Sun Exposure Survey 2016

Older Adult Report

September 2016

health promotion agency

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Data preparation and analysis was conducted by Dr Holly Trowland and Wa Anwar (HPA). This report was contributed to by Dr Holly Trowland, Wa Anwar, Sarah Dallas, Joanna Minster, Dr Karen McBride-Henry and Dr Rebecca Bell.

REVIEW

This report has not undergone external peer review.

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CONTENTS

KEY RESULTS

- Nine in 10 older adults were outside on the weekend for 15 minutes or more.
- Gardening was the most popular outdoor activity among older adults. The risk of sunburn was the same across all types of outdoor activities.

One in 10 older adults who were outside on the weekend got sunburnt.

- One in 10 older adults (11%) who were outside on the weekend got sunburnt.
- Half of all older adults used sunscreen and it was more likely to be used by females and people with fair skin. Sunscreen was most commonly applied to the face, nose and neck.
- Six in 10 older adults wore a hat when they were outside.
- Over half of older adults wore sunglasses most of the time when they were outside. Wearing sunglasses outside was more popular among older females than males.
- Of all body parts, older adults were less likely to use either clothing or sunscreen to protect their hands, forearms (arms below the elbows) shins (legs below the knees), and neck from the sun when outdoors.
- The body areas that were most often left uncovered by clothing were the hands, forearms and shins.
- Four in 10 older adults made a choice to stay in the shade when they were outside.
- One in 25 older adults used the Sun Protection Alert to prompt them about using sun protection.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Health Promotion Agency undertakes the Sun Exposure Survey (SES) every three years. The purpose of this ongoing research is to collect consistent information on attitudes and behaviours towards sun exposure, to facilitate comparison with historical survey data, and to inform future decision making in the sun safety and skin cancer prevention sector.

The SES was formerly known as the Triennial Sun Protection Survey (TSPS). The TSPS was conducted in 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006. The SES was then developed in 2009, following a review of the TSPS. In addition to a number of new questions being included, many of the questions from the TSPS were maintained in the SES, to allow for the continued monitoring of trends over time. The age range of the SES sample was also expanded – previously the TSPS included only adults aged 18 to 54 years and the revised SES included youth aged 13 to 17 years. The first SES was conducted in 2010 and subsequently in 2013. The sample age range was further expanded in 2016 to include older adults (aged 55 years and over).

2,272 interviews with 1,270 adults, 486 youth and 516 older adults.

METHODOLOGY

In 2016, the survey sample was everyone aged 13 years and over. Data collection comprised a total of 2,272 interviews with 1,270 adults (aged 18 to 54 years), 486 youth (aged 13 to 17 years) and 516 older adults (aged 55 years and over). The sample frame was based on Random Digit Dialling (RDD) using Exchange Information Numbers (EINs). Each EIN is attached to a specific geographic area in the country. EINs were combined with a string of four randomised numbers to give the number used for RDD. This method avoids selecting respondents from the White Pages Directory, thereby minimising any selection bias due to incomplete, unlisted and disconnected phone numbers. The use of RDD allows accurate representation of the geographic area surveyed since calls are scattered across the entire area and responses, therefore, reflect the underlying population characteristics.

Quota targets were established based on known population distributions from the 2013 census data. Quota targets were established as ‘hard’ targets that had to be achieved and ‘soft’ targets that permitted a variation of +/-10%. Hard targets were set for broad geographic region and soft targets were set for regional council boundary, age group and gender.

Refer to the *Sun Exposure Survey 2016 Methodology Report* (Health Promotion Agency, 2016) for a full account of the methodology used for the SES.

Data Collection

The data collection method was over the telephone. Interviewing was undertaken by Digipoll interviewers, who were trained in the questionnaire prior to commencing the work. The interviews were carried out between 11 January and 21 March 2016 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday between the hours of 4:00pm and 8:30pm. Sixty-four interviews were conducted on a Thursday following a long weekend.

Interviews were only conducted in areas in which at least one day of the weekend met the 'fine weather' criteria. The fine weather criteria is a scoring system based on regional meteorological data for the weekend where the survey fieldwork takes place. The scoring system takes into account the temperature, sky conditions and Ultraviolet Index. Only those regions with scores greater than 10 on at least one weekend day were eligible for interviews. The interviews were then conducted the following week in relation to the eligible day when a respondent reported being outdoors for 15 minutes or more between 10:00am and 4:00pm.

Weighting

Data from this survey were weighted so that no specific population was over or under-represented in the survey sample. This was done by calculating selection weights and by benchmarking using census data.

Response Rate

Of the 29,683 telephone calls made using RDD, a total of 8,556 respondents were identified as being eligible for inclusion in the survey. Of these eligible respondents, 2,272 completed the survey interviews, yielding a total response rate of 27% (2,272 ÷ 8,556).

OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

This report provides an overview of key findings from the 2016 SES on the sample of older adults aged 55 years and over. It is intended to provide a technical summary of the survey findings rather than a detailed discussion of the results in the context of existing research and literature.

Results are reported for all respondents (total) and also broken down into subgroups of gender (female or male), age group (55 to 64 years or 65+ years), area where the respondent lives (rural or city/town), and skin type (fair or medium/dark). For some of the subgroups there were missing responses, which means some of the subgroup totals do not add up to the total responses.

The fair skin type includes people who described their skin as "very fair" or "fair", the medium/dark skin type includes people who described their skin as "medium", "olive", "dark" or "very dark or black".

Only differences that are statistically significant, for which the p-value is less than 0.05, have been commented on in the text of this report. Statistical significance was measured either by looking at 95% confidence intervals or using t-tests.

Some graphs in this report include error bars that represent the 95% confidence intervals. The caption of the graphs includes a note on the "base" – this relates to the group of respondents for which the responses are being presented (eg, "outside during the previous weekend" or "sunburnt the previous weekend"). The number of respondents in the base is stated in the value of 'n' in the caption of each graph and this is an unweighted count.

