

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.hbhc.org>
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbhc/>



National University of Ireland, Galway
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh



HPRC

Health Promotion Research Centre



Office of the Minister for
Children and Youth Affairs
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Department of
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AN ROINN SLÁNTE AGUS LEANAÍ

Aoife Gavin, Siobhán O'Higgins and the HBSC Ireland Team, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway.

Summary

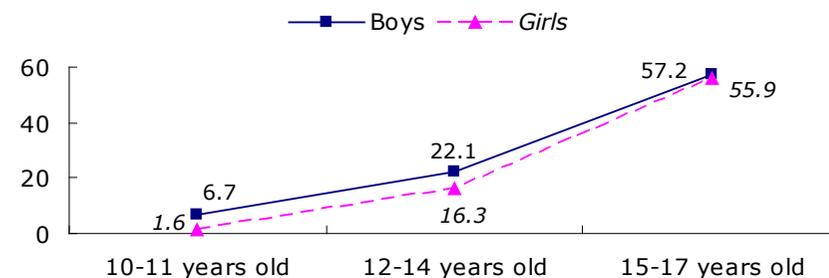
HBSC Ireland 2006 has found that 32.4% of schoolchildren in Ireland report having been drunk (35.2% of boys and 29.4% of girls). This percentage is stable since 2002 (31.2%). The percentage of children that have been drunk is higher among older children; 6.7% of boys and 1.6% of girls aged 10-11 years, and 57.2% of boys and 55.9% of girls aged 15-17 years. Children who have been drunk are less likely to live with both parents, be able to talk to their parents about things that bother them, like school, have excellent health and be happy with their lives, and are more likely to spend 4 or more evenings with their friends, feel pressured by school work and report easy communication with their best friend. Being drunk in this factsheet refers to children who report having had so much alcohol that they were 'really drunk' once or more in their lifetime.

Why this topic?

By mid-adolescence experience of drunkenness is relatively common^{1,2}. Drunkenness is an indicator of alcohol misuse¹. Alcohol related misuse can result in damage to health, economic loss, violence, disruption to family life and serious accidents³. An association exists between alcohol misuse and other behaviors such as smoking and illegal drug use as well as negative health outcomes such as poorer subjective health and overall health⁴.

Trends 2002-2006

The overall percentage of children who report having been drunk has remained stable from 2002 to 2006 (31.2% in 2002, 32.4% in 2006). There has been a slight increase among boys (32.7% to 35.2%) while figures have remained stable among girls (30.1% to 29.4%).

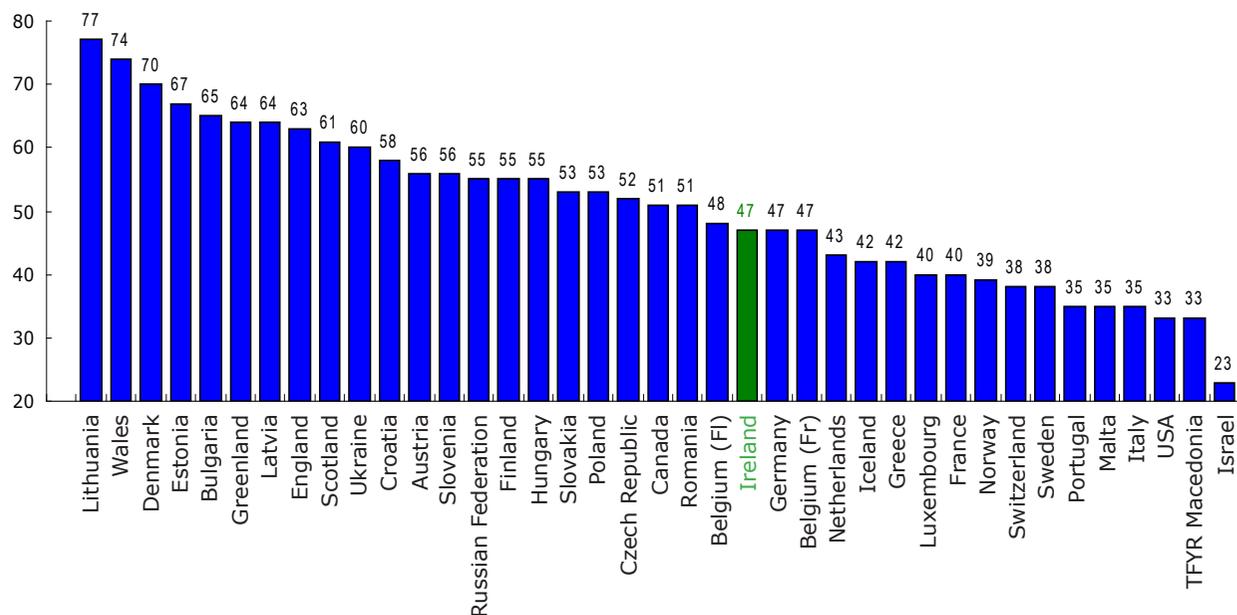


Percentage of children who have been really drunk, by age and gender

Drunkenness in context

- Children who have been drunk are less likely to live with both parents than those who have not (73.8% vs. 83.7%).
- Children who have been drunk are less likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (70.8% vs. 85.2%) and their father (51.6% vs. 69.7%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been drunk are more likely to find it easy to talk to their best friend (89.1% vs. 87.2%) and more likely to spend 4 or more evenings per week with their friends (51.5% vs. 38.0%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been drunk are more likely to report feeling pressured by schoolwork (50.7% vs. 36.4%) and less likely to report liking school (51.2% vs. 75.6%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been drunk are less likely to report excellent health (23.9% vs. 37.7%) and feeling happy with their lives (36.1% vs. 56.0%) than those who have not.
- Drunkenness is not associated with social class.

...Drunkenness among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting they have been really drunk, by country

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 23rd among 39 countries in Europe and North America with 47% reporting that they ever consumed so much alcohol that they were 'really drunk'. Overall 4% of 11 year olds in Ireland (ranked 34th) and 17% of 13 year olds in Ireland (ranked 28th) reported that they had consumed so much alcohol that they were 'really drunk'.

Implications

The overall percentage of young people in Ireland that report having been 'really drunk' has remained stable since 2002. The level of reported drunkenness in Ireland is mid-range in comparison to other European and North American countries. The findings show that family and

social relationships as well as attitudes to school are associated with reports of being drunk among schoolchildren. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of the social context of alcohol misuse when developing policy and

References

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

Contact us at: hbcs@nuigalway.ie

This factsheet was prepared by Aoife Gavin, Siobhán O'Higgins, Graham Brennan, Pauline Clerkin, Aingeal de Róiste, Cliona Fitzpatrick, Colette Kelly, Michal Molcho, Larri Walker and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn.