



Weight concerns and dieting among boys in Ireland

Findings from the Health Behaviour in School-
aged Children (HBSC) survey



Dr Colette Kelly
Health Promotion Research Centre
June 2010



Dieting and weight concerns

- Dieting is a prevalent behaviour among young people
- The desire to change shape or weight is also common
- It is likely that weight and body concerns differ by gender
- Less attention on dieting and weight concerns among boys
- Risk and protective factors for weight concerns may differ by gender

Aims

- Explore prevalence of dieting and weight concerns among boys in Ireland
- Examine relationships between weight concerns among boys and associated factors in the family, peer and school environments.

Family

- Family - is a key setting for promoting healthy behaviours and for social support
- Parents - providers of health information
- Parents - significant influence on behaviours and perceptions surrounding eating, body image and weight among young people

HBSC Ireland-methodology

- 215 schools with 10,334 students from 10-18 years
- Ethical approval from NUI Galway REC
- Consent from schools, parents and children
- Questionnaires completed in class
 - confidential & anonymous



Questions

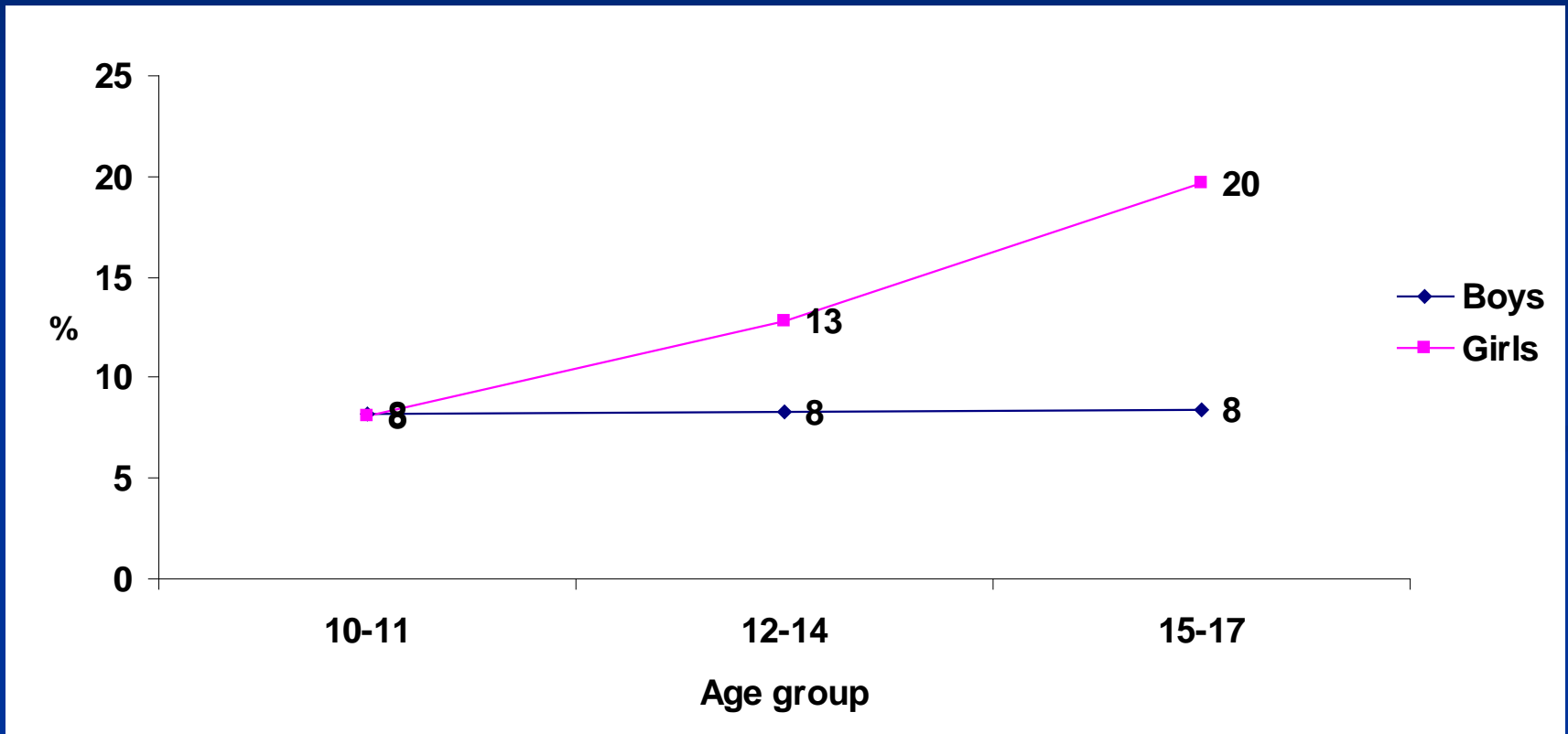
- Are you currently on a diet or doing something else to lose weight?
- Response options
 - No, my weight is fine
 - No, but I should lose some weight
 - No, because I need to put on weight
 - Yes

