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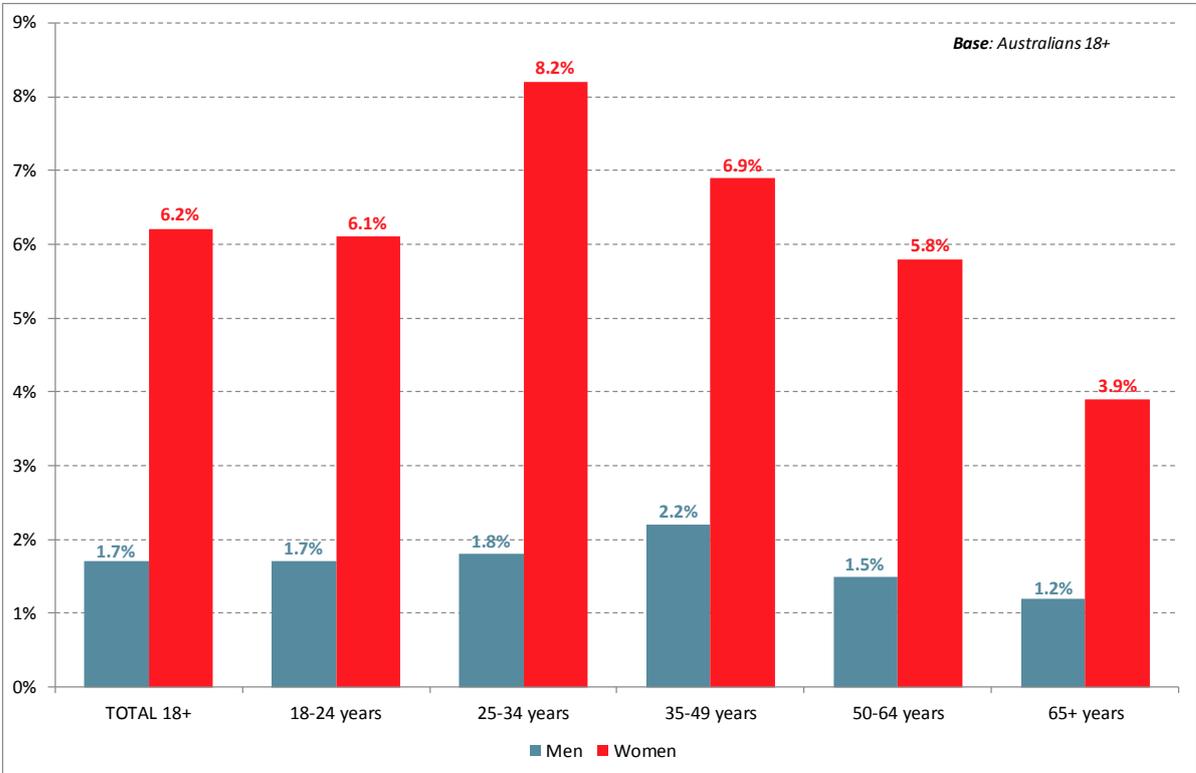
Lactose intolerance on the rise among Australian women

Between 2011 and 2015, the proportion of Australian adults reporting they are lactose intolerant has risen from 2.8% to 4.0%. Amounting to just over 240,000 additional sufferers, this may not seem like much, but what makes it noteworthy is the fact that the increase is almost entirely driven by women.

In the 12 months to September 2015, 1.7% of Australian men 18+ reported being lactose intolerant, a figure which has remained relatively stable over the last few years, growing by just 3,000 men nationwide. In contrast, 6.2% of Aussie women 18+ (576,000) say they are lactose intolerant, up from 3.8%/337,000 in the 12 months to September 2011.

Women aged between 25 and 34 have the nation's highest incidence of lactose intolerance (8.2%), followed by women from the 35-49 age bracket (6.9%). Among men, those aged 35-49 years and 25-34 years are most likely to be lactose intolerant, although at 2.2% and 1.8% respectively, they appear to be dramatically less susceptible than women.

Lactose intolerance among Australian men and women, by age



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), October 2014–September 2015 (n=14,991).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lactose intolerance comes complete with suite of symptoms and side effects, ranging from the unpleasant to the really serious. Compared with the average Australian, people who are lactose intolerant are:

- 72% more likely to have osteoporosis
- 158% more likely to experience nausea
- 183% more likely to get diarrhoea
- 212% more likely to be vitamin deficient and
- 421% more likely to suffer from digestive problems

Little wonder, then, that lactose-intolerant Aussies are 13% less likely than the average Australian to agree that 'I'm feeling well and in good health'.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Lactose intolerance occurs when a person's body doesn't produce enough of the lactase enzyme to break down the lactose found in dairy milk and some foods. Although medical and health research does not tend to identify women as being more susceptible to the condition than men, our data shows that it is considerably more prevalent among Australian women.

"One could speculate that the lower prevalence among men may simply be due to a lack of diagnosis, but it is worth noting that our findings also show that almost identical proportions of men (27.3%) and women (27.5%) visit their doctor in any given four weeks.

"To minimise its symptoms, people who are lactose intolerant need to avoid certain dairy products and our data bears this out: 58.6% of them avoid dairy foods whenever possible (compared with the national average of 13.4%). Curiously, given their heightened risk of osteoporosis, lactose intolerant people are slightly less likely than average to try to get enough calcium in their diet.

"Food and beverage brands wishing to reach lactose-intolerant consumers with products catering to their dietary limitations need an in-depth knowledge of these people to ensure their marketing resonates with the right audience. Beyond age/gender breakdowns, a more holistic understanding of how lactose-intolerant Aussies feel about food and health could make all the difference when it comes to attracting them."

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research's health data, please contact:

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About Roy Morgan Research

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Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2