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The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams¹ in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2010 from 12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

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HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



Summary

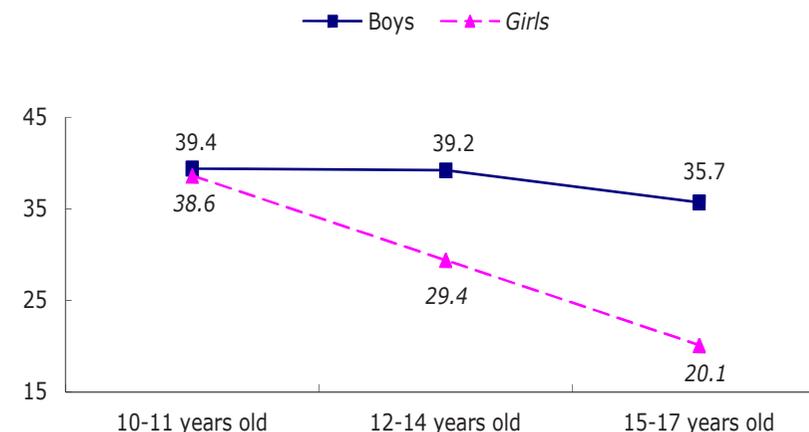
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 32.8% of schoolchildren in Ireland report excellent health and has remained stable since 2006 (33.3%). Overall a greater percentage of boys report excellent health (37.9%) compared to girls (27.3%). The percentage of children reporting excellent health is higher among younger children; 39.4% of boys and 38.6% of girls aged 10-11 years, 39.2% of boys and 29.4% of girls aged 12-14 years and 35.7% of boys and 20.1% of girls aged 15-17 years. Schoolchildren in Ireland who report excellent health are more likely to live with both parents, communicate easily with their parents and best friends and report liking school, similar to the findings of the 2006 HBSC survey. In this factsheet health perceptions refer to children reporting excellent health.

Why this topic?

Adolescence is a critical life period for a young person's health². Self-rated health is a subjective indicator of general health¹ and is considered an appropriate assessment of health in young adulthood³. Young people's appraisal of their health is shaped by their overall sense of functioning, including physical and non-physical health dimensions and is associated with a broad range of health indicators¹. It has been considered a reliable indicator of health status⁴.

Change 2006-2010

The percentage of schoolchildren reporting excellent health has remained stable since 2006 from 33.3% to 32.8%. In general, among both boys and girls, the same pattern over time is present, as schoolchildren get older reports of excellent health decrease. Generally girls are less likely to report excellent health compared to boys of all ages.

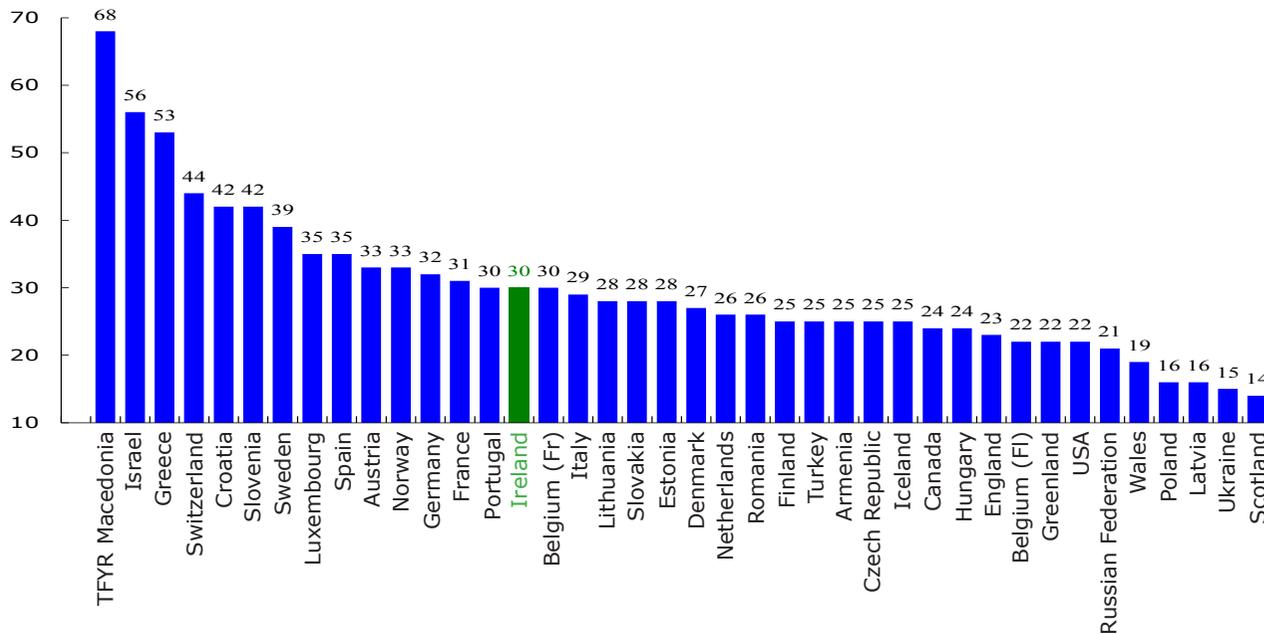


Percentage of children who reported excellent health, by age and gender

Health perceptions in context

- Children from higher social classes (SC) are more likely to report excellent health (SC1-2: 35.2%; SC3-4: 32.2%; SC5-6: 28.9%).
- Children who report excellent health are more likely to report living with both parents (78.1% vs. 73.3%) and liking school (77.4% vs. 67.8%) than children who do not.
- Children who report excellent health are more likely to report ease of talking to mother (87.3% vs. 79.2%) and ease of talking to father (76.2% vs. 61.9%) than children who do not.
- Children who report excellent health are more likely to report ease of talking to best friend (89.8% vs. 87.5%) than children who do not.
- Children who report excellent health are less likely to report they feel pressured by school work (33.0% vs. 41.3%) than children who do not.

...Health perceptions among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting excellent health, by country

International

With 29.9% reporting that they have excellent health, 15 year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 15th among 40 countries in Europe and North America. Ireland is ranked 20th (33.9%) among 13 year old children, and 27th (37.2%) among 11 year old children.

Implications

The percentage of young people in Ireland that report excellent health has remained stable since 2006. Ireland ranks midrange for 11, 13 and 15 year olds compared to other European and North American countries with regard to reporting excellent health. These data show that there is a strong association between parent-child relationships and living with both parents and those who report excellent health. However these data also indicate that

there is a social class gradient which should be considered. Another concern is the trend for girls and older children to be less likely to report excellent health. These findings deserve the attention of health promotion professionals and policy makers to reduce the health inequalities that exist.

References

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All factsheets and other HBSC publications and reports can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbhc>

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