



Chronic Conditions in the Australian Capital Territory: National strategic framework for chronic conditions reporting framework – ACT results

Results in brief

The burden of chronic conditions for the ACT health system is growing as prevalence increases with an ageing population. Measuring outcomes, determinants and incidence enables health professionals and policy makers to more confidently develop strategies and interventions to address chronic condition management.

The AIHW developed 45 indicators to monitor progress against the objectives of the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions. This paper reports ACT results for the Chronic Conditions reporting framework along with comparisons to national estimates. To view the AIHW national reporting framework results, [click here](#).

Key messages

- Compared to national estimates, the ACT performs well on many measures of chronic disease prevalence and social determinants of health, such as income, education, and employment.
- The ACT has lower smoking rates and rates of bowel cancer than Australia, and the incidence rate for lung cancer has decreased.
- However, there are areas where the ACT performs less favourably compared to the rest of Australia including:
 - Hay fever rates (ACT: 29.2%, Australia: 19.3%)
 - Deferred access to GP due to cost (ACT: 7.7%, Australia: 3.8%)



Download all indicator tables

Chronic conditions

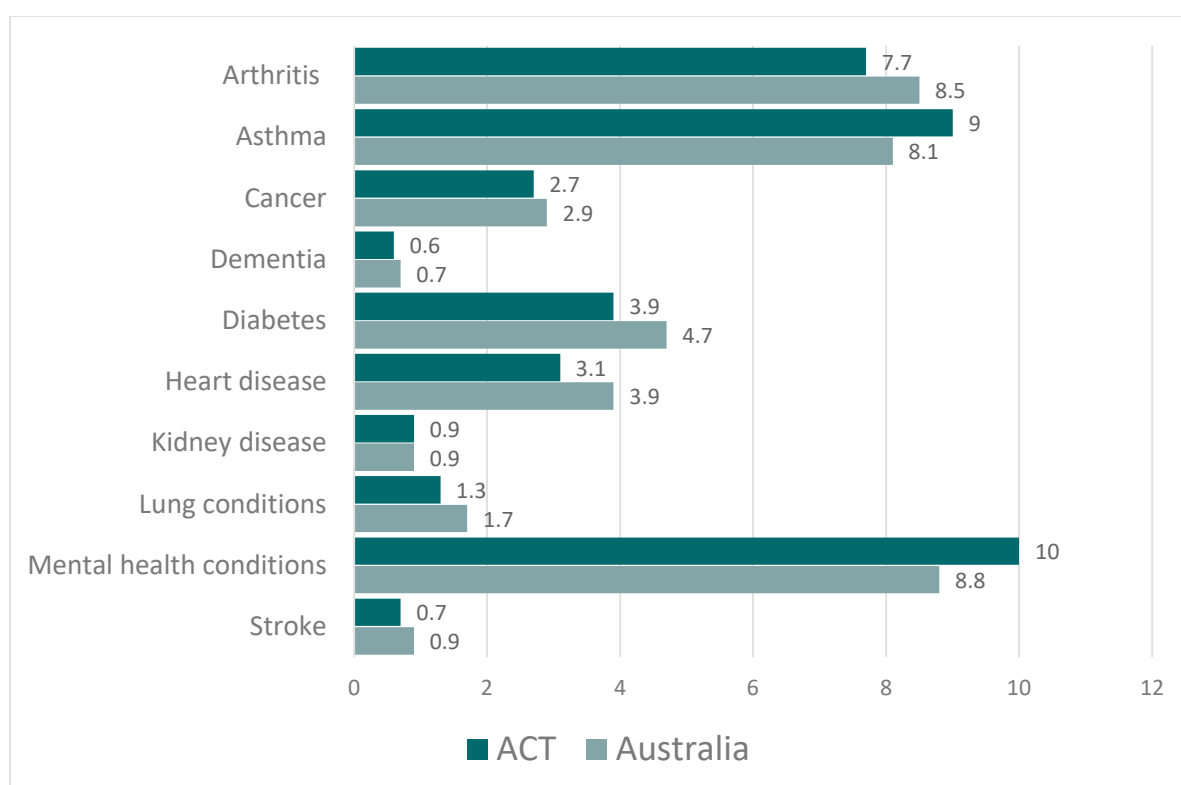
Chronic conditions (also referred to as chronic diseases, non-communicable diseases or long-term health conditions) are generally characterised by their long-lasting and persistent effects¹.

Chronic conditions often have complex and multiple causes. They are not usually immediately life threatening but tend to develop gradually, becoming more common with age. Once present, they often persist throughout a person's life, so there is generally a need for long-term management by individuals and health professionals¹.

Selected long term health conditions

In 2021, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' population census asked respondents if they had been told by a doctor or nurse that they have a long-term health condition. Around 150,000 (32.9%) Canberrans indicated that they had a long-term health condition. The most often reported conditions were mental health conditions (10%), asthma (9.0%) and arthritis (7.7%). Figure 1 shows ACT comparisons with national estimates.

Figure 1: Census question, 'do you have any long-term health conditions' (per cent), all ages, ACT and Australia



Framework indicators

Table 1 presents a sub-set of the data available in the detailed tables ([download here](#)). Overall, the prevalence of chronic conditions in the ACT is similar to national figures. However, the prevalence of hay-fever is around 50% higher in the ACT than Australia.

While a smaller proportion of Canberrans earn less than \$650 gross weekly income (9.0%) than nationally (16.5%), a higher proportion of Canberrans reported deferring access to a GP due to cost than nationally (7.7% and 3.8% respectively) and deferred the purchase of prescriptions due to cost (8.0% and 6.6% respectively).

Table 1. Selected chronic conditions framework indicators, per cent, ACT and Australia

	ACT	Australia
Mental health		
High/ very high psychological distress	11.1	13.0
Physical health		
Heart, stroke and vascular disease	4.5	4.2
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder	2.4	2.5
Back problems (dorsopathies)	16.6	15.7
Hayfever and allergic rhinitis	29.2	19.3
Fruit and vegetable consumption		
Inadequate fruit consumption	51.9	49.3
Inadequate vegetable consumption	93.5	92.6
Financial inequity		
Less than \$650 gross weekly income	9.0	16.5
Deferred access to GP services due to cost	7.7	3.8
Deferred purchase of prescription due to cost	8.0	6.6
Delayed seeing dentist due to cost	17.6	19.1
Tobacco and alcohol		
Daily smoker	10.6	14.0
Smoked during first 20 weeks of pregnancy	5.6	9.0
Alcohol, exceeded lifetime risk guideline	15.8	16.0
Wait times		
Number of days before 90% of radiotherapy patients have begun treatment	44 days	24 days

Note:

For further information regarding these indicators including reference period and sources, please download the detailed ACT indicator set ([Download](#)).

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions, reporting framework: indicator results, catalogue number PHE 299, AIHW, Australian Government. Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-disease/nsf-for-chronic-condition-indicator-results/summary>

Note

This document provides a brief introduction to the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions - reporting framework and is best viewed in conjunction with the detailed ACT statistical tables and national reports. More information on the development of the framework can be found at <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/09/national-strategic-framework-for-chronic-conditions.pdf>



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