

Careers in the area of Fitness

Dr Jo Salmon is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at Deakin University. Dr Salmon works as a behavioural epidemiologist who studies the distribution of physical activity and lifestyle disease in the population. As a full-time researcher, Dr Salmon informs on health policy and practice, particularly in the area of obesity prevention among children in Australia.

Interview

What are the main types of careers in the fitness area?

For a student studying physical activity and health at Deakin University, this could lead to a career working with local government promoting physical activity and active lifestyles, or with non-government health agencies, such as the Heart Foundation or VicHealth.

Who are your colleagues/clients?

My research involves direct contact with members of the public (primarily children and families), with teachers in schools, with local, state and federal government, and with non-government organisations (eg, Heart Foundation, VicHealth, Parks Victoria).

What are the highlights?

Seeing the impact of your research at the national as well as the state level. Having the opportunity to inform the development of physical activity public health guidelines, to advise government on population health monitoring, and to have intervention programs to reduce the time children spend sedentary made available to all primary schools in the state. Feeling like your research is directly relevant to the health of children and adults in Australia and elsewhere. Being able to share and compare research findings and actively collaborate with colleagues internationally is also a highlight.

Advice for students who are interested in working in the area of fitness?

If you are passionate about health, and in particular about the importance of lifelong physical activity, then a career in physical activity research or promotion for health would be a rewarding career for you. If you are not sure about whether you want to work in this field or if you want to pursue a research career, enrol in 4th year honours and you will soon get a sense if this career is for you.