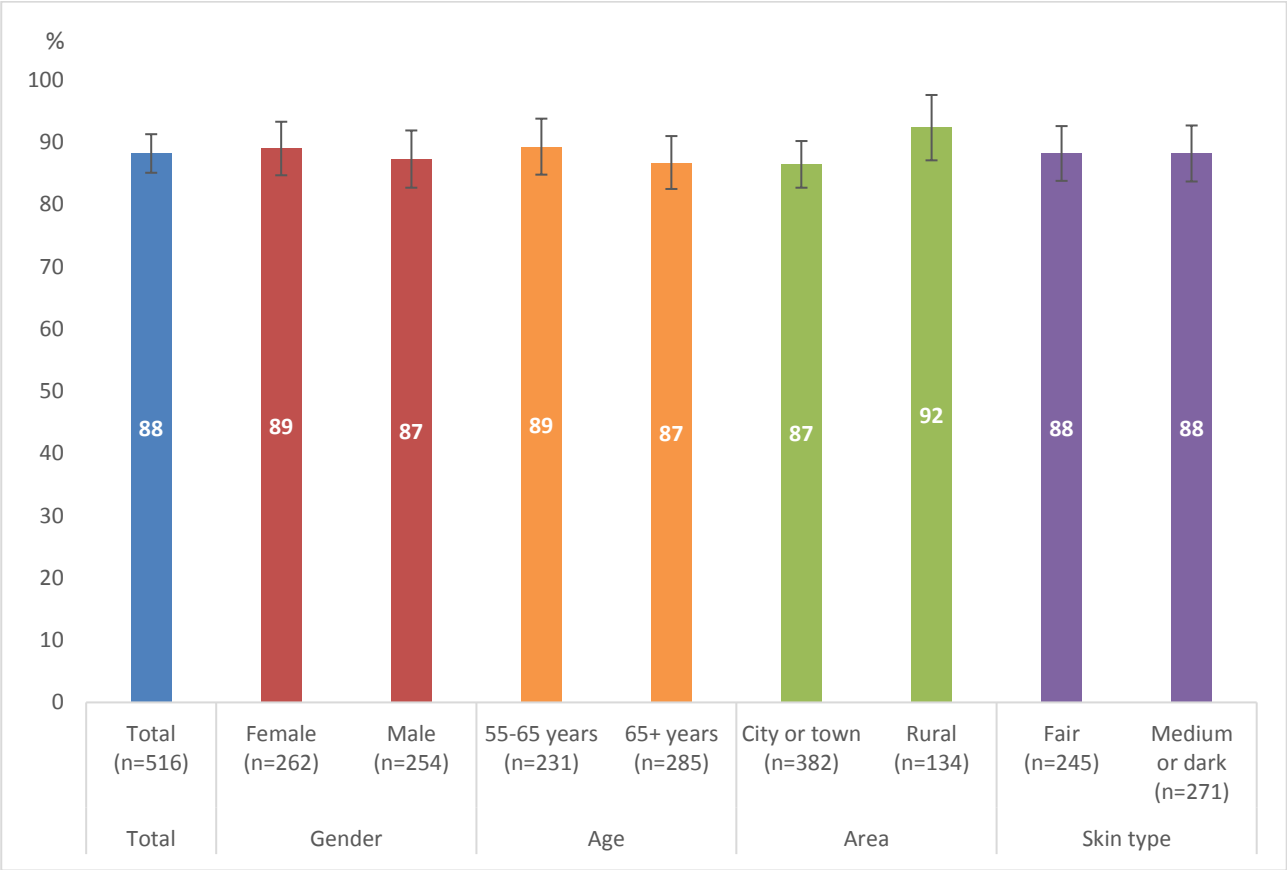
OTHER REPORTS ON THE 2016 SUN EXPOSURE SURVEY

- For a more comprehensive discussion of the results and time trend analysis from the adult sample, see *Sun Exposure Survey 2016: Adult topline time series report* (Trowland et al., 2016).
- For an overview of key findings for the entire sample, *see Sun Exposure Survey 2016: Demographic report* (Health Promotion Agency [HPA], 2016a).
- For an overview of key findings the youth sample, see *Sun Exposure Survey 2016: Youth report* (HPA, 2016b).
- For a full account of the methodology used refer to the methodology report: *Sun Exposure Survey 2016 Methodology Report*, 2016 prepared by Key Research Ltd (HPA, 2016).
- To review the full set of questions included in the 2016 SES refer to: *Health Promotion Agency Sun Exposure Survey 2016 Questionnaire* (HPA, 2016c).

SUN EXPOSURE

Nine in 10 older adults are outdoors on the weekend

Nearly nine out of 10 (88%) older adults were outdoors for 15 minutes or more between 10:00am and 4:00pm during the previous weekend. The proportion of people spending time outside during the weekend did not differ significantly between genders, age groups, areas of residence, or skin types.

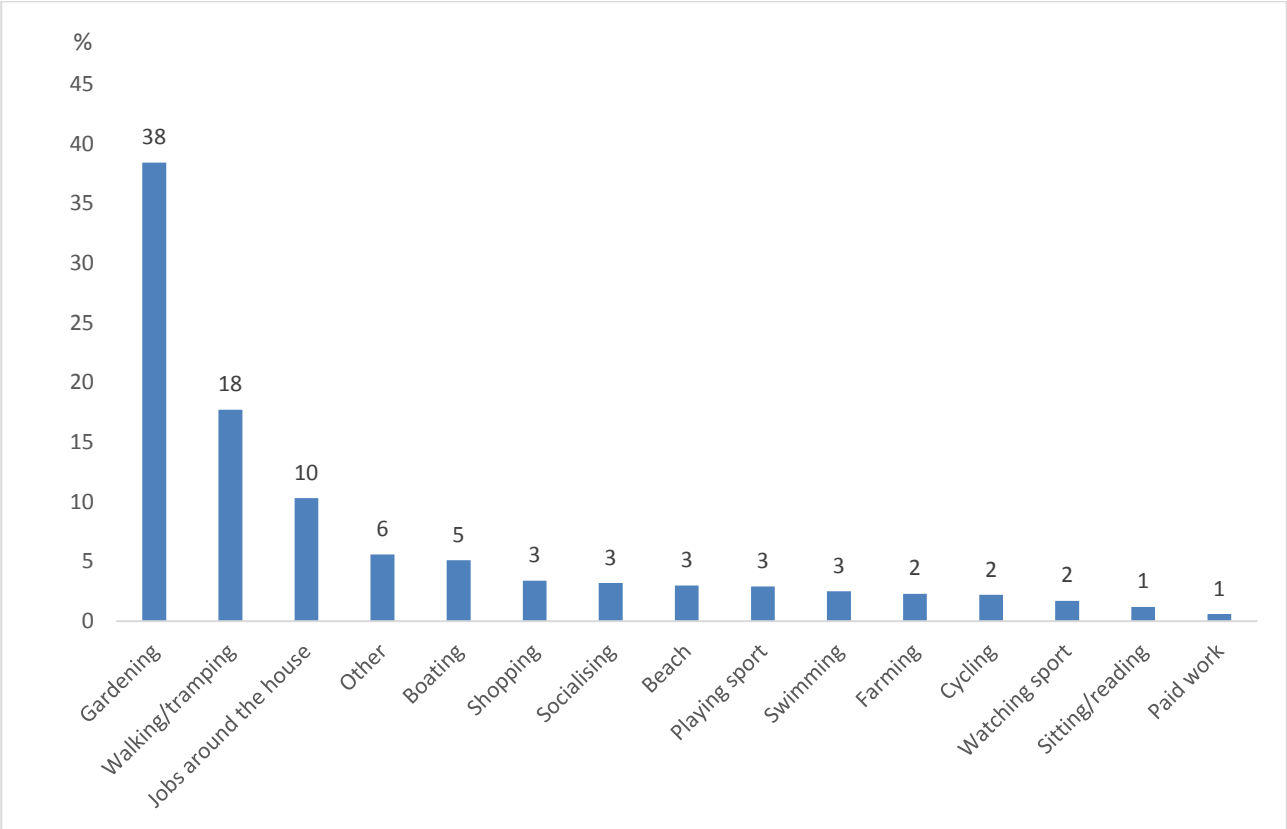


Respondents who spent 15 minutes or more outside during the previous weekend
Base: all older adults, 55+ years

Gardening is a popular outdoor activity among older adults

Gardening (38%) was the most popular weekend activity among older adults, followed by walking/tramping (18%) and jobs around the house (10%).

Women were significantly more likely than men to be gardening (48% for women and 28% for men) and less likely to be doing jobs around the house (5% for women and 16% for men) during the weekend. There were no differences for the other subgroups.



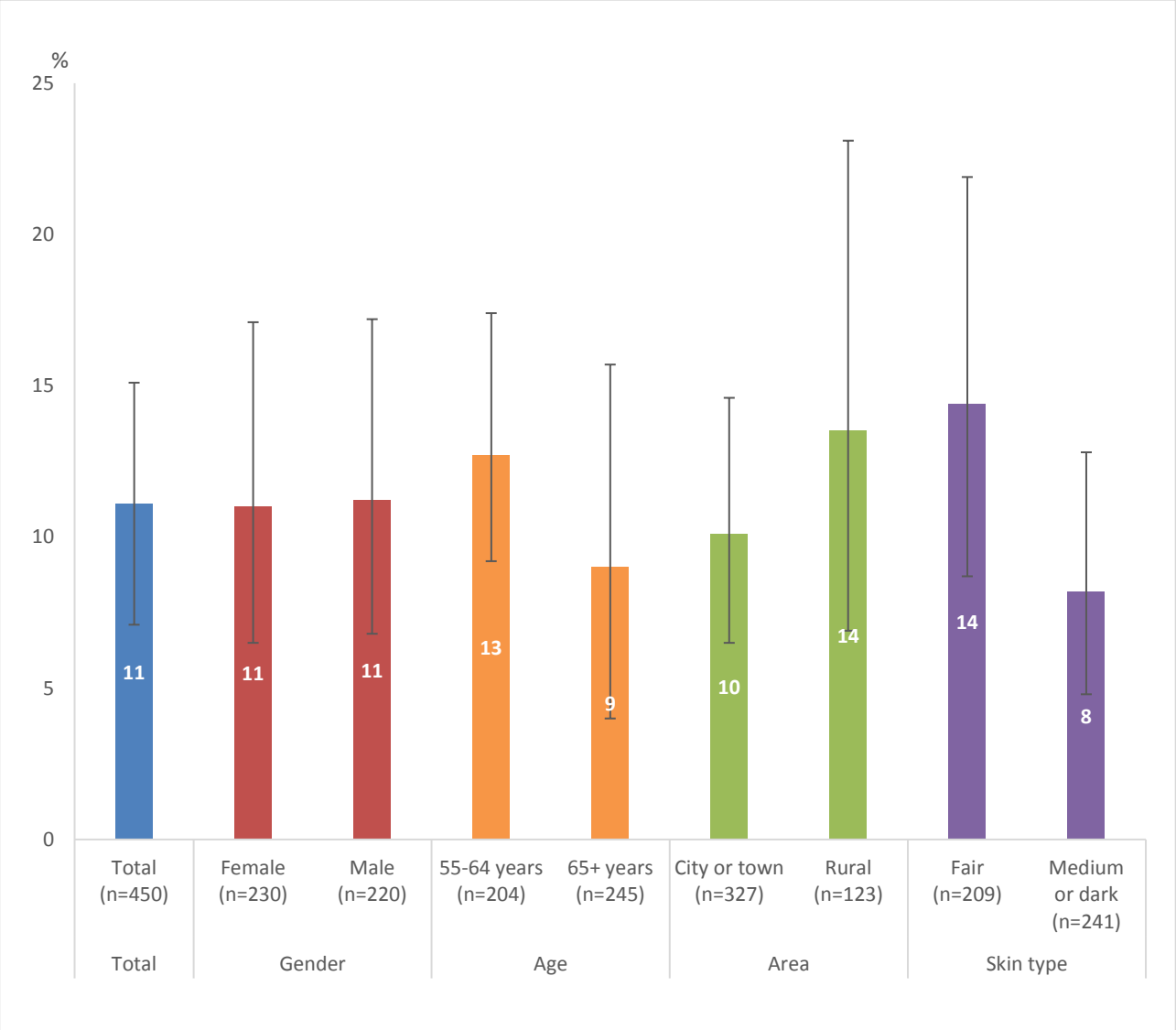
Main outdoor activity participated in during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years (n=435)

SUNBURN

One in 10 older adults who go outside during the weekend get sunburnt

Over one in 10 (11%) older adults who were outside for 15 minutes or more during the previous weekend reported that they got sunburnt. Sunburn was defined as having experienced any amount of reddening of the skin after being in the sun.

More people with fair skin were burnt (14%) than people with medium or dark skin (8%) and more people aged between 55 and 64 years (13%) were sunburnt than people over 65 years, although these differences were not statistically significant.

