



# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

In public health and in medicine, the concept of health-related quality of life (HRQOL) refers to an individual's perceived physical and mental health over time. HRQOL is often used to measure the effects of health behaviors and chronic illnesses and how these affect a person's day-to-day life. Tracking HRQOL in different populations can identify subgroups with poor physical or mental health and help guide policies and interventions to improve their health.<sup>1</sup>

Unhealthy days are an estimate of HRQOL. In 2004, the California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) asked 4,557<sup>2</sup> California women aged 18 and older, "Now thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?" This was followed by, "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" Unhealthy days are calculated as the overall number of days during the previous 30 days when the respondent felt that either her physical or mental health was not good.

Responses to the two questions above were combined to calculate a summary index of overall unhealthy days, with a logical maximum of 30 unhealthy days. For example, a person who reported 4 physically unhealthy days and 2 mentally unhealthy days was assigned a value of 6 unhealthy days, while someone who reported 30 physically unhealthy days and 30

mentally unhealthy days was assigned the maximum of 30 unhealthy days.<sup>3</sup> Unhealthy days can be related to a number of risk factors. The table shows different risk factors by the mean number of unhealthy days among California women, as well as 95.0 percent confidence intervals.

Overall, more than one-quarter of the past 30 days were unhealthy among California women (7.8 days). California women with a high school education or less had a statistically significant higher mean number of unhealthy days in the past 30 days (9.2 days) than women with some college (7.9 days) or a college education or more (5.9 days).<sup>4</sup> Women who reported being obese<sup>5</sup> had a statistically significant higher mean number of unhealthy days (10.5 days) than those who reported not being obese (7.0 days). Likewise, women who reported being overweight or obese<sup>6</sup> had a statistically significant higher mean number of unhealthy days (9.0 days) than those who reported not being overweight or obese (6.6 days).

All levels of smoking (current smoker, former smoker, and never smoked) were statistically different as well. California women who reported physical, mental, or emotional limitations had a statistically significant higher mean number of unhealthy days (16.1 days) than those who did not (5.9 days). Finally, California women who reported having food insecurity with hunger reported a statistically significant higher mean number of unhealthy days (11.5 days) than women who reported having food security (6.4 days).

## Unhealthy Days Among California Women, 2004

Survey Research Group

**Public Health Message:** *Unhealthy days are an estimate of health-related quality of life, which is affected by chronic disease and illness. Unhealthy days are a broad measure that health professionals can use to identify and better understand how health behaviors and chronic illness affects a person's well being.*

1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (November 2000). *Measuring Healthy Days*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

2 Don't know and refused responses were omitted, final n=4,519.

# Unhealthy Days Among California Women, 2004

Survey Research Group

## Unhealthy Days Among California Women, 2004

TOPICS	VARIABLE	N	Mean # of Unhealthy Days	95 percent CL for Mean	
	Overall	4519	7.8	7.5	8.2
RACE/ETHNICITY	White	2605	7.3	6.9	7.7
	Black/African American	249	8.9	7.5	10.4
	Hispanic	1345	8.7	8.1	9.4
	Other	320	6.7	5.6	7.9
AGE	18-24	359	6.9	5.9	7.9
	25-34	899	6.9	6.3	7.6
	35-44	1030	7.9	7.2	8.6
	45-54	855	8.9	8.0	9.7
	55-64	644	8.3	7.2	9.3
	65+	732	8.3	7.3	9.2
EDUCATION	High School graduate or less	1731	9.2	8.6	9.8
	Some college	1270	7.9	7.3	8.5
	College graduate or more	1518	5.9	5.4	6.3
POVERTY STATUS	Below poverty	620	9.9	8.9	10.9
	100 percent-200 percent	759	10.1	9.2	11.0
	201 percent and above	2753	6.5	6.1	6.9
	Unknown	387	7.5	6.2	8.8
SMOKING STATUS	Current smoker	550	12.0	10.9	13.1
	Former smoker	991	8.1	7.4	8.9
	Never smoked	2973	7.0	6.6	7.4
ACUTE DRINKING <sup>1</sup>	Not at risk	3783	7.9	7.5	8.2
	At risk	302	8.7	7.5	10.0
CHRONIC DRINKING <sup>2</sup>	Not at risk	4067	7.9	6.7	7.7
	At risk	64	10.7	7.6	13.8
GENERAL HEALTH STATUS	Excellent, very good, or good health	3710	5.8	5.5	6.1
	Fair or poor health	809	16.8	15.8	17.7
OBESITY <sup>3</sup>	Obese	1037	10.5	9.7	11.3
	Not obese	3291	7.0	6.6	7.4
OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE <sup>4</sup>	Overweight or obese	2248	9.0	8.5	9.5
	Not overweight or obese	2080	6.6	6.1	7.0
ASTHMA <sup>5</sup>	Yes	627	11.2	10.2	12.2
	No	3613	7.3	6.9	7.7
DIABETES <sup>5</sup>	Yes	306	14.0	12.5	15.6
	No	3883	7.4	7.0	7.8
	Gestational diabetes	49	8.1	5.7	10.5
PHYSICAL, MENTAL, OR EMOTIONAL LIMITATIONS <sup>6</sup>	Yes	910	16.1	15.2	17.0
	No	3604	5.9	5.5	6.2
OSTEOPOROSIS <sup>5</sup>	Yes	422	11.5	10.1	12.9
	No	3795	7.6	7.2	7.9
FOOD INSECURITY <sup>7</sup>	Food insecure	1094	11.4	10.6	12.2
	Food secure	3339	6.4	6.1	6.8

Note: \*All don't know or refused responses are set to missing.

\*Tukey significance level at .05

1 Acute drinking includes those who had 5+ drinks on one occasion in the past 30 days.

2 Chronic drinking includes those who had 60+ drinks in the past 30 days.

3 Obesity is defined as a body mass index greater than or equal to 30.

4 Overweight or obese is defined as a body mass index greater than or equal to 25.

5 Respondent reported doctor diagnosis.

6 "Respondent reported having physical, mental, or emotional limitations".

7 Food insecurity with hunger (6 question scale defined by California Prevention and Nutrition Section).

Source: 2004 California Women's Health Survey  
Weighted to the 2000 CA population

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2005). How is the summary index of unhealthy days calculated? Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Retrieved 9/14/05), <http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/>.

4 Tukey significance testing (p<0.05).

5 Obese is defined as a body mass index greater than or equal to 30.

6 Overweight or obese is defined as a body mass index greater than or equal to 25.

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