

# Can school participation be good for children?

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**NUI Galway**  
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# Research Questions

- To explore associations between school participation and health and well-being among school students
  - Participation in school: expressing own views, organising activities and taking part in making rules
  - School related outcomes: perceived academic performance and liking school
  - Health and well-being outcomes: self-rated health, happiness and life satisfaction



# Methodology

- Data collected from the 2006 Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey
- Self-completion questionnaires from a stratified random sample of 10,334 students aged 10-17 years in Irish schools (83% response rate of school children)
- Associations between school participation and other measures are expressed by odds ratios from logistic regression models, conducted separately for girls and boys
- Ethical approval was granted by NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee

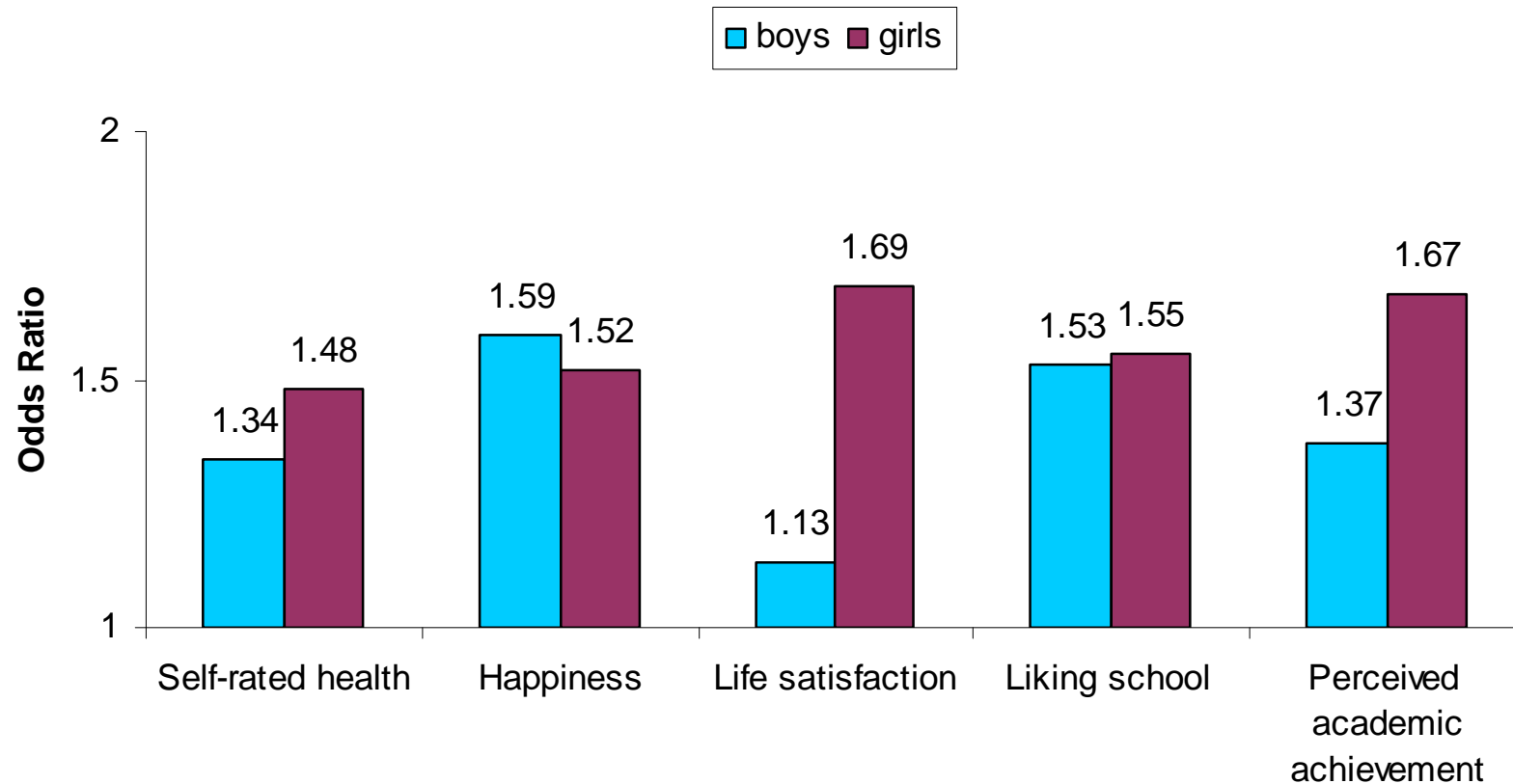


# Results

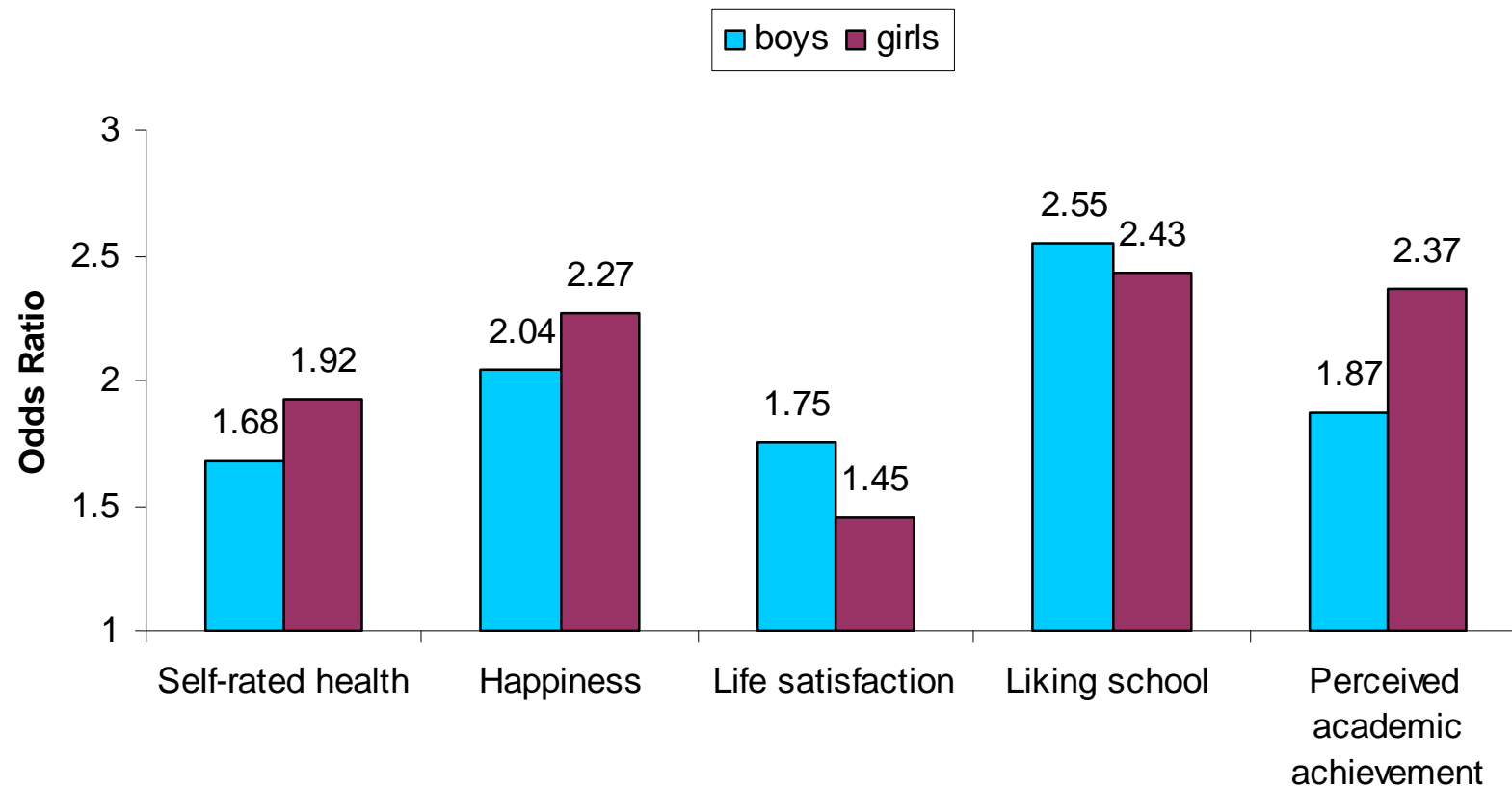
- Encouraged to express views
  - 63% overall
  - Higher among girls
- Take part in organising school events
  - 58% overall
  - Higher among girls
- Take part in making school rules
  - 23% overall
  - Decreases with age for both genders