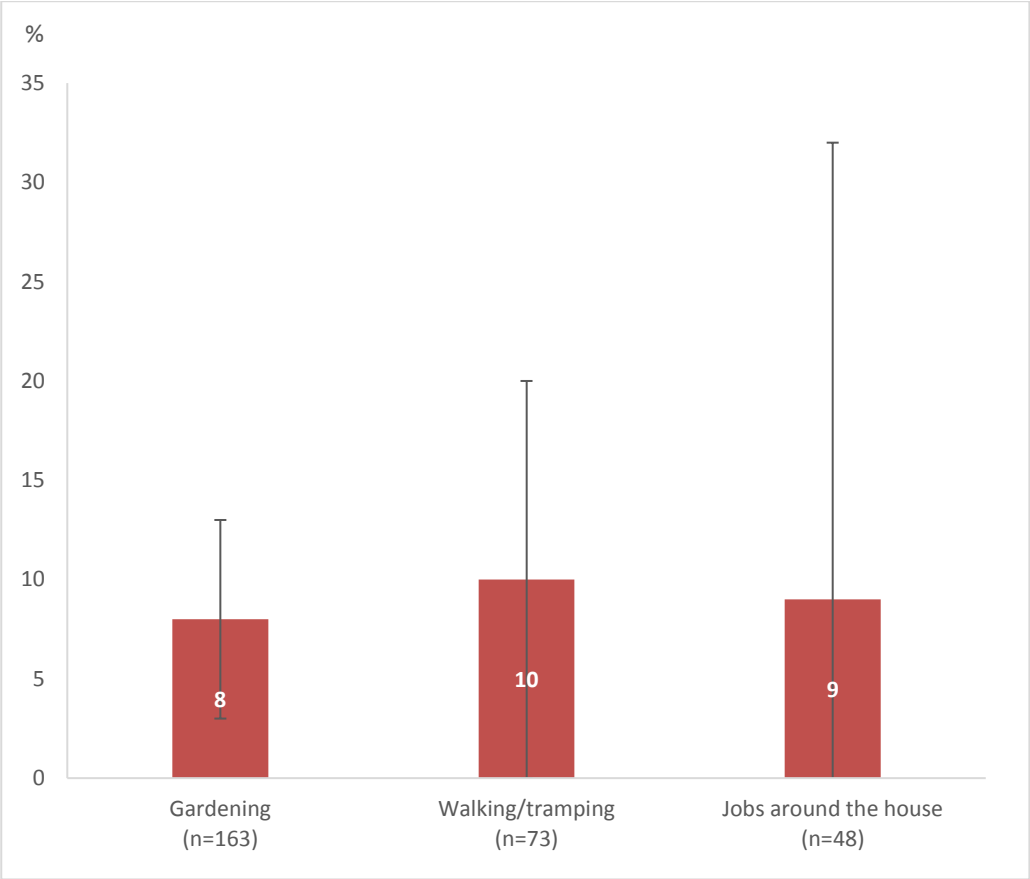


Respondents who reported getting sunburnt during the previous weekend

Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years

No particularly risky outdoor activity for sunburn

Older people who were gardening (8%), walking/tramping (10%) and doing jobs around the house (9%) all got sunburnt at a similar rate. These rates were consistent with the overall rate of sunburn during outdoor weekend activities (11%).



Main outdoor activity participated in when sunburnt during the previous weekend

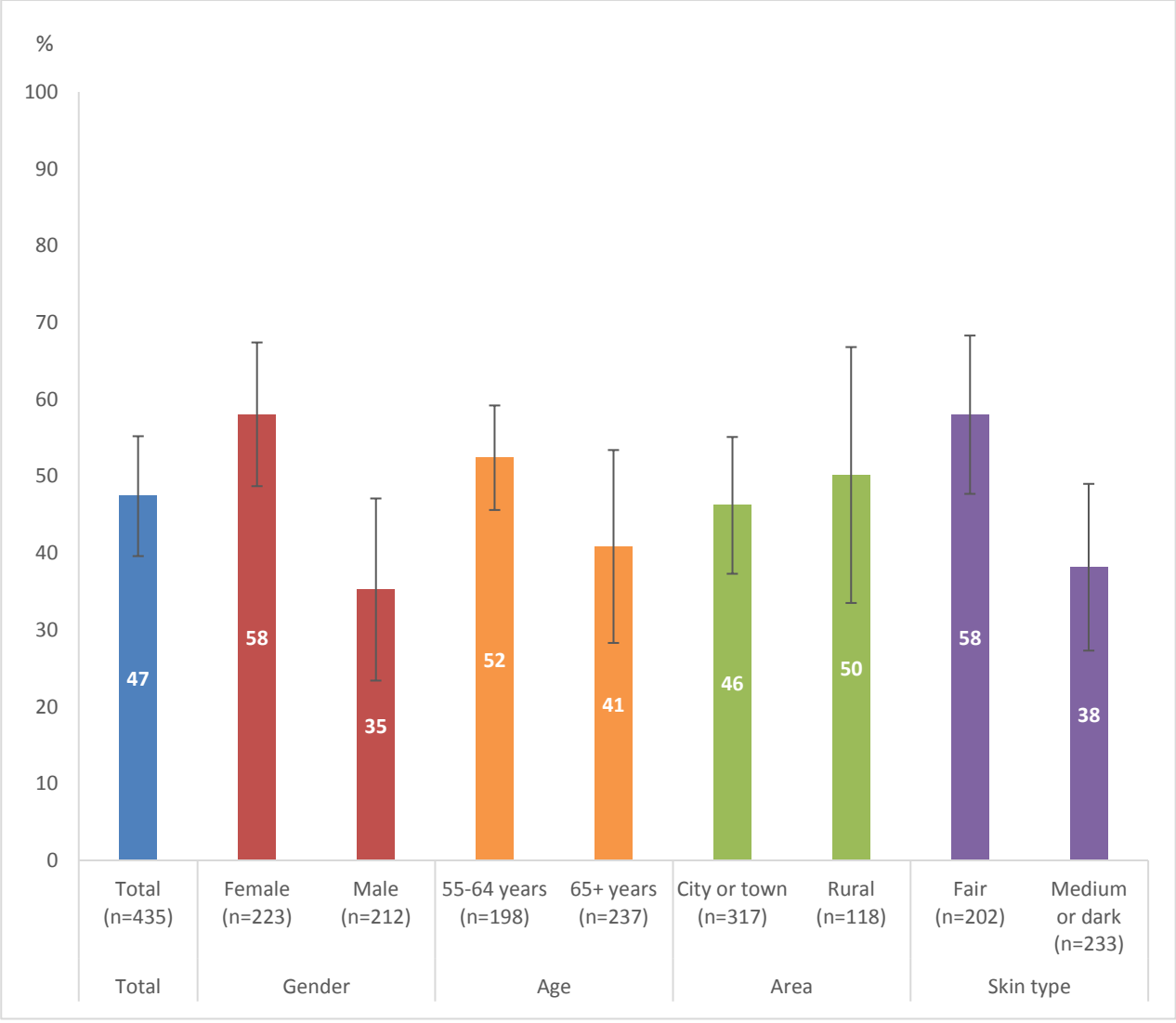
Base: main outdoor activity during the previous weekend, 55+ years. Note: Activities with fewer than 30 participants are not shown because of high uncertainty associated with the proportions.

