

## HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (HBSC): A WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

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### Background

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The HBSC international survey runs on an academic 4 year cycle and in 2009/10 there were 43 participating countries and regions ([www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org)). Cross nationally, HBSC collects information on the key indicators of health, health attitudes and health behaviours, as well as the context of health for young people aged 11, 13 and 15 years.

### Research Aims:

The overall study aims to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and wellbeing, health behaviours and their social context. The overarching aim is to contribute to the scientific literature and inform policy and practice that affects children and young people's lives. In Ireland, children from the age of 9-17 years are included to obtain a more coherent understanding of health behaviours and their context from middle through to late childhood/adolescence. In 2010 information on sexual health behaviours were collected from those aged 15 years or older to establish baseline data on sexual health among young people in Ireland. Previous HBSC Ireland surveys did not collect this data.

### Methods

HBSC is a school-based survey with data collected through self-completion questionnaires administered by teachers in the classroom. The HBSC survey instrument is a standard questionnaire developed by the international research network. Younger children received a shorter questionnaire. A nationally representative sample of primary and post-primary schools from the Republic of Ireland was selected. Individual schools were randomly selected and subsequently, class groups within schools were randomly selected for participation.

### Results

Data collection for the 2009/10 survey is now complete with a response rate of 65.8% including 254 schools and 15,884 students. Data entry is ongoing and data analysis and report writing will commence thereafter. The first national report from the 2010 Irish HBSC survey will be launched in the Autumn of 2011. Work on the international HBSC data file, which includes data from 11, 13 and 15 year olds, has begun. Dissemination of the findings from the 2006 is ongoing.

### Key Publications and Reports:

Brooks, A-M., Hanafin, S., Cahill, H., Nic Gabhainn, S. & Molcho, M. (2010). *State of the Nations Children 2010*. Dublin: Department of Health and Children.

Kelly, C., Molcho, M. & Nic Gabhainn, S. (2010). Patterns in weight reduction behaviour by weight status in schoolchildren. *Public Health Nutrition*, 13(8), 1229–1236.

Molcho, M., Kelly, C. & Nic Gabhainn, S. (2010). Deficits in Health and Well-Being among Immigrant Children in Ireland: the Explanatory Role of Social Capital. *Translocations: The Irish Migration, Race and Social Transformation Review*, 6(1).