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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 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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hbsc
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



Mary Callaghan and the HBSC Ireland Team, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway.

Summary

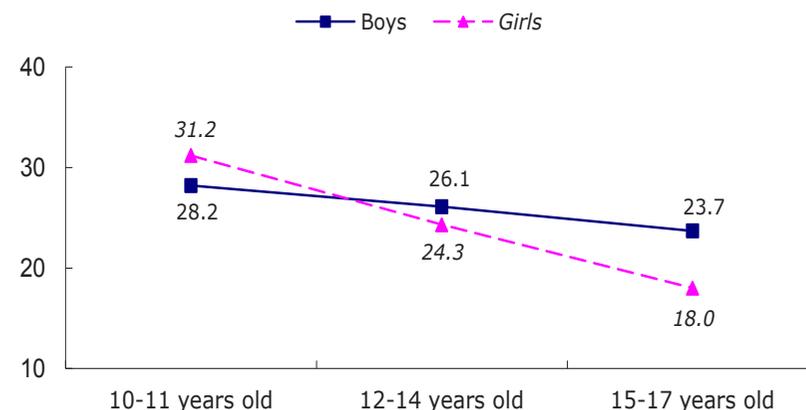
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 24.3% of schoolchildren in Ireland report having been bullied (25.5% of boys and 23% of girls). This figure has remained stable since 2006 (24.5%). The percentages of boys and girls being bullied are at their highest in the 10-11 year old category (28.2% of boys and 31.2% of girls) and decrease with age for both boys (26.1% in 12-14 year olds, 23.7% in 15-17 year olds) and girls (24.3% in 12-14 year olds, 18.0% in 15-17 year olds). Children who have been bullied are less likely to live with both parents, find it easy to talk to their parents or best friend or to like school. They are more likely to report feeling pressured by schoolwork. Bullying in this factsheet refers to children who report being bullied at school once or more in the past couple of months.

Why this topic?

Bullying may be defined as the repeated physical, verbal or psychological aggression directed by an individual or group against others². It is recognised that bullying in schools is a particular problem. Young people who have been bullied are more likely to experience poorer psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety and group withdrawal³. Long-term exposure to bullying can also lead to suicide in extreme cases⁴. The increased popularity of social media networks has given rise to new ways of bullying using technology, such as cyberbullying⁵. Bullying prevention and intervention programmes must be developed further to tackle all forms of bullying.

Change 2006-2010

The percentage of children who report having been bullied has remained stable since 2006 (24.5%). The percentage of both boys (25.6% to 25.5%) and girls (23.4% to 23.0%) who have been bullied remained stable since 2006 across all age groups except for boys aged 12-14 years old where there was a slight decrease from 28.2% in 2006 to 26.1% in 2010.

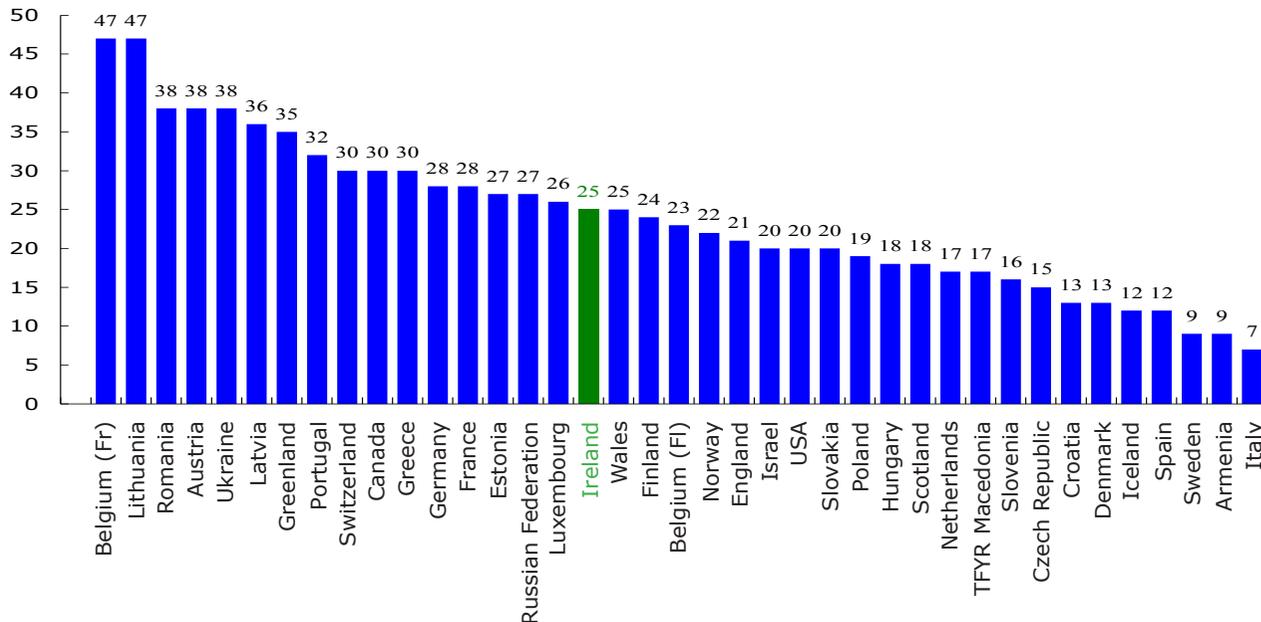


Percentage of children who have been bullied, by age and gender

Bullying behaviour in context

- Children who have been bullied are less likely to live with both parents (69.8% vs. 76.9%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report finding it easy to talk to their mother (74.9% vs. 83.9%), father (58.7% vs. 68.8%) and best friend (83.1% vs. 89.9%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report liking school (66.3% vs. 72.7%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are more likely to report pressure from schoolwork (46.7% vs. 36.2%) than those who have not.
- Being bullied is not associated with social class.

...Bullying behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland



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

International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 17th among 39 countries in Europe and North America with 24.8% reporting that they have been bullied. Overall 32.0% of 11 year olds (ranked 20th) and 27.0% of 13 year olds (ranked 24th) report having been bullied.

Implications

The percentage of children in Ireland reporting having been bullied at least once in the past couple of months has remained stable since 2006, with Ireland ranking midrange in comparison to other European and North American countries. Younger children (both girls and boys) aged 10-11 years old are most likely to report being bullied. The findings presented in this factsheet indicate that children who have been bullied are more

likely to report feeling pressured by school and to not like school. Good communication between parents and children may protect against bullying. Further resources need to be allocated to schools to incorporate a broader spectrum of anti-bullying policies, including specific anti-cyberbullying programmes. Schools should also raise awareness of bullying in the school community so that teachers, parents and children are more alert to it and its harmful effects.

References

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