

Victims of bullying among students with a disability or chronic illness and their peers: A cross-national study between Ireland and France

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Introduction

- Students with disabilities or chronic illness (D/CI) have become increasingly integrated into mainstream schools, but negative attitudes are considered as a major barrier to full social inclusion of disabled students
- School bullying is a common problem among students across countries and need to be studied among disabled students because they are potentially more vulnerable
- France and Ireland represent two contrasting environments in educational systems and bullying prevention at school.

Objectives

- To describe the level of bullying behaviours among children with and without D/CI in France and Ireland
- To compare the relative strength of the associations between socio-demographic, social network, family factors and bullying victimisation between students with or without D/CI across these countries
- To document the additional risk of bullying victimisation associated with the level of D/CI.

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey (HBSC)

- ✓ Based on the 2006 HBSC/WHO cross-national survey international protocol
- ✓ A nationally representative sample of students aged 11, 13 and 15 years in Ireland (n=4,894) and in France (n=7,154)
- ✓ Self-completion questionnaire, anonymous and voluntary

Disability and chronic illness

- Long-term illness, disability, or medical condition diagnosed by a doctor
- Restriction in participation at school due to D/CI.

Contextual factors

- Socio-demographic: age, gender, family affluence
- Social network : social support, communication with same gender friends
- Family: family structure, communication with mother and father

Bullying victimization at school

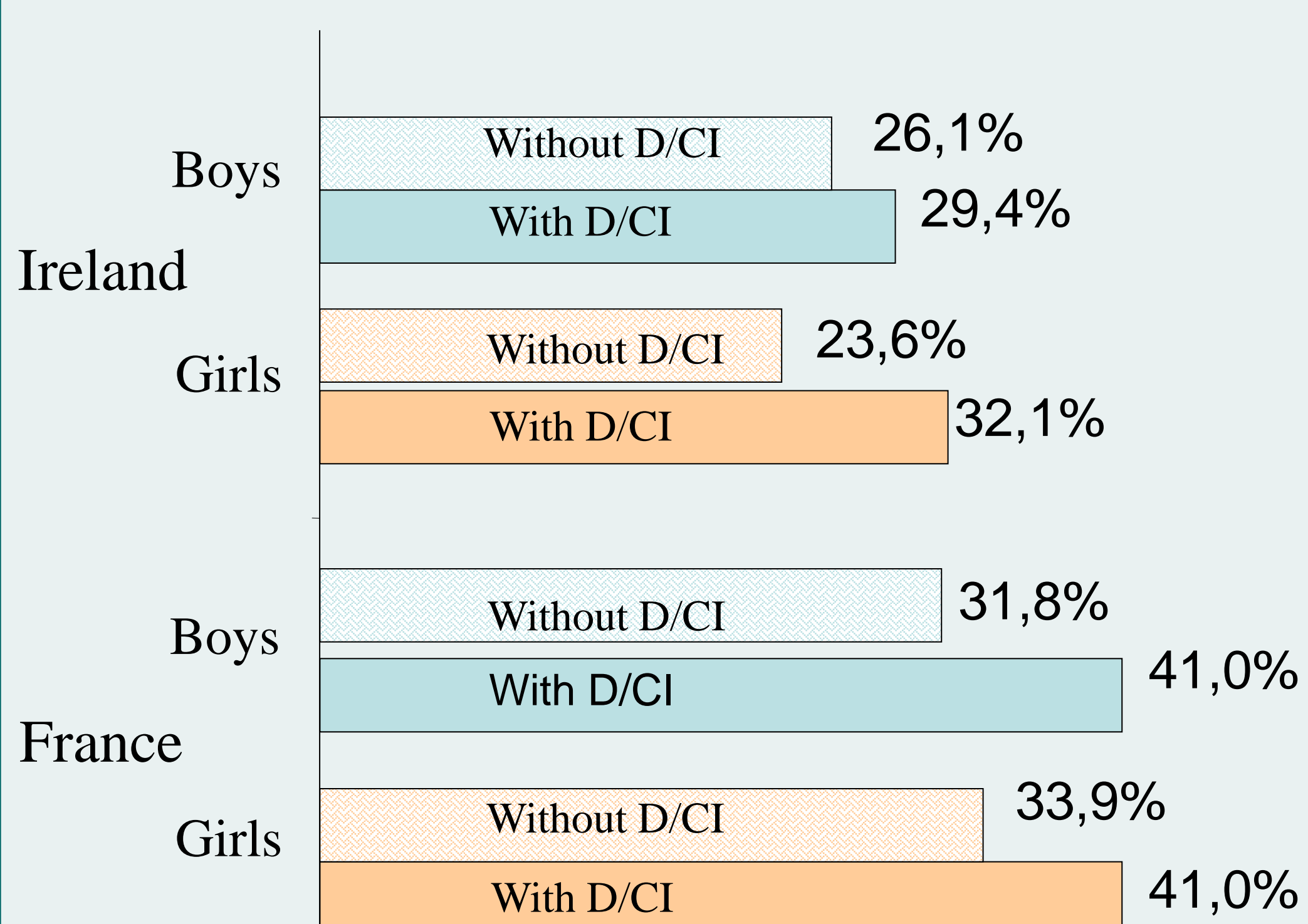
- A standardised introduction focused on the three elements that define bullying (Olweus 1993): repetition, harm, unequal power
- Measure: being bullied at least once in the couple of months.

Results

1. Overall, in **France 34.2%** of students reported being bullied at least once, vs. **25.9% in Ireland**.
2. **Students with D/CI were significantly more likely to report being bullied** in both countries

3. Regardless of country and D/CI status, being bullied was significantly associated with **weaker social support** and **difficulty of communication with fathers**, with even stronger associations among students with D/CI.

4. Regardless of country, **30% additional risk** of being bullied was found when students reported both D/CI and restriction in school participation because of their D/CI.



Level of disability	n	OR ^a (95% CI)	p-value
No D/CI	7,259	1	
D/CI without restriction in participation	1,178	1.3 (1.1-1.4)	<0.01
D/CI with restriction in participation	314	1.8 (1.4-2.4)	<0.001
Ordinal assumption	8,751	1.3 (1.2-1.4)	<0.001

^a adjusted for age, gender, family affluence, communication with same sex friends, classmates support, family structure, communication with mother, communication with father and country.

Associations between bullying victimisation and level of D/CI

Conclusion

- Students with D/CI are more likely to be victimised, with a similar risk in Ireland and in France
- We found considerable similarities between countries and between D/CI status groups in the factors associated with being bullied. The specific role of fathers in relation with bullying victimisation is not documented in the literature and needs to be explored in future qualitative research
- We hypothesised that the level of disability was more severe when students reported that their D/CI had an impact on their school participation compared those reporting D/CI without such a restriction in participation, and our results show that the risk of being bullied is higher in the more severe cases.
- Our findings should be considered in the development of specific bullying prevention strategies.