

# Nearly half of the South Australian population not meeting recommended exercise guidelines

24 February 2014, by Rosanna Galvin



Despite the knowledge that physical activity is crucial to good health, nearly half of the South Australian population are not meeting recommended guidelines of at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days a week.

And according to a new University of South Australia study undertaken in the state's Riverland region, the number of rural South Australians meeting those guidelines is even less.

Researchers Professor Mark Daniel and Suzanne Carroll from UniSA's School of Population Health and Associate Professor Jim Dollman from the School of Health Sciences are now calling for urgent interventions to take place in the Riverland to address the health impacts of insufficient physical activity.

"Population health data indicates that 47 per cent of South Australians are insufficiently inactive and in the rural Riverland region, that number rises to 56.9 per cent," Carroll says.

"This is of particular concern for rural Australians

as they have higher levels of mortality, disease and [health](#) risk factors than their city counterparts.

"Rural residents are, as a whole, generally older and have fewer years of completed education. These are all factors related to lower physical activity levels.

"Previous studies conducted in the U.S. found that rural residents face a number of barriers to exercise, including limited accessibility and availability of places to be physically active, extreme weather, traffic and fear of unattended dogs. But little is known about the factors associated with physical activity among rural-dwelling Australians."

The study, which involved interviews with nearly 300 participants in the Riverland, found that the region would benefit greatly from sex-specific intervention strategies that promote physical activity.

"The results of the study suggest that men would benefit from strategies that enhance social connectedness and encourage participation in physical activity outside of work. For women, programs aimed to develop a regular physical activity routine and improve self-efficacy may be beneficial," Carroll says.

"While our study focused on the Riverland community in South Australia, we believe the results may be applicable to other Australian rural populations."

The study 'Sex-specific correlates of adult [physical activity](#) in an Australian rural community' was published in the February issue of the Australian Journal of Rural Health.

**More information:** "Sex-specific correlates of adult physical activity in an Australian rural community." Carroll S, Dollman J, Daniel M. *Aust. J Rural Health*. 2014 Feb;22(1):15-22. [DOI: 10.1111/ajr.12081](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.12081).

Provided by University of South Australia

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