

# Young women make healthy use of social media

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Australian researchers are using social media to encourage young women to contribute towards one of Australia's most significant studies on women's health.

Researchers from The University of Queensland and The University of Newcastle are using Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter and YouTube to recruit Generation Y [women](#) from across Australia for the [Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health](#) (ALSWH).

Since 1996, the study has collected data from more than 40,000 women who are now in their 30s or older.

The study findings contribute to knowledge on women's health and wellbeing in Australia and are used to inform health policy.

UQ ALSWH study director Professor Annette Dobson said they hoped to recruit a new cohort of more than 10,000 women aged between 18 to 23 years old.

"By utilising [social media](#) and online surveys we are aiming to encourage [young women](#) to participate in the study through the online connections they use everyday," Professor Dobson said.

"The study is a valuable opportunity for young women to play a central role in identifying the health issues that are important for their generation and to help shape the future of improved health services for

women."

Questions asked are on a range of health topics including weight, physical activity, use of tobacco, [illicit drugs](#) and alcohol, sexual behaviour, patterns of contraceptive use, experiences of pregnancy and childbirth, access to health services and future life goals in relation to education, travel, area of residence, work, family and children.

ALSWH co-director, University of Newcastle Professor Julie Byles, said the findings were used to inform policy and highlight opportunities for improving the health behaviours of women at different life stages.

"A recent report for the Australian Government Department of [Health](#) and Ageing compared national guidelines with actual data provided by [study participants](#), showing that fewer women than ever are meeting guidelines for healthy weight," Professor Byles said.

"Women who were aged 18 to 23 when the study began, and who are now aged between 34 and 39 years have gained the most weight over the course of the study, with 45 per cent of this age group now overweight or obese."

Other findings include dietary patterns among pregnant women and women's use of screening services such as mammography and Pap tests.

**More information:** Any interested participants can contact 1800 068 081, visit the survey website [www.alswh.org.au](http://www.alswh.org.au) or social media sites [www.facebook.com/alswh](http://www.facebook.com/alswh), [www.alswhofficial.tumblr.com](http://www.alswhofficial.tumblr.com), [www.twitter.com/ALSWH\\_Official](http://www.twitter.com/ALSWH_Official).

All papers that have been published in regards to the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health including 20 papers published in 2012 can be found at [www.alswh.org.au/publications- ... rts/published-](http://www.alswh.org.au/publications-...rts/published-)

[papers](#)

Provided by University of Queensland

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