SUN PROTECTION BEHAVIOUR

Half of older adults use sunscreen when outdoors

Nearly half (47%) of older adults used sunscreen when they were outdoors during the previous weekend.

Females were significantly more likely to have used sunscreen than males (58% of females and 35% of males). Similarly, older people with fair skin were more likely to have used sunscreen (58%) than those with medium or dark skin (38%).



Use of sunscreen while outdoors during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years

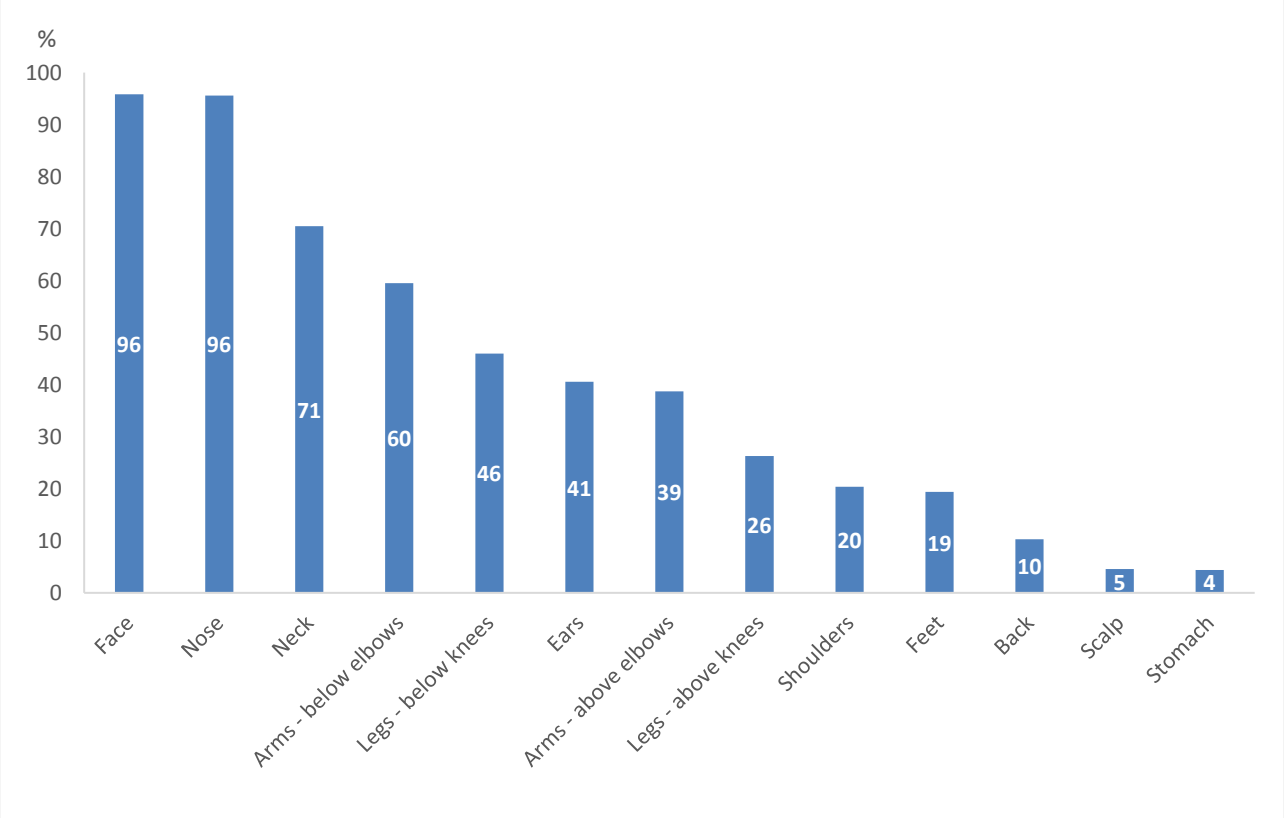
Older people commonly apply sunscreen to their face and nose

Almost all older people who used sunscreen applied it to their face and nose (96%). It was also commonly applied to the neck (71%), arms below the elbows (60%) and the legs below the knees (46%). The body areas where sunscreen was least commonly applied were the stomach (4%), scalp (5%), back (10%) and feet (19%).

Females were significantly less likely to apply sunscreen to ears than males (28% for females and 64% for males). However, females were more likely to apply sunscreen to their legs below knees (55%), feet (24%), and arms above elbows (50%) than males (the proportions for males were: legs below knees 30%; feet 10%; arms above elbows 18%).

Older people aged 65+ years were less likely to apply sunscreen to the neck (58%) than those aged 55 to 64 years (78%).

Older people with fair skin (1%) were less likely to apply sunscreen to the stomach than those with medium/dark skin (9%).

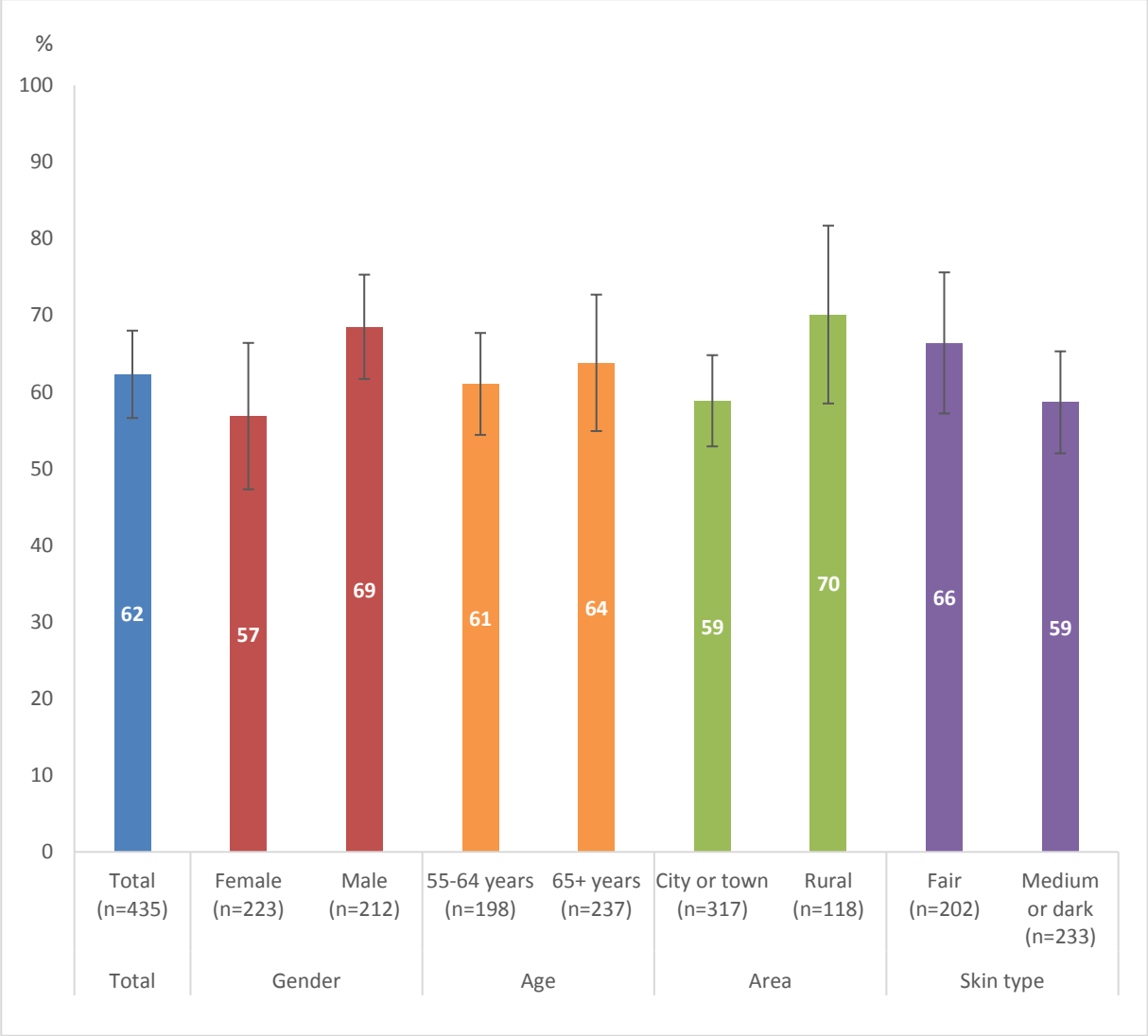


Body parts covered by sunscreen during the previous weekend
Base: applied sunscreen while outdoors, 55+ years (n=193)

Six in 10 older adults wear a hat when outdoors

Older adults who went outdoors during the previous weekend were asked whether they were wearing something on their head most of the time, such as a hat, cap, scarf, visor, or helmet. All those who reported wearing some kind of head covering were combined into a yes/no “wore a hat” response.

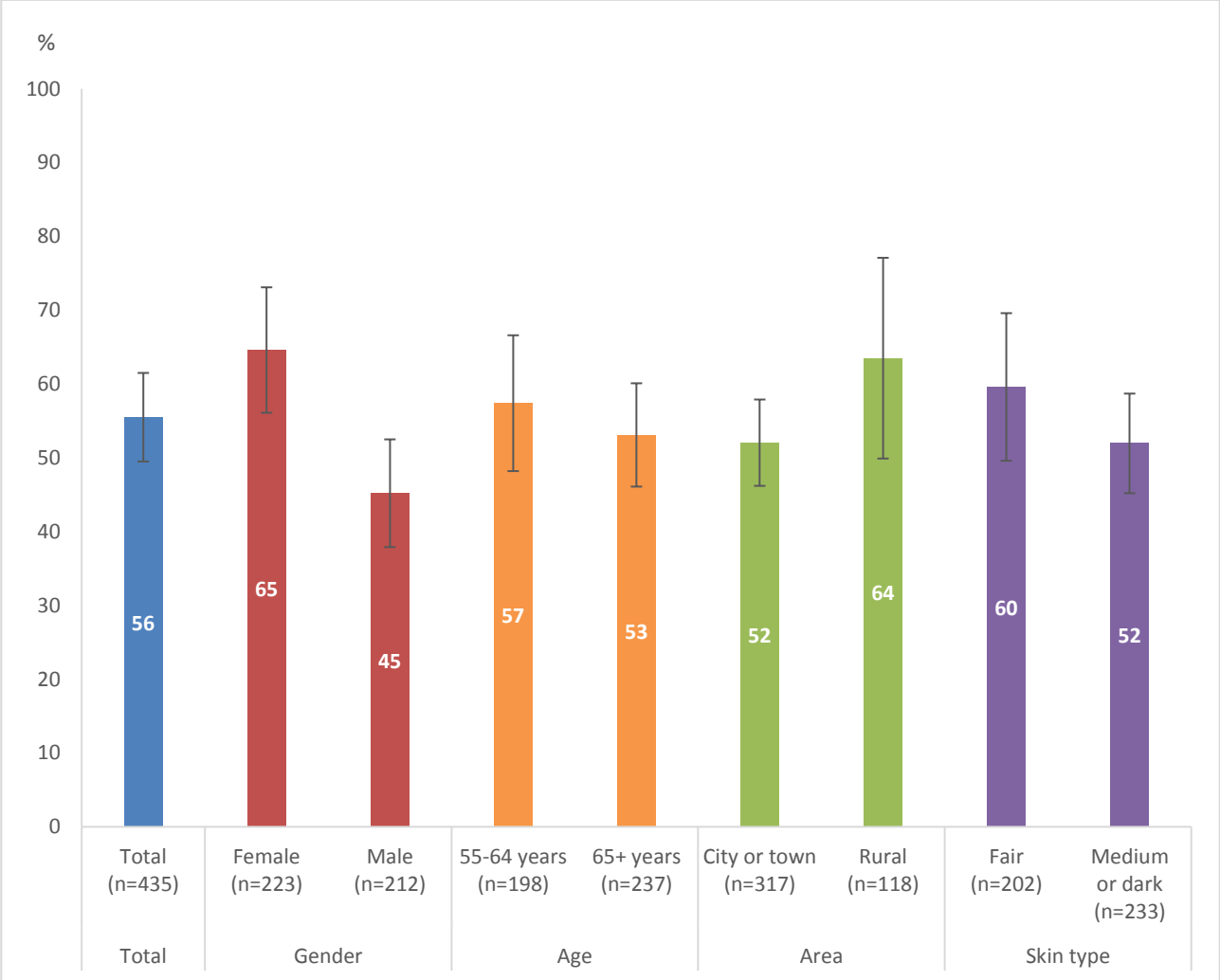
Six in 10 (62%) older adult respondents who were outdoors during the previous weekend were wearing some kind of hat. There were no significant differences in the rate of hat use between any of the subgroups.



