

## Barriers to active transport to and from school

The reasons parents and caregivers gave for what prevents their children walking, biking, skating or using other forms of physical activity to go to and from school<sup>14</sup> were:

- we live too far from school (67.5%, 64.1–70.9)
- busy traffic / main road (23.0%, 20.4–25.6)
- too dangerous, for reasons other than traffic (17.3%, 14.7–19.9)
- it takes too long / there is not enough time (12.0%, 9.7–14.3)
- the weather (5.9%, 4.1–7.7)
- child doesn't want to (4.4%, 3.1–5.7)
- child is unable to due to a health condition (1.9%, 0.9–2.9)
- something else (8.9%, 6.9–10.8).

Parents of European/Other children were significantly more likely to report traffic (SRR: 1.10, 1.06–1.15) and lack of time (SRR: 1.09, 1.02–1.15) as a barrier compared to all parents. Parents of Pacific children were significantly more likely to report that it was too dangerous, for reasons other than traffic (SRR: 1.59, 1.17–2.00).

## Television watching

### Introduction

Watching television is a very sedentary behaviour. Time spent watching television displaces opportunities for more active pursuits and increases exposure to advertising, which has been shown to adversely affect children's food choices through the promotion of foods that can lead to weight gain. Watching television has also been associated with increased consumption of energy-dense foods and drinks (Utter et al 2006).

Many studies have found that watching two or more hours of television per day in childhood increases the risk of obesity in both childhood and adulthood (Scragg et al 2006; World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research 2007). The Dunedin Multidisciplinary Study, following children from their birth in 1972/73 through to adulthood, found that watching television for more than two hours a day in childhood and adolescence explained 17% of overweight, 15% of raised blood cholesterol, 17% of smoking and 15% of poor fitness at age 26 (Hancox et al 2004). Sustained watching of television for more than two hours a day in childhood is also associated with poor behavioural outcomes and low social skills (Mistry et al 2007).

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) physical activity guidelines for children and young people recommend that 5–18-year-olds should spend less than two hours a day out of school time in front of television, computers and game consoles (Ministry of Education 2007).

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<sup>14</sup> For those parents and caregivers whose children do not usually use active transport to school. Note that multiple responses were possible.

## What were the survey questions?

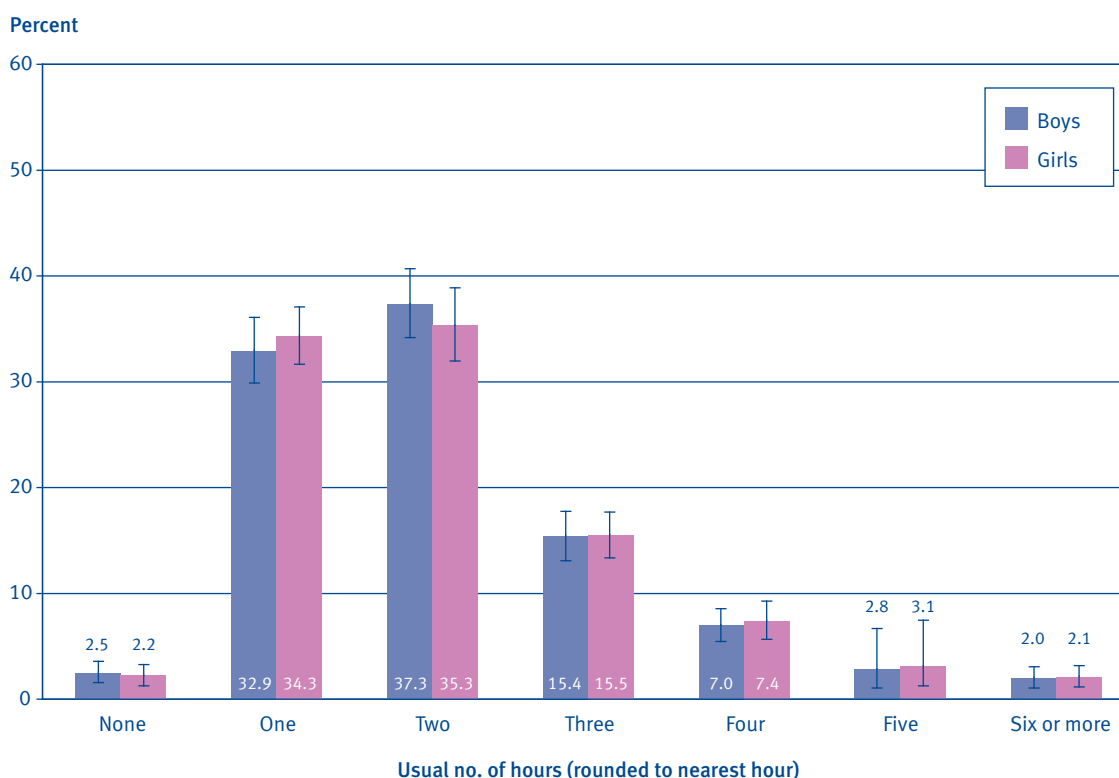
In the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey, parents and caregivers of children aged 5–14 years were asked how many hours (rounded to the nearest hour) their child usually watched television, on a weekday and over the weekend separately, to aid recall.

