

WEIGHT, HEIGHT AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

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Data on weight, height, parents' country of birth and father's occupation were obtained during routine screening by the School Medical Service for children attending pre-school on the Mornington Peninsula between February and December 1981. The data reported here are for 1378 children (658 girls and 720 boys) in their fifth year who constitute over 90% of this age group in the area.

Group	Weight and height centiles					
	Boys			Girls		
	10	50	90	10	50	90
Weight (kg)						
Study group	15.4	18.0	20.5	15.0	17.3	21.0
New South Wales	15.8	18.2	21.1	15.1	17.7	20.7
America	15.1	17.7	20.5	14.1	16.6	19.4
Height (cm)						
Study group	101.0	106.0	112.0	99.5	106.0	111.0
New South Wales	101.0	106.1	111.7	99.6	105.1	110.8
America	100.2	105.8	111.8	97.6	103.8	109.4

The distributions of weight and height were compared with similar data for children from New South Wales (Jones and Hemphill 1974) and America (National Centre for Health Statistics 1977). Comparisons were also made between the demographic characteristics of the group as a whole and those of children at the extremes of the weight and height distribution (<10 centile, >90 centile).

The only significant differences ($P < 0.05$) observed were for tall children, who had a lower than expected proportion of Australian-born fathers, and short children, who had a higher than expected proportion of fathers in occupational status category D (Congalton 1969).

This study illustrates that data routinely collected by the School Medical Service provide a valuable source of information for monitoring influences on child growth and development.

CONGALTON, A.A. (1969). 'Status and Prestige in Australia', Appendix B, p. 143. (Cheshire: Melbourne).

JONES, D.L. and HEMPHILL, W. (1974). 'Height, Weight and other Physical Characteristics of New South Wales Children', p. 71. (Health Commission of New South Wales).

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HEALTH STATISTICS (1977). 'NCHS Growth Curves for Children Birth to 18 Years', p. 29. (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare: Washington).

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