than those who participated in no activity.
- This study identified sub-groups which can be targeted for further promotion of 10,000 Steps. These include: men, those with a lower socioeconomic status (lower education and living in most disadvantaged areas) and people participating in no physical activity.



INTRODUCTION

Background

Funded by Queensland Health, 10,000 Steps Rockhampton was Australia's first 'whole of community' physical activity health promotion project. In 2001, the Rockhampton region was chosen for a two-year trial of the project. The trial successfully increased physical activity levels in Rockhampton [1]. Since 2003, Queensland Health has continued to provide funding for 10,000 Steps to be developed as a sustainable statewide initiative.

10,000 Steps provides information regarding physical activity, promotional materials, support interactive 10.000 and via the Steps www.10000steps.org.au. Workplaces and community groups have since adopted and implemented 10,000 Steps across Queensland and beyond to promote physical activity and raise awareness of the health benefits associated with physical activity. Individuals are also able to access the program by using the interactive online Step Log to record and monitor their physical activity levels. At the start of 2017, the program launched a re-branded look with an updated website including new features such as the ability to sync steps with a Fitbit account, updated promotional materials and new mobile application. As of March 2019, the 10,000 Steps program has had almost 400,000 individual members and over 13,500 Coordinators (organisations and community groups) registered with the 10,000 Steps website.

Awareness levels of the 10,000 Steps program have been monitored specifically in Queensland (2005-2014) and have now extended to Australia wide (2009, 2014-2019). This aligns with the continued expansion of the project beyond Queensland, as such it is appropriate to assess the awareness of 10,000 Steps at a national level. National awareness has been monitored annually since 2014. From 2005 to 2017 awareness was examined via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system by the Population Research Lab at CQUniversity. The results have shown a significant increase in awareness of the 10,000 Steps program from 33.5% across Queensland in 2005 to 70.6% in 2017, with a slight decline to 61.7% in 2018. The awareness Australia-wide has increased from 56.0% in 2009 to 67.7% in 2017, and a drop to 55.9% in 2018 [2-15]. As the program continues to expand to Queensland and beyond, it is appropriate to continue to assess the awareness of 10,000 Steps at a national level. Due to the closure of the Population Research Lab at the end of 2017, awareness in 2018 and 2019 was examined using online omnibus surveys.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the awareness of the 10,000 Steps program across Australia in 2019. In addition, the study examined if demographic variables including gender, age, level of education, socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA), and physical activity, were associated with program awareness.

Survey Method

An omnibus survey of 2199 adults from the Life in Australia™ online panel was conducted by the Social Research Centre. The Life in Australia™ online panel is a national probability based panel with participants recruited randomly via their landline or mobile telephone. Unlike other research panels it includes people with and without internet access and those without internet access are able to complete surveys by telephone.

The omnibus survey is comprised of core demographic questions (gender, age, location, education etc.) and client sponsored questions. 10,000 Steps sponsored four questions in the omnibus survey conducted from Monday 18th February until Sunday 3rd March 2019.



Participants from the panel who indicated they would like to complete surveys online were invited to this wave of the omnibus survey by email and SMS (where available), followed by multiple email reminders. If the survey was not completed by the second week, they were followed up with reminder phone calls and full telephone interviews were undertaken if required.

For participants from the panel who indicated they would not like to complete surveys online they were initially invited to this wave of the omnibus survey by SMS (where available) and then followed up via phone calls during the two-week survey period.

Members of Life in Australia[™] receive a minor incentive for completing each survey (e.g. \$10 for a survey length of up to 15 minutes).

Data Quality

The total number of complete responses was 2199. Among individuals who were invited to the survey from the online panel the completion rate was 80.9%. Taking into account the recruitment rate to the panel and attrition from the panel, the cumulative response rate is 9.2%.

Estimated Sampling Error

The probability basis of the Life in Australia™ sampling method means results are generalisable and sampling errors and confidence intervals can be calculated. The results have been weighted to represent the national population. For this survey, the margin of error (half-width of the 95% confidence interval) incorporating the design effect for full-sample estimates at 50% by sample is ± 2.35 percent..

Data Treatment

Awareness of 10,000 Steps was examined by gender, age, level of education, SEIFA, and physical activity levels. Awareness of the 10,000 Steps program was determined through the following question using a yes/no response format; 'Have you heard of the 10,000 Steps program?'. This is the same question that has been used to determine awareness in each of the surveys since the Queensland Social Survey in 2005.

Physical Activity Levels

Physical activity levels were determined using the following single item physical activity measure [16]; 'In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 min or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate? This may include sport, exercise and brisk walking or cycling for recreation or to get to and from places, but should not include housework or physical activity that may be part of your job'. Responses included 0-7 days.