Communication

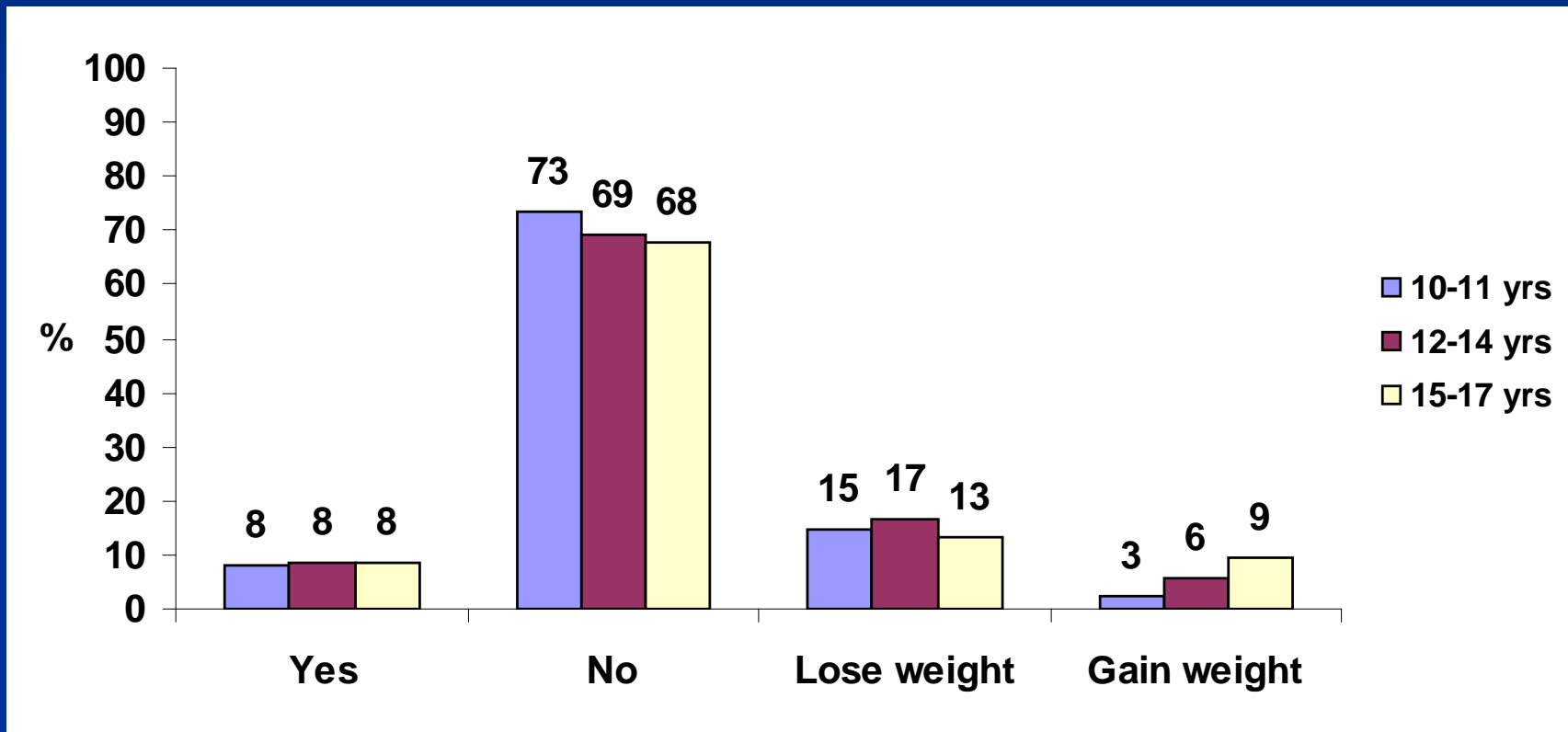
- How easy is it for you to talk to the following persons about the things that really bother you?
 - Father Mother Elder brother
 - Best Friend Friends of the same sex.....

- Response options:
 - Very easy Easy Difficult
 - Very difficult Don't have or don't see this person

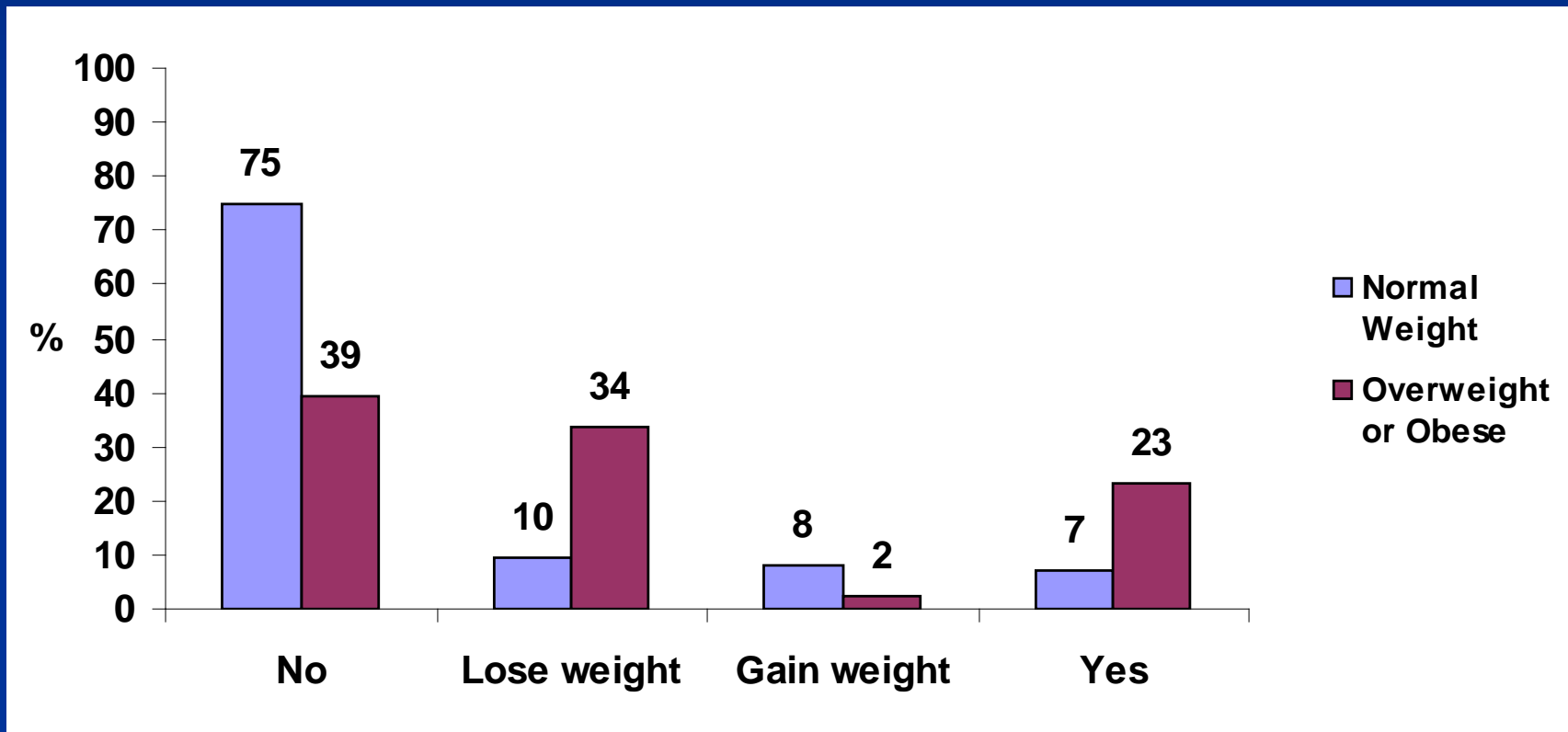
Dieting to lose weight



Weight concerns among boys (n=5185)



Weight concerns among boys by weight status



Associations between relationships with family members and weight concerns among boys

	Desire to Lose Weight	95% CI	Desire to Gain Weight	95% CI
Father	0.96	0.93, 1.00	0.59	0.47, 0.75
Mother	0.66	0.56, 0.78	0.62	0.48, 0.80
Elder brother	0.69	0.56, 0.84	0.75	0.54, 1.06
Best Friend	0.83	0.70, 0.99	0.81	0.60, 1.08
Friend Same sex	0.90	0.77, 1.05	0.78	0.61, 1.01

Analysis controlled for age

Discussion

- Weight concerns among boys in Ireland are prevalent
- The importance of positive family relationships in body weight satisfaction has been highlighted
- Future work on the influence of peers and other socio-cultural factors on weight concerns among boys in Ireland should be explored.

Acknowledgements

- Schools, parents & children
- Department of Health and Children
- Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs



Team members

- Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn - PI
- Dr Michal Molcho - Deputy PI
- Dr Colette Kelly - Survey Manager
- Amanda Fitzgerald
- Natasha Clarke
- Larri Walker
- Siobhan O'Higgins
- Aoife Gavin
- Priscilla Doyle
- Geraldine Nolan

- Prof Candace Currie & team, International Co-ordinating Centre, Scotland

- HBSC network of researchers



Further details available....

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