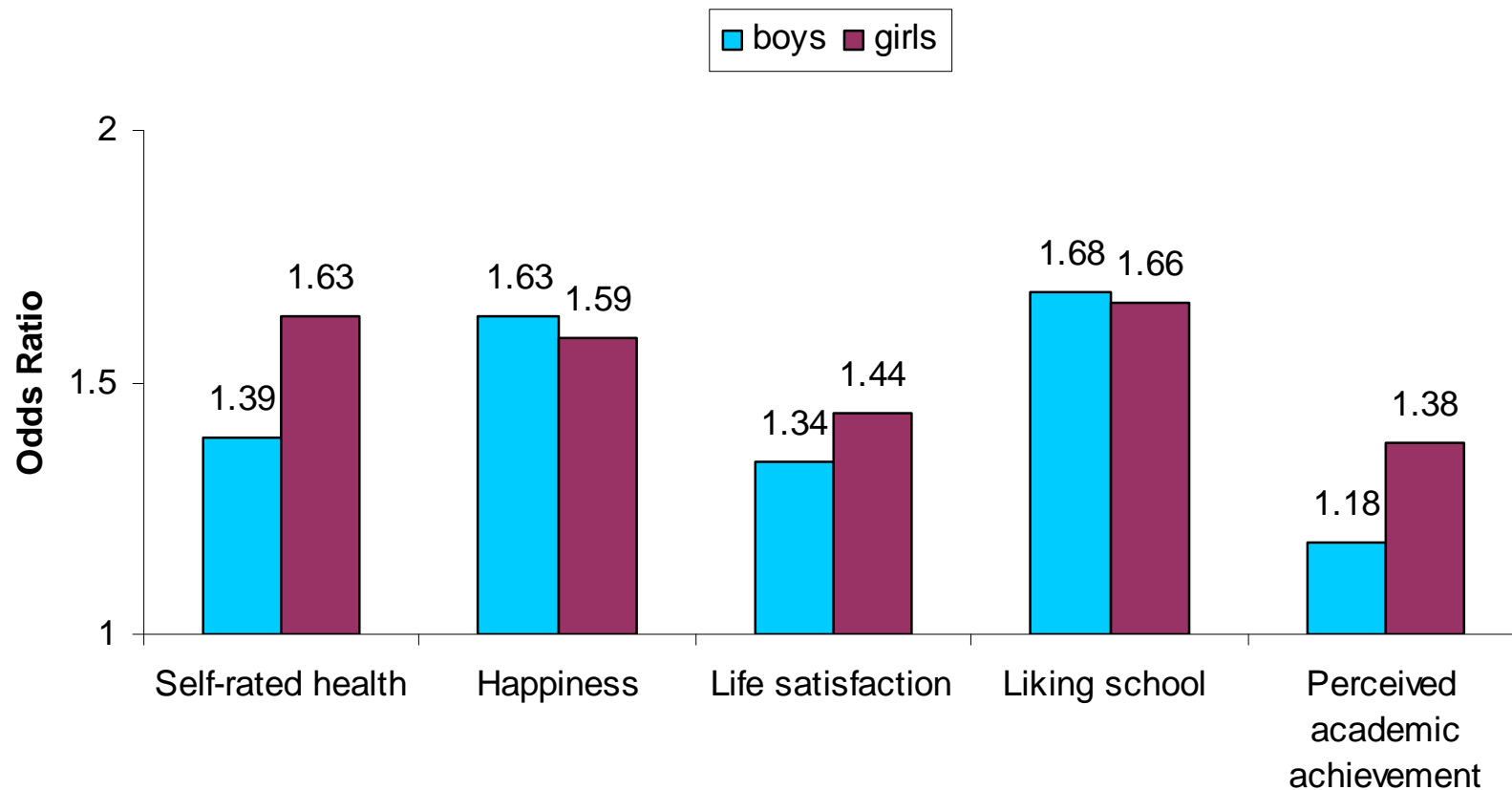
# Participate in making school rules



# Encouraged to express views



# Organising events



# Discussion

- Participation varies and is generally lower among older students
- Participation is (consistently) associated with a range of school, health and well-being outcomes
- Different types of participation might be more important at different ages
- Longitudinal studies need to confirm patterns
- Higher levels of participation should be encouraged – on health as well as educational grounds
- Students should validate whether participation is ‘real’
- Current work among HBSC Ireland members– establishment of a Child Advisory Board, PhD theses exploring the concept of participation among children



# Acknowledgements

- Children, Parents, Schools
- National Department of Health and Children
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
- Contact us
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- HBSC network of researchers



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