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Snapshot helpful to better our health

The results are in - life expectancy and immunisation rates are up and smoking rates are down, however less of us are eating enough vegetables and more adults are experiencing high levels of psychological distress.

These are the findings of South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD)'s latest Health Snapshot, which reports on the health status and lifestyle behaviours of the people of south western Sydney.

SWSLHD Director of Epidemiology Professor Bin Jalaludin said the Health Snapshot helped to identify areas where progress had been made and areas where there was still some work to be done.

"We've made great strides in some areas, for example 14 per cent of adults smoke compared with 21 per cent last year," Professor Jalaludin said.

Although this improvement in smoking rate is welcome, Professor Jalaludin said we should be cautious how we interpret this result.

"This drop in the smoking rate could just be a blip and we need wait for the next set of results to see if it is maintained. But of course we are hopeful that rates will continue to drop," he said.

There is still progress to be made in some areas, with 66 per cent of people not getting adequate exercise and only 1 in 25 people eating the recommended quality of vegetables.

"Identifying these health risks within south western Sydney's population allows SWSLHD to target areas of concern, and prioritise programs which can address the problems," Professor Jalaludin said.

SWSLHD offers access to a number of free programs which aim to create a healthier community, some of which include the Get Healthy telephone coaching service, Go4Fun, Quit for new life, the Healthy Children Initiative programs which focus on addressing childhood obesity, such as Live Life Well @ School. For more information on the programs, visit www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/populationhealth/PH_Promotion/links.html

To see the document visit: <http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/2016Snap.pdf>