Physical activity data was categorised as follows:

- 1) No activity (Reported 0 days of physical activity in the past week);
- 2) Inactive (Reported between 1 and 4 days of physical activity in the past week);
- 3) Active (Reported 5 or more days of physical activity in the past week).

Statistical Analyses

Prevalence estimates are presented as a percentage of the population who report being aware of 10,000 Steps. Binary logistic regression was used to examine the associations between awareness and selected demographic measures assessed in the study. The association is presented as an odds ratio in comparison to a reference group and indicates the increased or decreased likelihood of a sub-group in the population to report being aware of 10,000 Steps. In the current analysis compared to the reference group, an odds ratio greater than 1.00 indicates that a particular group or subgroup is more likely to report being aware of 10,000 Steps, and an odds ratio less than 1.00 indicates that a group or subgroup is less likely to report being aware of



10,000 Steps. Each odds ratio has a 95% confidence interval and if the lower and upper confidence intervals include 1.00 (e.g., 0.80-1.28) the association is not statistically significant. If the odds ratio does not include 1.00 (e.g., 0.40-0.97, or 1.34-1.92) the association is statistically significant.

RESULTS

Sample

Table 1 (See Appendix – Table 1) shows that 53.6% of the participants were women, 50.5% were aged 55 years and older, and that approximately 73% of participants had a non-school qualification (certificate, diploma, bachelor degree or post graduate degree). Self-report data showed that 24.0% reported being sufficiently active for health benefits in the past week. Further demographics of the sample are presented in Table 1 (See Appendix – Table 1). Due to the availability of complete responses in the omnibus survey a total of 2117 were included in the adjusted logistic regression analysis (Table 3).

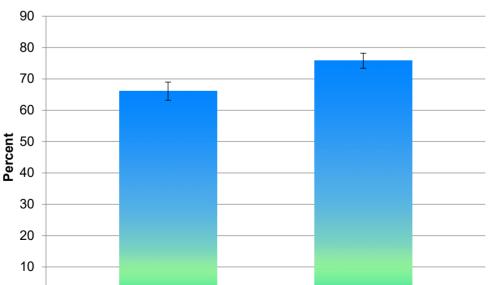
National Awareness of the 10,000 Steps Program

In 2019 the overall level of awareness was 71.3%. The prevalence of awareness across gender, age, education level, SEIFA, and physical activity variables is shown in Table 2 (See Appendix – Table 2). Significant associations were found between awareness and gender, age group, level of education, SEIFA and physical activity level. When adjusting for all other demographic variables, significant associations remained for all five variables (See Appendix – Table 3). The following sections discuss these results in detail.

Gender

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A higher percentage of women (75.8%) were aware of the 10,000 Steps program than men (66.1%). Figure 2 shows the proportion of men and women aware of 10,000 Steps in 2019. The logistic regression analysis revealed that women were significantly more likely to be aware of 10,000 Steps than men (Table 3).



Men

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents aware of 10,000 Steps by gender in 2019.



Women

Age Group

Participants aged 45-54 years reported the highest levels of awareness (76.2%), while adults aged 18-34 years had the lowest levels of reported awareness (62.6%). Figure 3 shows the levels of awareness by age categories in 2019. There was a significant association between age and awareness in 2019 with older participants more likely to be aware of 10.000 Steps than the youngest participants (Table 3).

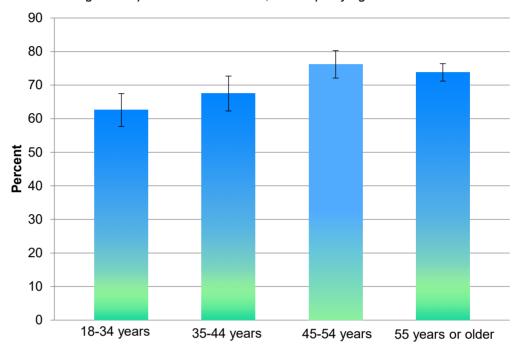


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents aware of 10,000 Steps by age in 2019.

Level of Education

Participants with higher levels of education (bachelor degree, graduate certificate or graduate diploma, and postgraduate degree) reported a higher level of awareness of the 10,000 Steps program (75.7%, 80.4% and 74.5%, respectively) than participants with the lowest levels of education (Certificate level, 67.1% and Year 12 or less, 65.8%). Figure 4 shows the percentage of awareness by education levels in 2019. When adjusting for all demographics, there was a significant association between level of education and awareness in 2019 with participants reporting a higher level of education more likely to be aware of 10,000 Steps than those with a secondary school education or less (Table 3).



