

Memorandum

Mental health information in the Health and Independence Report 2023

Date due to MO:	1 August 2024	Action required by:	N/A
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Health Report number:	H2024047618
To:	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
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Mental health information in the Health and Independence Report 2023

Purpose

1. This memo responds to your request for a summary of content and key findings included in the Health and Independence Report 2023 (the Report) that are relevant to your Mental Health portfolio. The Report is the Director-General's report to the Minister of Health on the state of public health in New Zealand for the 2023 calendar year.

Key findings

2. Key findings by relevant to your Mental Health portfolio are summarised below. This information is presented by the sections of the Report.

People of Aotearoa New Zealand

3. Unmet need for mental health and addiction services is presented to highlight examples of inequities for priority populations – see table 1 in the Report.
4. Unmet need for mental health and addiction services (where an individual feels like they need professional help) is highest for disabled adults (18.9%, compared to 8.4% for the total population).

Causes of health loss

5. The Government's focus on the 5 + 5 concept is acknowledged in the Report. The 5 + 5 concept prioritises the prevention of five non-communicable diseases, including mental health, by addressing five modifiable risk factors.
6. Results from the Global Burden of Disease have been included:
 - a. Mental disorders accounted for 11% of health loss (measured as disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)) in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2021.
 - b. Conditions contributing substantially to the burden of disease for mental health disorders included anxiety disorders (3.5% of total DALYs) and depressive disorders (2.6% of total DALYs).
7. Data from the New Zealand Health Survey module (the module) on mental health and problematic substance use are presented. Results from the module were previously shared with you in May (H2024036922) and are published in a data explorer and report. Key results from the module that are included in the Report include:
 - a. The prevalence of adults experiencing mild or greater anxiety and/or depression symptoms in the two weeks before this survey has increased from 25.0% in 2016/17 to 34.8% in 2021–23.
 - b. Moderate or greater symptoms of anxiety and/or depression in adults increased at a greater rate than mild symptoms over the period.

- c. The prevalence of children aged 2–14 years likely to have emotional and/or behavioural problems increased from 9.2% in 2016/17 to 13.0% in 2021–23.
 - d. The prevalence of adults with moderate or high risk of problematic substance use decreased between 2016/17 and 2021–23 (from 32.6% to 27.0%).
 - e. The prevalence of moderate or high risk of problematic use of both tobacco and alcohol decreased between 2016/17 and 2021–23 (from 20.7% to 14.6% for tobacco and 15.8% to 13.0% for alcohol). The prevalence of moderate or high risk of problematic use of illicit substances also increased (from 10.1% to 11.2%).
 - f. Unmet need (where an individual feels like they need professional help) for mental health and addiction services has increased between 2016/17 and 2021–2023 for both adults (rising from 4.9% to 8.4%) and children (rising from 4.8% to 6.8%).
8. Data from Health New Zealand on the numbers of suicides is also presented.
- a. The annual rate of suspected self-inflicted death (suspected suicide) was 10.6 per 100,000 population.
 - b. This rate was 9.2% lower than the average rate over the last 14 financial years, however those rates are highly variable.
 - c. It is important to not conflate mental illness with suicide or to equate these figures with some measure of the performance of the mental health system. People who die by suicide are almost always acutely distressed but do not necessarily have a mental health diagnosis.

Next steps

9. Officials from the Ministry of Health will discuss the report, and key findings, with you at your meeting on Monday 5 August.



Peter Dolan
Group Manager

Evidence Research and Innovation

Date: 1 August 2024

The Health and Independence Report 2023 is published here:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/health-and-independence-report-2023>