Here, weekend and weekday data have been combined to produce an indicator for usually watched two or more hours of television a day (averaged over the week).

## Television watching for children aged 5–14 years

Two out of three children aged 5–14 years usually watched two or more hours of television a day (64.1%, 62.1–66.2). This equates to 368,700 children watching two or more hours of television a day (averaged over the week). There was no difference by gender in the hours of television usually watched, adjusted for age (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14: Number of hours of television usually watched per day, for children aged 5–14 years, by gender (age standardised prevalence)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

The remainder of this section focuses on those children who usually watched two or more hours of television per day.

## Television watching, by age group

Children aged 10–14 years (71.8%, 69.3–74.3) were significantly more likely than children aged 5–9 years (56.3%, 53.0–59.7) to usually watch two or more hours of television a day. There was no difference by gender for these age groups.

## Television watching, by ethnic group

Table 2.6 gives an indication of the proportion and number of children in New Zealand’s main ethnic groups who usually watched two or more hours of television a day.

Table 2.6: Usually watched 2 or more hours of television per day for children aged 5–14 years, by ethnic group (unadjusted)

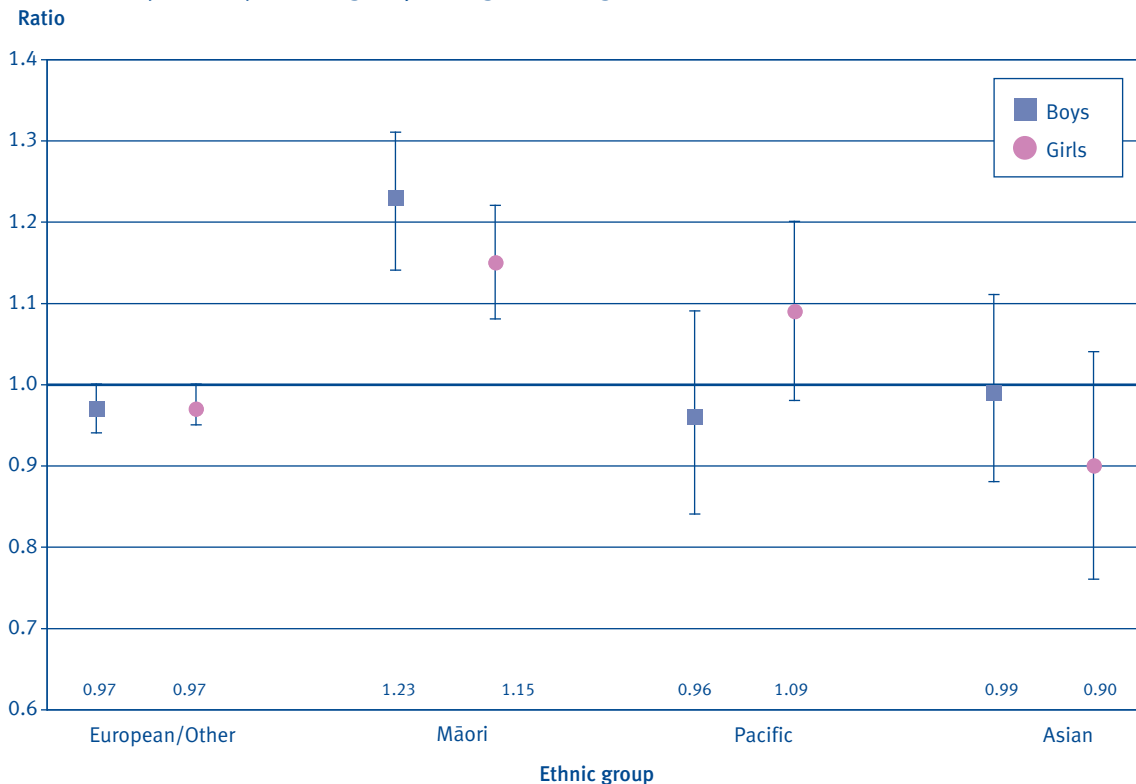
Ethnic group	Prevalence (95% CI)	Number of children
European/ Other	62.5 (60.0–65.0)	273000
Māori	76.1 (72.9–79.2)	98200
Pacific	65.7 (60.6–70.7)	42100
Asian	60.9 (54.3–67.5)	31500

Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Note: Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

Adjusted for age, Māori boys and girls were significantly more likely to watch television for two or more hours a day compared to boys and girls in the total population (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Usually watched 2 or more hours of television per day for children aged 5–14 years, by ethnic group and gender (age standardised rate ratio)



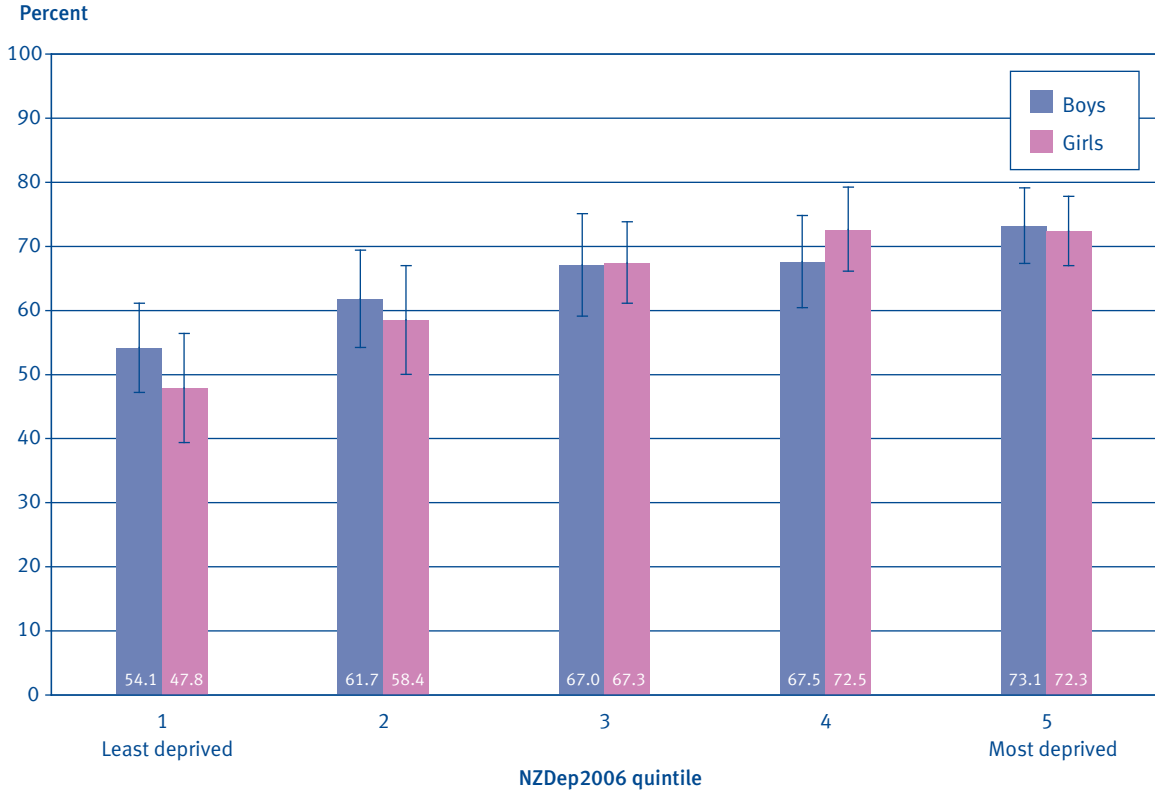
Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Notes: Age standardised to the WHO world population. Reference group, with a rate ratio of 1.0 (indicated by the bold line), is the total male female population aged from 5-14 years. Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

### Television watching, by neighbourhood deprivation

Children aged 5–14 years living in the most deprived neighbourhoods (NZDep2006 quintile 5) were significantly more likely to watch two or more hours of television a day than children in NZDep2006 quintile 1 (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.16: Usually watched 2 or more hours of television per day for children aged 5–14 years, by NZDep2006 and gender (age standardised prevalence)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey