

# First Generation Immigrant Children's Perceived Discrimination and Health

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Health Inequities: Action for Change  
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# Overview

- Background: HBSC study and immigrant children's health
- Methods: measures and matching
- Results: discrimination and health indicators
- Discussion
- Implications



# Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2018 study

- Cross-national research conducted every four years in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Aim to improve understanding of children and young people's health
- Children complete individual questionnaires in school classrooms
- Data drawn from the findings of HBSC Ireland 2018
- Perceived discrimination and health inequities
- Matching migrants to their peers in school



# Immigrant Children's Health

- One in eight international migrants is a child (UNICEF, 2021)
- Immigration status is an important social determinant of health
- Migrants are among the most vulnerable groups of children (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2021)
- First major report on discrimination in Ireland published (DCEDIY, 2022)
- Comparing first generation immigrant children in Ireland and their non-migrant peers



# Case Control Matching

- 1,696 first generation immigrants matched with those born in Ireland by
  - age
  - gender
  - social class
- Matched within
  - classroom
  - school
  - geographical area



# Measures

- Perceived discrimination on the basis of:
  - birth, gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation, race, religion or other grounds
- Health and wellbeing:
  - life satisfaction, happiness, physical activity, been bullied, going to school or bed hungry
- Social determinants of health:
  - good places to spend free time, liking school, 3+ friends of the same gender, ease of talking to mother or father



# Perceived discrimination

Basis of Discrimination	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Immigrant Child (%)	Child born in Ireland (%)	p-value
Place of birth	52.2	16.2	<0.001
Race	33.3	6.9	<0.001
Sexual orientation	13.3	9.0	0.010
Religion	21.1	9.7	<0.001
Other	58.1	37.8	0.009

Associations tested by Chi Square

Gender, age, disability status, Traveller status were not significant

# Wellbeing and psychosocial

Indicators	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Immigrant Child (%)	Child born in Ireland (%)	p-value
High life satisfaction	69.1	72.6	0.04
Happiness	41.3	44.8	0.034
Been bullied	36.1	28.3	<0.001
Going to school or bed hungry	23.2	17.5	<0.001

Associations tested by Chi Square

Differences in self-reported health and physical activity were not significant



# Social Determinants of Health

Indicators	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Immigrant Child (%)	Child born in Ireland (%)	p-value
Liking school	75.1	71.5	0.018
Good places to spend free time	69.1	65.5	0.026
3+friends same gender	84.4	89.4	<0.001
Ease talking to mother	79.7	85.1	<0.001
Ease talking to father	67.6	72.5	0.004

Associations tested by Chi Square

Differences in physical fighting were not significant

# Discussion

- High rates of discrimination among immigrant children in Ireland on various grounds
- First generation immigrant children report lower health and happiness, and higher bullying and hunger than their peers
- First generation immigrant children report fewer close friends and less ease talking to their parents about their problems than their peers
- However, first generation immigrant children are more likely to report liking school and having good places to spend free time in their communities than their peers



# Next Steps

- Inequities in health and wellbeing among immigrant children should continue to be documented and shared
- Cross-national analyses could reveal policy drivers of equity
- This must include the socio-economic determinants of health for immigrant children
- Further analyses should address intersectionality, and include second generation immigrants
- HBSC 2022 may be able to investigate Ukrainian children in Ireland



# Thank you!



Questions?

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