



# Australian Cycling Conference

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### **Trends in cycling: an epidemiological application of data from the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area Household Travel Survey**

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Cycling is a moderate-intensity physical activity. As a form of exercise, recreation or travel it is associated with numerous health benefits when practiced regularly at sufficient duration. Cycling has unique potential to support an active lifestyle when it could be integrated into daily travel routines. Efforts to promote this behaviour are continuing to achieve sustainable transport and health advantages. Indeed, bicycles sales have been steadily increasing for the last eight years. However, whether this has translated to an increase in cycling with health benefits has not been investigated in any national or state public health surveillance. Transportation surveys, especially those undertaken continuously and consistently have the potential to fill this gap by informing public health about the impact of such efforts. This study presents a public health application of the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area (SGMA) continuous Household Travel Survey (HTS) to inform about the epidemiology and trend in cycling in the last decade.

The HTS data was analysed to examine the (a) prevalence of cyclists (i.e.  $\geq 1$  cycling trip/day); (b) prevalence of those cycling at a health-enhancing level (i.e.  $\geq 1$  cycling trip of at least 10 minutes/day), and; (c) prevalence of those cycling at a sufficient level (i.e. accumulated  $\geq 30$  minutes/day). Analysis was done by population sub-groups and by time period.

The findings suggest that although the prevalence of cyclists in SGMA is still very low, a positive trend of increase in the number of cyclists has been noted during this period. Relevant indicators for use in public health surveillance of cycling can be generated from HTS to evaluate the long-term impact of health promotion efforts in the transport settings at a population level.