The relationship between self-perception of wellbeing and lifestyle behaviours in young adults

Paukste, E. 1, 2, Harris, N 1, 2, Sebar, B 1, 2

1 Population and Social Health Research Program, Griffith Health Institute, Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia
2 School of Public Health, Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia

Background and rationale: Young adulthood is a critical life period when lifestyle behaviours that have impact on health worsen. For example, only 4% of 19-24 year olds meet recommended consumption of both fruit and vegetable, only 47% meet physical activity recommendations and 18% (18-24 year olds) drink alcohol at risky/high risk levels at least once a week. Despite numerous interventions targeting these behaviours they remain persistent. Understanding what drives or prevents young adults from engaging in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours is limited. Self-perception of wellbeing has been identified as one of the factors that influence these behaviours. A few recent studies have found an inverse relationship between wellbeing and engagement
in risky behaviours (e.g. drink driving, illicit drug use). Yet, the relationship between self-perception of wellbeing and lifestyle behaviours has only recently attracted research attention and is still not well understood. **Aim:** To explicate the role of self-perception of wellbeing in shaping lifestyle related thinking and behaviours among young adults aged 18-25 years in South-East Queensland. **Proposed methodology and methods:** A mixed methods study with two phases – quantitative (phase 1) and qualitative (phase 2). Study design is sequential where qualitative phase follows quantitative. Phase 1 uses a multi-scale structured paper & pencil and online survey to investigate the associations between self-perception of wellbeing and lifestyle behaviours. Two stage cluster and convenience sampling techniques will be used to recruit approximately 300 participants. Phase 2 will employ a visual data collection method - photovoice to explore young adult conceptions of wellbeing and how these are applied to make sense of lifestyle behaviours. 16 participants will be purposively recruited and asked to take pictures that capture their views on wellbeing followed by individual interviews where they will reflect on their pictures. **Research outcomes:** It is expected that this study will add to our understanding of what drives or prevents young adults to engage in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours. If results show that wellbeing serves as a protective factor against unhealthy behaviours, this in turn can open up a potential new platform for alternative or complementary health promotion approaches (e.g. building strengths within young adults themselves).