

HBSC IRELAND

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 Edinburgh. In 2006 HBSC Ireland surveyed 10,334 schoolchildren in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:
<http://www.hbsc.org>
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/>



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HPRC
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Summary

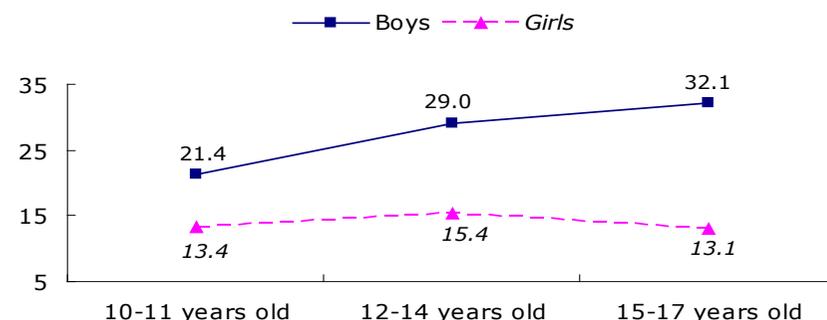
HBSC Ireland has found that 22% of schoolchildren in Ireland report having bullied others at school (29.4% of boys and 14.3% of girls). This figure has remained relatively stable since 2002 (20.2%). The percentage of boys that have bullied others is highest among 15-17 year olds (32.1%). The percentage of girls bullying others is highest among 12-14 year olds (15.4%). Children who have bullied others are less likely to: find it easy to talk to their parents or best friend, live with both parents, like school, report excellent health or feel happy about their lives. They are more likely to spend four or more evenings out with friends and feel pressured by schoolwork than those who do not report bullying others. Bullying others in this factsheet refers to children who have reported taking part in bullying another student(s) at school once or more in the past couple of months.

Why this topic?

Bullying is viewed as a problem in Irish schools and includes such behaviours as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion and extortion^{2,3}. A large proportion of bullying is thought to be conducted by 'popular' group leaders who feel good about themselves and who bully others to maintain social dominance over their peers⁴. It is not uncommon to find that these students have also been bullied⁵.

Trends 2002-2006

Overall the percentage of children who report having bullied others has remained stable between 2002 (20.2%) and 2006 (22%). Bullying others is more common in boys (29.4%) than girls (14.3%). There has been a slight increase over time in the number of 15-17 year olds who report bullying others (20.4% to 23.1%).

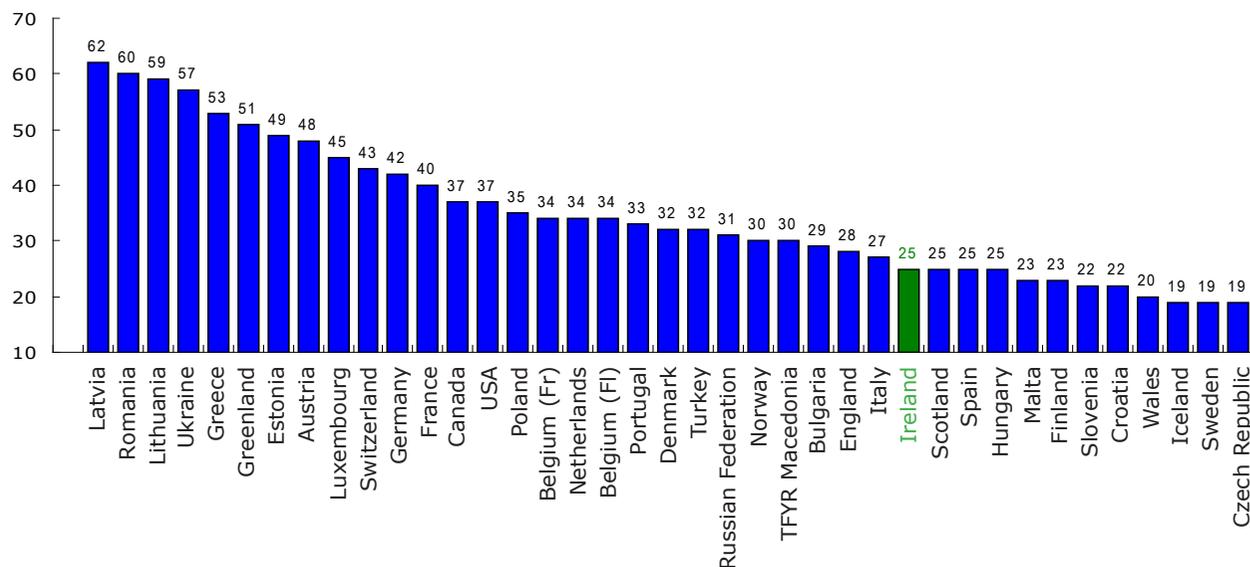


Percentage of children who have bullied others, by age and gender

Bullying others in context

- Children who have bullied others are less likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (74.8% vs. 82.1%), father (56.8% vs. 65.8%) and best friend (84.1% vs. 88.7%) than those who have not.
- Children who have bullied others are less likely to live with both parents than those who have not (77% vs. 81.5%).
- Children who have bullied others are less likely to like school (57.3% vs. 71%) than those who have not.
- Children who have bullied others are more likely to feel pressured by schoolwork (45.1% vs. 39.7%) and spend more than four evenings per week with friends (48.2% vs. 40.4%) than those who have not.
- Children who have bullied others are less likely to report excellent health (28.2% vs. 34.6%) and feeling happy about their lives (40.3% vs. 52%) than those who have not.
- Bullying others is not associated with social class.

...Bullying others among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting they have bullied others, by country

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 28th among 39 countries in Europe and North America, with 25% reporting having bullied others. Overall 17% of 11 year olds in Ireland (rank 34th) and 23% of 13 year olds in Ireland (rank 34th) report having bullied others once or more in the past couple of months.

Implications

The percentage of young people in Ireland that report having bullied others has remained relatively stable since 2002. This figure is relatively low in comparison to other European and North American countries. These data suggest that strong family relationships are associated with lower prevalence of bullying, while strong peer

relationships may be related to such behaviour. Furthermore those who bully others appear to be more susceptible to feeling pressured by schoolwork, lower levels of feeling happy with life, and poor subjective health. Future attention needs to focus on researching the motivations of those who bully and what initiates bullying.

References

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4. Nishna, A. (2004). A theoretical review of bullying: Can it be eliminated?. In C.E. Sanders & G.D. Phye (Ed.), *Bullying: Implications for the classroom*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
5. Olweus, D. (1994). Bullying at school: long term outcomes for the victims and an effective school based intervention program. In L.R. Huesmann (Ed.), *Aggressive Behaviour: Current Perspectives*. New York: Plenum.

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

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