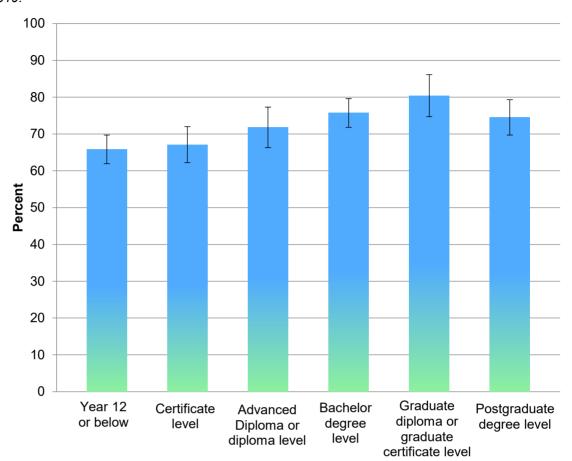


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents aware of 10,000 Steps by level of education in 2019.

SEIFA

Participants from the least disadvantaged areas (4th and 5th quintiles) had the highest levels of awareness of the 10,000 Steps program (74.6% and 73.1%, respectively). Participants from the most disadvantaged area (1st quintile) reported the lowest awareness of the 10,000 Steps program at 64.5% (Figure 5). When adjusting for other demographic factors, there was a significant association between SEIFA and awareness with those from the least disadvantaged areas (4th and 5th quintile) more likely to be aware of 10,000 Steps than those from the most disadvantaged area (1st quintile).



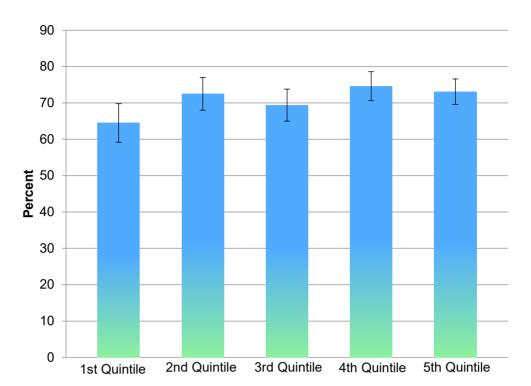


Figure 5. Percentage of respondents aware of 10,000 Steps by SEIFA in 2019.

Physical Activity Levels

Levels of awareness were lowest (63.4%) in those reporting no physical activity, and increased in those reporting being inactive (70.9%) and being active (79.4%; Figure 8). Logistic regression analysis revealed that relative to those people reporting no activity, those reporting being active had significantly higher levels of awareness (Table 3).



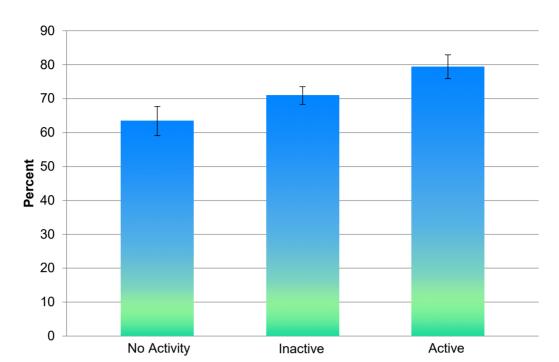


Figure 8. Percentage of respondents aware of 10,000 Steps by physical activity levels in 2019.

10,000 Steps Awareness compared to other health related initiatives

During the 2019 omnibus survey respondents were also asked about their awareness of other similar physical activity and health programs. Awareness of 10,000 Steps (71.3%) was higher compared to the other programs assessed. Of the other programs, participants were most aware of the Quit HQ/13Quit/Quitline program (61.5%), Heart Foundation Walking program (41.0%), and Queensland's "Healthier. Happier." program (9.4%). Fewer participants were aware of Move it Aus (8.9%), My Health for Life (8.2%), Make Healthy Normal (7.6%), Country Kitchens (4.0%) and Get Healthy Coaching Service (2.7%). Almost a quarter of all survey respondents (22.9%) reported that they were not aware of any of the physical activity and health programs listed above.

10,000 Steps Awareness in Queensland

Awareness of 10,000 Steps has been determined using the Queensland Social Survey (QSS) from 2005 to 2014, the National Social Survey (NSS) from 2015 to 2017 and online omnibus surveys in 2018 and 2019. The national sample was divided into states to determine awareness in Queensland adults. In 2019, awareness in Queensland was found to be 76.5%. Awareness was quite high across most Australian states. Over 70% of adults from South Australia (78.9%), Australian Capital Territory (75.9%) and Victoria (71.3%) were aware of 10,000 Steps. Slightly lower levels of awareness were observed individuals from Tasmania (69.8%), New South Wales (67.6%) and Western Australia (66.3%) with Northern Territory residents reporting the lowest levels of awareness (56.3%).