Hat use while outdoors during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years

Sunglasses are popular among older women

Over half (56%) of older adults wore sunglasses most of the time when they were outside on the previous weekend. Females (65%) were significantly more likely than males (45%) to wear sunglasses.



Wore sunglasses most of the time while outdoors during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years

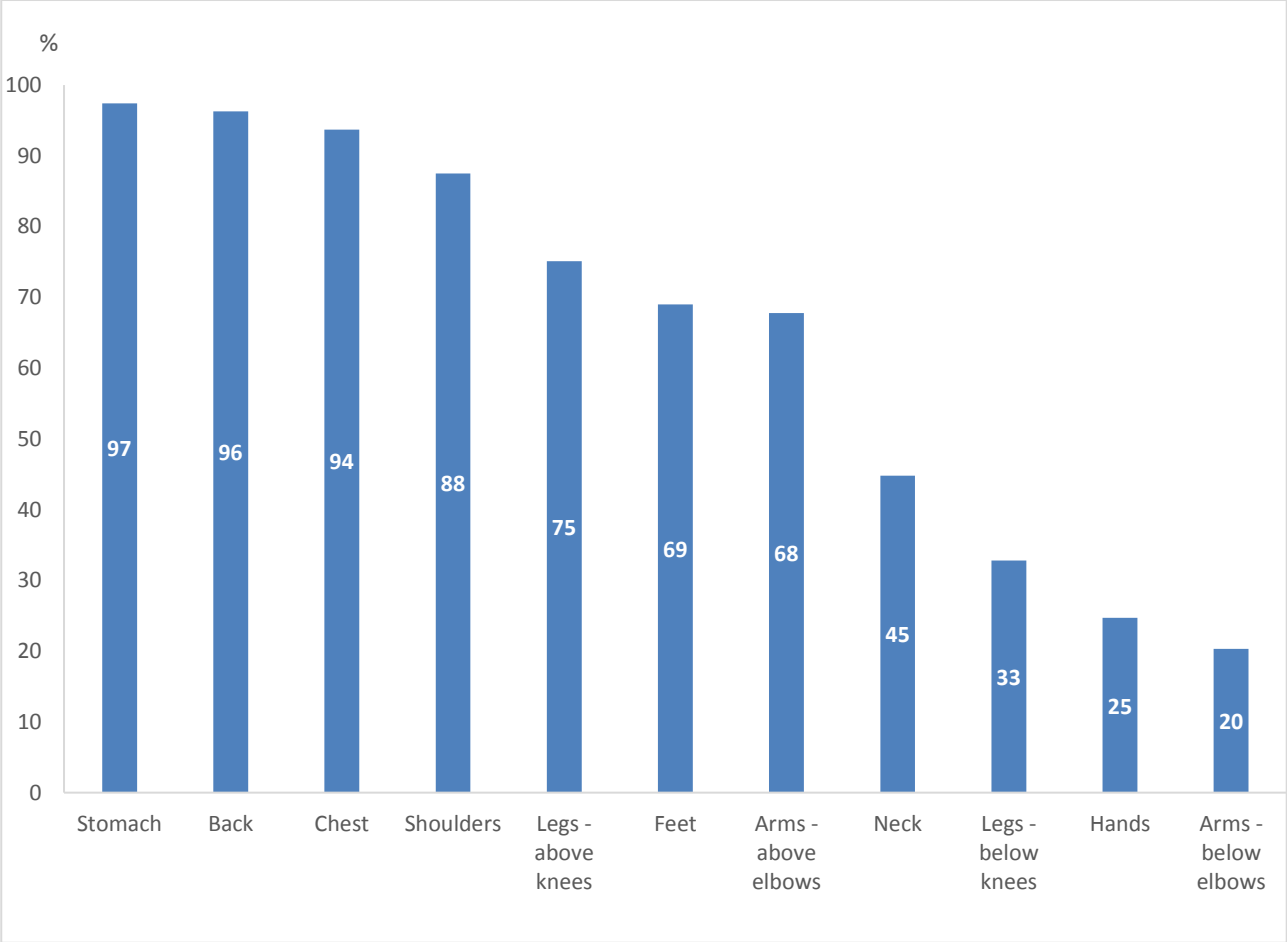
Hands, forearms and shins are less likely to be covered by clothing than other body parts

Nearly all of the older adults who were outdoors on the weekend were wearing clothing that covered their stomach (97%), back (96%) and chest (94%). Areas that were most often left exposed were the arms below the elbows (20%), hands (25%) and legs below the knees (33%).

Older adults aged 65+ years were more likely to wear clothing on their neck, shoulders, legs above the knees and arms below the elbows than those aged between 55 and 64 years.

Women were significantly more likely than men to wear clothing that covered their feet, hands and stomach.

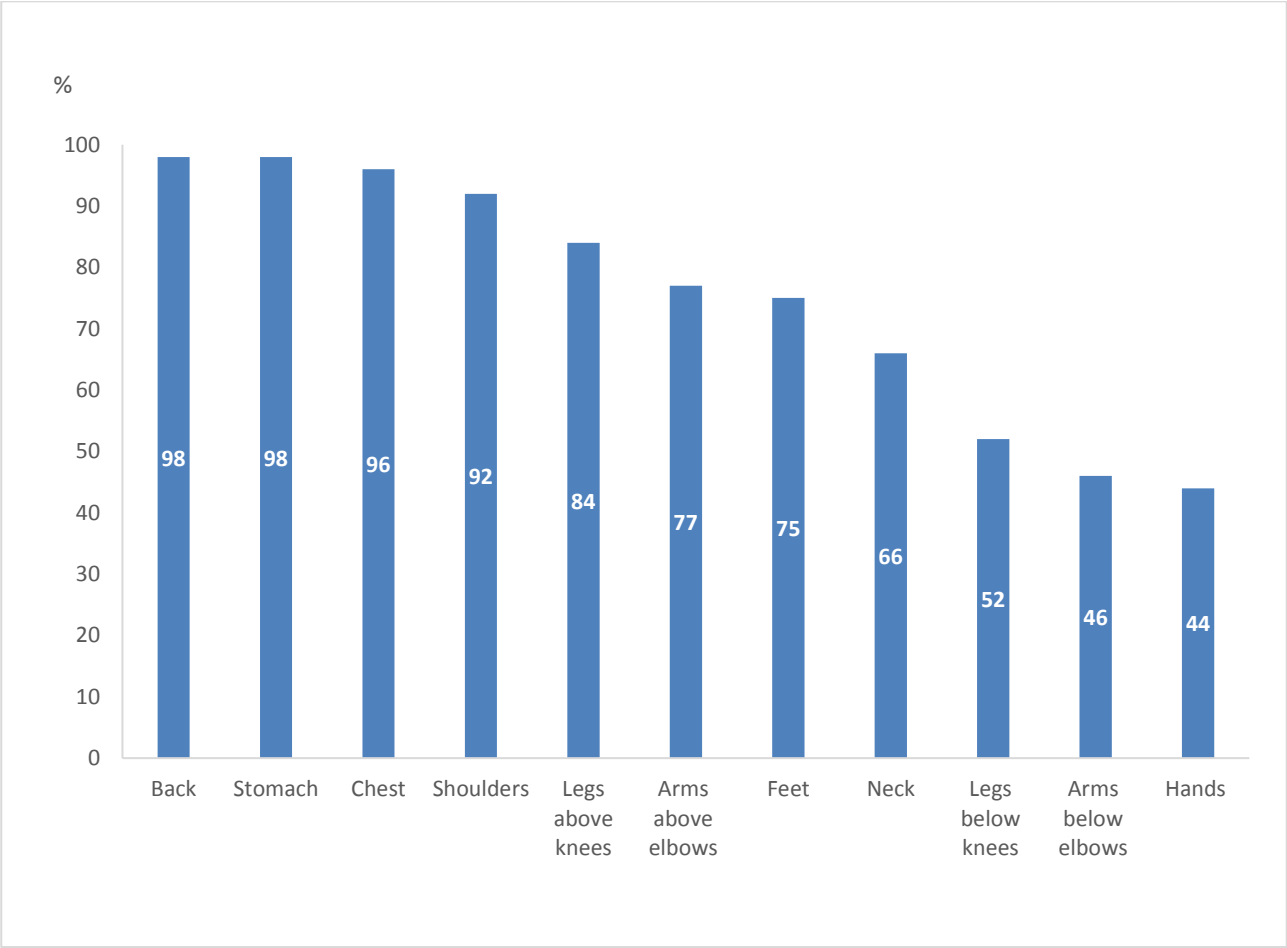
Older adults who lived in rural areas were more likely to wear clothing that covered their stomach and chest than people who lived in cities.



Body parts covered by clothing while outdoors during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years (n=435)

Hands, forearms and shins are less likely to be protected from the sun than other body parts

Almost all older adults (more than 90%) protected their back, stomach, chest and shoulders from the sun using either clothing or sunscreen. Older adults were less likely to use either clothing or sunscreen to protect their hands (44%), arms below the elbows (46%), legs below the knees (52%) and neck (66%) from the sun.



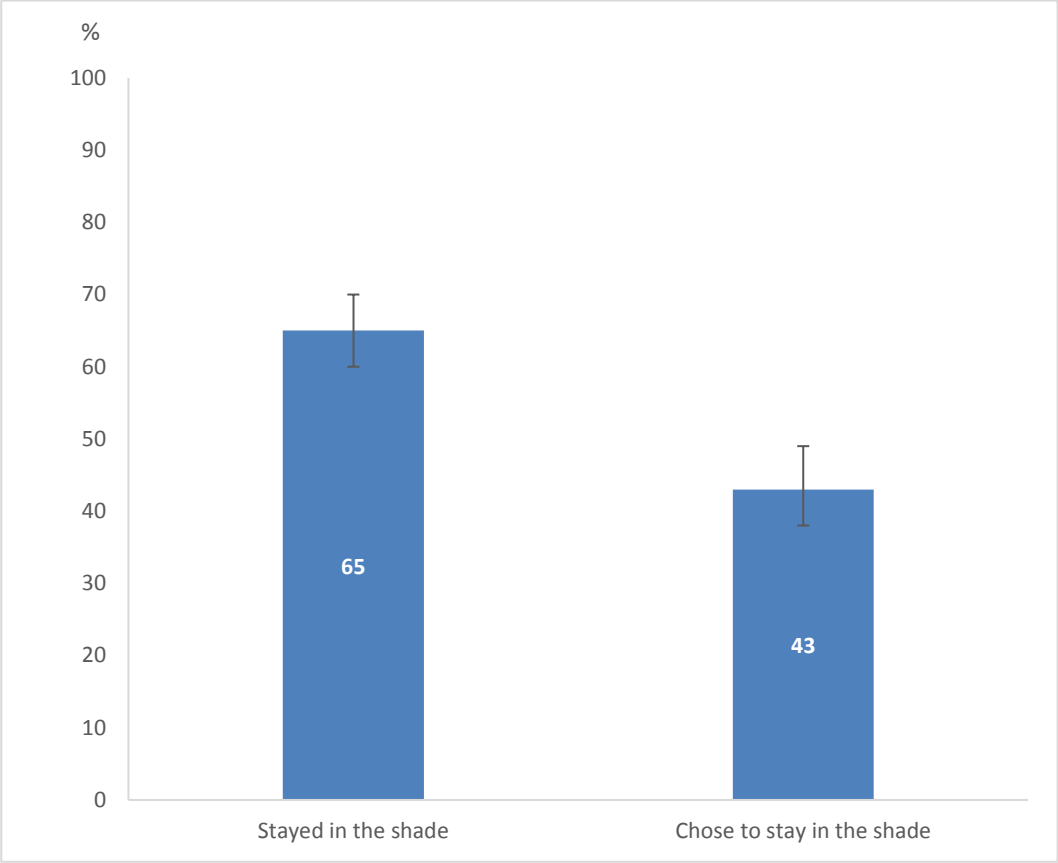
Body parts protected from the sun by either clothing or sunscreen while outdoors during the previous weekend

Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years (n=435)

Four in 10 older adults deliberately chose to seek shade when outside

Nearly two thirds (65%) of older adults stayed in the shade at any time when they were outdoors during the previous weekend. Four in 10 (43%) older adults who were outside made a deliberate choice to stay in the shade, rather than it just happened.

Neither the use of shade, nor the choice to stay in shade, were significantly different between any of the subgroups.



Use of the shade while outdoors during the previous weekend
Base: outdoors during the previous weekend, 55+ years (n=435)

One in 25 older adults use the Sun Protection Alert

Nearly three-quarters of older adults (74%, n=376) reported that they typically look at the weather forecast ahead of outdoor activities. Of those older adults who checked the forecast ahead of outdoor activities, one in 25 (4%) said that they used the Sun Protection Alert to prompt them about using sun protection. There were no significant differences in this behaviour between subgroups. The 95% confidence intervals of this proportion were 2% to 7%.

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