The Health Behaviours in School-Aged Children Study: Exploring its potential

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HBSC Study - background

- Initiated in 1982 in four countries
  - Next year we celebrate 30 years!
- 40 countries collected data in 2010
- Satellite studies
- Collaborative study with WHO European Region
- Irish data collected over four cycles since 1998
The study aims to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and well-being, health behaviours and their social context.

The findings are used to inform and influence children’s policy and practice at national and international levels.

The target age-groups are 11, 13 and 15 year olds attending school (n=4500).
HBSC 2010 – 43 regions
Health Behaviour in School Aged Children study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s lives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contexts:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
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<td><strong>Risk behaviours:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drinking, smoking...</td>
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<td>Health enhancing behaviours:</td>
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<td>Physical activity, leisure activity...</td>
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<td><strong>Health outcomes:</strong></td>
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<td>Well being</td>
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<td>Life satisfaction</td>
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<td>Self rated health</td>
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**SES:** Gender, Age, Social Class, Ethnicity
HBSC Objectives

- to initiate and sustain national and international research
- to contribute to theoretical, conceptual, and methodological developments
- to monitor and to compare health of school-aged children in member countries
- to disseminate findings
- to develop partnerships with relevant external agencies
- to promote and support the establishment of expertise in the field
- to establish and strengthen a multi-disciplinary network of experts
- to provide an international source of expertise and intelligence
HBSC - Methods

- Questionnaire developed by the network
- Research protocol developed by the network
- Random / systematic-random sampling
- Class as the sampling unit
- ~1500 from age group
- Self-administrated questionnaire
HBSC Ireland

- Four cycles of data collection took place:
  - 1998
    - N= 8497
    - 5th class to 5th year; 10-17 year olds
  - 2002
    - N= 8424
    - 5th class to 5th year; 10-17 year olds
  - 2006
    - N=13738
    - 3rd class to 5th year; 9-17
  - 2010
    - N=16060
    - 3rd class to 5th year; 9-17
Middle childhood study

• A gap was identified
• The HBSC questionnaire was modified
• A prolonged pilot process took place
• The questionnaire was amended
• A validation process followed
• In 2010, 2\textsuperscript{nd} round of data were collected
Types of research questions

- Simple bi-variable relationships
  - Associations and differences
- Multi-variante associations
  - Predicting outcomes
  - Identifying key determinants
- Multi-level regression models
  - Assessing class/school effect
- Cross-national comparisons
- Time-trends?
Dissemination of Irish data since 1998

- 39 reports (national and international)
- 90 scientific publications
- 7 books / book chapters
- >100 conference presentations
- 20 short reports
- Fact sheets
Dieting behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland

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

Summary

HBSC Ireland 2006 has found that 11.5% of children report dieting (8.3% of boys and 14.9% of girls), this figure has remained stable since 2002. The percentage of girls dieting is higher among older girls (8.3% of 10-11 year olds and 19.7% of 15-17 year olds), whereas the percentages of boys dieting remains stable across age groups. Children who report dieting are less likely to live with both parents, find it easy to talk to their parents, like school, have excellent health or be happy with their lives, and are more likely to report feeling pressured by schoolwork, and spending four or more evenings per week with friends. Dieting in this factsheet refers to children who report that they are on a diet or doing something to lose weight at present.

Why this topic?

Dieting is a prevalent behaviour among adolescents and weight control practices can comprise a mixture of acceptable and less acceptable methods. Body image or self-perception of overweight are significant factors associated with adolescents’ attempts to lose weight. Inadequate dietary intake during adolescence can have serious short and long term health implications. Dieting is also associated with low self-esteem and other negative psychological states.

Trends 2002-2006

The overall percentage of children who report dieting has remained stable from 2002 (13.1%) to 2006 (11.5%). There has been a slight decrease among girls (17.9% to 14.9%), with figures for boys remaining stable (6.6% to 8.3%).

Dieting in context

- Children who report dieting are less likely to live with both parents (77.9% vs. 80.9%) than those who do not.
- Children who report dieting are less likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (75.9% vs. 81.3%) and father (54.7% vs. 65.2%) than those who do not.
- Children who report dieting are more likely to spend more than four evenings a week with friends (46.2% vs. 41.7%) than those who do not.
- Children who report dieting are more likely to feel pressured by schoolwork (51.1% vs. 39.6%) and are less likely to like school (62.8% vs. 68.5%) than those who do not.
- Children who report dieting are less likely to report excellent health (19.4% vs. 35.2%) and being happy with their lives (38.0% vs. 51.1%) than those who do not.
- Dieting is not associated with social class.
Dieting behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland

Percentage of 15 year old children reporting they are on a diet, by country

International
Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 27th among 41 countries in Europe and North America with 13% reporting that they are dieting. Overall 11 year old children are ranked 38th (8% report being on a diet) and 13 year olds are ranked 31st.

Implications

References
Where else is the data used?

- State of the Nation’s Child report
- National reports on children’s health
- WHO/HSBC Forum reports
- Health Divide in Europe report
- UNICEF reports
- EMCDDA
- ....
How else can the data be used?
Working with the parents councils

- How often are you tired in the morning when you go to school?

*Feel tired on the way to school once a week or more*

Data from HBSC Israel: Harel et al., 2002
Monitoring interventions

- Helmet use:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Never use bicycle helmet

Data from HBSC Israel: Harel et al., 2003
Looking at trends

- Smoking

15-17 year olds who are smokers

Data from HBSC Ireland
Looking at trends

- Drinking

15-17 year olds who drink monthly

Data from HBSC Ireland
Spin-offs

- Child participation
- Food poverty
- Inequality report
- Children in care
- Immigrant children
Child report

B. Puberty was the second highest ranked HBSC topic

- About boys changing
- About girls changing
- What's the first thing to happen?
- What are the changes?
- Where does hair grow apart from your head?
- How long should your period last?
- What do you do when you have a period?
- How do you avoid mood swings?
- Does it affect you a lot? Why does it affect you?
- How could puberty affect you?
- Does everyone experience puberty?
- How many kids have it?
- Does puberty hurt?
- Does it hurt a lot?
- Is it safe?
- How to have sex?
- Why have sex?
- How to have a baby?
Short report services

- In addition to the reports and factsheets, HBSC Ireland provides a short report service.
- The service responds to requests from voluntary, community and statutory groups for specific analyses of the HBSC Ireland dataset(s).
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/shortreports.html](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/shortreports.html)
Wrap up – HBSC study

- A big European study running for many years
- Growing reputation
- Multi-disciplinary team in Ireland
- Data are collected over long period of time
- Same methods employed
- Committed to working with policy makers
- Committed to improving children’s lives
HBSC Ireland 20010

- Irish PI Saoirse Nic Gabhainn

- Funding from Health Promotion Policy Unit & Office of the Minister for Children, Dept. Health and Children and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

- Ethical Approval from NUIG Research Ethics Committee

- Support from Department of Education and Science
Further details available....

- www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc
- www.hbsc.org
- Email: HBSC@nuigalway.ie

Thank you!