Awareness of Queensland respondents from 2005 to 2019 has steadily increased from 33.5% to over 75% (Figure 9). The decrease observed from 2017 to 2018 may be due to sampling and survey differences as discussed in the previous awareness report [15].

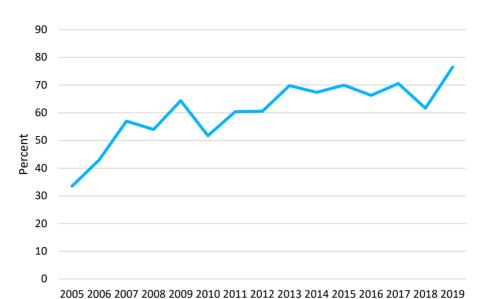


Figure 9. Percentage of Queensland respondents aware of 10,000 Steps – 2005 to 2019

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the continued promotion of the 10,000 Steps program across Queensland, it is important to investigate and monitor awareness of the program in the general population. Based on the 2019 omnibus survey, 71.3% of Australian residents are aware of the 10,000 Steps program, and 76.5% of Queenslanders are aware of the program.

An increase in awareness was observed this year (71.3%) from the 2017 and 2018 national awareness levels (67.7% and 55.9%). This increase was also observed in the Queensland sub-sample. It would appear that awareness is still increasing in the Australia population. Caution must be considered when making this assumption as different methodology has been used over the previous two years to assess awareness due to the closure of the Population Research Lab in 2017. While this year's survey was predominantly conducted online, it was conducted with a nationally representative sample and there was a CATI component. Therefore, it was more similar to previous methods than the 2018 version, and hopefully gives us more similar data to make the comparison of awareness over the years.

The 2019 awareness levels were associated with gender as previously found [2-15]. Differences in awareness between genders were also found in 10,000 Steps projects conducted in Belgium [17-18]. The disparity between awareness reported from men and women is also reflected in 10,000 Steps membership levels, where women make up nearly 70% of membership. Women also make up over 80% of the people who like and follow the 10,000 Steps Facebook page. While membership (on the Website and Facebook) favours the female gender, in 2019 over 60% of men were aware of the program. This percentage continues to increase over the years and suggests that while awareness is higher in women, men are also aware of the message. Future initiatives and promotions of the program could look at specifically encouraging the involvement of men to see if the awareness gap can be closed between genders.

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Differences were also observed in the awareness levels of age subgroups. As observed this year, and most previous years (with the exception of 2018) participants aged 18-34 years reported the lowest levels of awareness. This age group is also observed to be the most physically active [19-20]), therefore it could be argued that

they are not the primary target group for 10,000 Steps. The average age of participants on the 10,000 Steps website is approximately 45 years and this is supported by data from this survey showing that participants aged 45-54 reported the highest levels of awareness. As smaller proportions of older age groups participate in sufficient levels of physical activity it is important for 10,000 Steps to keep targeting and reaching this group.

It was found that 10,000 Steps awareness was lower in participants with a lower socioeconomic status (lower levels of education and located in more disadvantaged areas). This group is also observed to have lower levels of physical activity in both Queensland and Australia [19-20]. More needs to be done to assist these groups to participate in physical activity and it may be necessary for 10,000 Steps to tailor promotion and engagement strategies to target this population.

In the 2019 online omnibus survey, physical activity levels were determined using one item. This will provide different results in comparison to the full Active Australia Questionnaire [21] used to determine physical activity in the previous QSS and NSS CATI surveys and many other Australian studies. It was found that approximately 20% of the population were active which is much lower than other Australia wide studies have found (e.g. 48% reported in the Health of Australians report 2018). This may reflect actual lower levels of physical activity in this particular sample or it may be a reflection of the question used. Despite differences in measuring physical activity. those that were more active were also found to be more aware of 10,000 Steps. This was a trend also observed in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. While there is an association between these two variables it cannot be determined if participants are more active because they are aware of 10,000 Steps or vice versa. However it indicates that those individuals with no physical activity are less likely to be aware of the program and therefore strategies could be implemented to target them specifically. People undertaking no physical activity are a primary target group for the 10,000 Steps program as any increase in physical activity (and steps) will provide significant health benefits for participants.

Overall, the current data indicates that 10,000 Steps has been reasonably well promoted across Queensland with flow on effects to other states largely as a result of workplaces with multi-state locations. Despite the drop in 2018 which could be due to the change in survey methodology, overall awareness of the 10,000 Steps program across Australia has steadily increased since initially assessed in 2005. This provides further evidence that the promotion strategies adopted have been valuable for promoting the program to individuals, workplaces, organisations and community groups. As the promotion of the 10,000 Steps program across the state continues it is predicted that levels of awareness will continue to rise across Queensland and nationwide.

Future Recommendations

From the data, the following sub-groups have been identified as those which could be prioritised in future marketing strategies: men, individuals from lower socio-economic groups (lower education levels and most disadvantaged SEIFA quintiles), and people participating in no physical activity. These groups are less likely to be aware of the 10,000 Steps program compared with other demographic groups.

Continued examination of the awareness of 10,000 Steps across Queensland and nationwide should be conducted to monitor the promotion strategy of the project and to identify socio-demographic groups that could be prioritised in future promotional efforts.



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APPENDIX: TABLES

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the total sample of participants 2019

	2019	2019
Characteristic	n ^a	%
Gender		
Men	1017	46.4
Women	1176	53.6
Age Group		
18-34 years	370	16.9
35-44 years	307	14.1
45-54 years	405	18.5
≥55 years	1103	50.5
Level of Education		
Year 12 or below	571	26.6
Certificate level	348	16.2
Advanced Diploma or diploma level	261	12.1
Bachelor degree level	465	21.6
Graduate diploma or graduate certificate level	185	8.6
Postgraduate degree level	320	14.9
SEIFA		
1 st Quintile (Most disadvantaged)	308	14.0
2 nd Quintile	385	17.5
3 rd Quintile	426	19.4
4 th Quintile	457	20.8
5 th Quintile (Least disadvantaged)	621	28.3
PA Levels		
No Activity	476	21.7
Inactive	1194	54.3
Active	527	24.0

^a n = 2199



Table 2. National awareness and crude odds ratios for awareness by demographic variables 2019

Variable	n Aware	%	Crude	95%
		Aware	OR	CI
Gender				
Men	668	66.1	1	Reference
Women	889	75.8	1.60	1.33-1.93
Age Group				
18-34 years	231	62.6	1	Reference
35-44 years	206	67.5	1.24	0.90-1.71
45-54 years	308	76.2	1.72	1.40-2.62
≥55 years	810	73.8	1.69	1.31-2.17
Level of Education				
Year 12 or below	374	65.8	1	Reference
Certificate level	232	67.1	1.06	0.80-1.40
Advanced Diploma or diploma level	186	71.8	1.32	0.96-1.82
Bachelor degree level	352	75.7	1.61	1.23-2.13
Graduate diploma or graduate certificate level	148	80.4	2.13	1.43-3.19
Postgraduate degree level	237	74.5	1.52	1.12-2.06
SEIFA				
1st Quintile (Most disadvantaged)	198	64.5	1	Reference
2 nd Quintile	279	72.5	1.45	1.05-2.00
3 rd Quintile	292	69.4	1.25	0.91-1.70
4 th Quintile	340	74.6	1.61	1.18-2.21
5 th Quintile (Least disadvantaged)	452	73.1	1.50	1.12-2.01
ATSI Status				
Not ATSI	1529	71.4	1	Reference
ATSI	28	63.6	0.70	0.38-1.30
PA Levels				
No Activity	300	63.4	1	Reference
Inactive	844	70.9	1.41	1.12-1.76
Active	416	79.4	2.22	1.68-2.95



Table 3. Adjusted odds ratios for national awareness by demographic variables 2019

Variable	Adjusted OR ^a	95% CI
Gender		
Men	1	Reference
Women	1.70	1.40-2.07
Age Group		
18-34 years	1	Reference
35-44 years	1.15	0.82-1.60
45-54 years	1.87	1.36-2.59
≥55 years	1.81	1.39-2.36
Level of Education		
Year 12 or below	1	Reference
Certificate level	1.12	0.87-1.51
Advanced Diploma or diploma level	1.34	0.96-1.87
Bachelor degree level	1.66	1.24-2.21
Graduate diploma or graduate certificate level	2.02	1.32-3.08
Postgraduate degree level	1.52	1.10-2.10
SEIFA		
1 st Quintile (Most disadvantaged)	1	Reference
2 nd Quintile	1.31	0.94-1.84
3 rd Quintile	1.24	0.89-1.72
4 th Quintile	1.54	1.11-2.14
5 th Quintile (Least disadvantaged)	1.39	1.01-1.90
PA Levels		
No Activity	1	Reference
Inactive	1.40	1.10-1.77
Active	2.24	1.66-3.02

^an = 2117



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