



Teenagers' health under scrutiny

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30 April 2007. The Youth'07 project, led by The University of Auckland, will collect information from more than 10,000 secondary school students over the next seven months. The data will allow researchers to assess the health and general wellbeing of teenagers to help build a picture of current and emerging youth health and social issues.

Secondary school students will be asked a series of questions covering diverse topics such as ethnicity and culture, physical and emotional health, family and living arrangements, attitudes towards diet and physical activity, and neighbourhood and community engagement. Data will be collected using Internet Tablets with touch sensitive screens.

"A recently released UNICEF report highlighted New Zealand's poor youth health record, with rates of unintended pregnancy, suicide and self-harm amongst the highest in OECD countries," says Dr Simon Denny of the University's Department of Paediatrics and an investigator in the study. "The survey looks at these issues through the eyes of the students themselves with the aim of providing accurate and up-to-date information, which can be used to improve young people's health and wellbeing.

"We have incorporated some new aspects to the project in recognition of the changing social and technological environments young people are growing up in since the previous study. The use of the internet tablets will enhance confidentiality and therefore the ability of students to answer truthfully."

The Youth'07 study follows on from Youth2000, the first national survey looking specifically at the health of New Zealand's youth. The Youth2000 findings have been used by policymakers, educators, health providers and communities working to advance the healthy development of New Zealand youth. Youth'07 will examine how youth health and behaviours have changed over the past six years.

The research is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, the Department of Labour, Families Commission, Accident Compensation Corporation, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand, and the Ministries of Youth Development, Justice and Health.

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