

# CIRCUMSTANCES AND BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED WITH EARLY FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN IRELAND

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# AIMS

- This study aims to explore the circumstances and behaviours associated with early first sexual intercourse among adolescents in Ireland and to investigate which of these factors are related to the feelings around timing of first intercourse, using data from the Health Behaviour in school-aged Children (HBSC) Ireland 2014 study.

# BACKGROUND

- The timing of sexual initiation, and the context and circumstances under which it occurs, can have consequences in the short term and later in life (*Magnusson & Trost, 2006; Singh et al., 2000*)
- Onset of sexual activity among adolescents often does not correspond with the age that is regarded as appropriate within a country/society and can result gaps in adequate promotion of young people's sexual health (*Wellings, Mitchell, & Collumbien, 2012*)
- Important to collate up-to-date information on the sexual behaviours and practices of adolescents - in particular important sexual milestones such as first sexual intercourse.

# IRELAND

- Pre-2014 only retrospective national data available specifically on first sexual experience
  - **Irish Study of Sexual health and Relationships** (*Layte et al., 2006*)
  - **Irish Crisis Pregnancy Programme** (*McBride et al, 2012*)
- Younger age-groups were more likely to first have sex **<17** years (*Layte et al., 2006; McBride et al, 2012*)
- Those who first had sex aged **≤16** years were **52%** less likely to have used contraception at first sex, compared with those who first had sex aged **≥17** years (*McBride et al, 2012*)
- **27.4%** of men and **16.5%** of women said that they/their partner had been drinking alcohol or taking drugs at the time of first intercourse
  - **36%** of men and **20.8%** of women aged 18-24 years (*Layte et al., 2006*)

# DEFINING EARLY SEXUAL INITIATION

- Number of different cut-offs employed: <13, <14, <15, <16 years



# HBSC IRELAND 2014

- Sample
  - 94 post-primary schools recruited (RR 59%)
  - 4,036 participants aged 15-17 years
  - 879 sexually active (436 boys, 443 girls)
- Analysis
  - SPSS 23.0 software package
  - Chi<sup>2</sup> tests



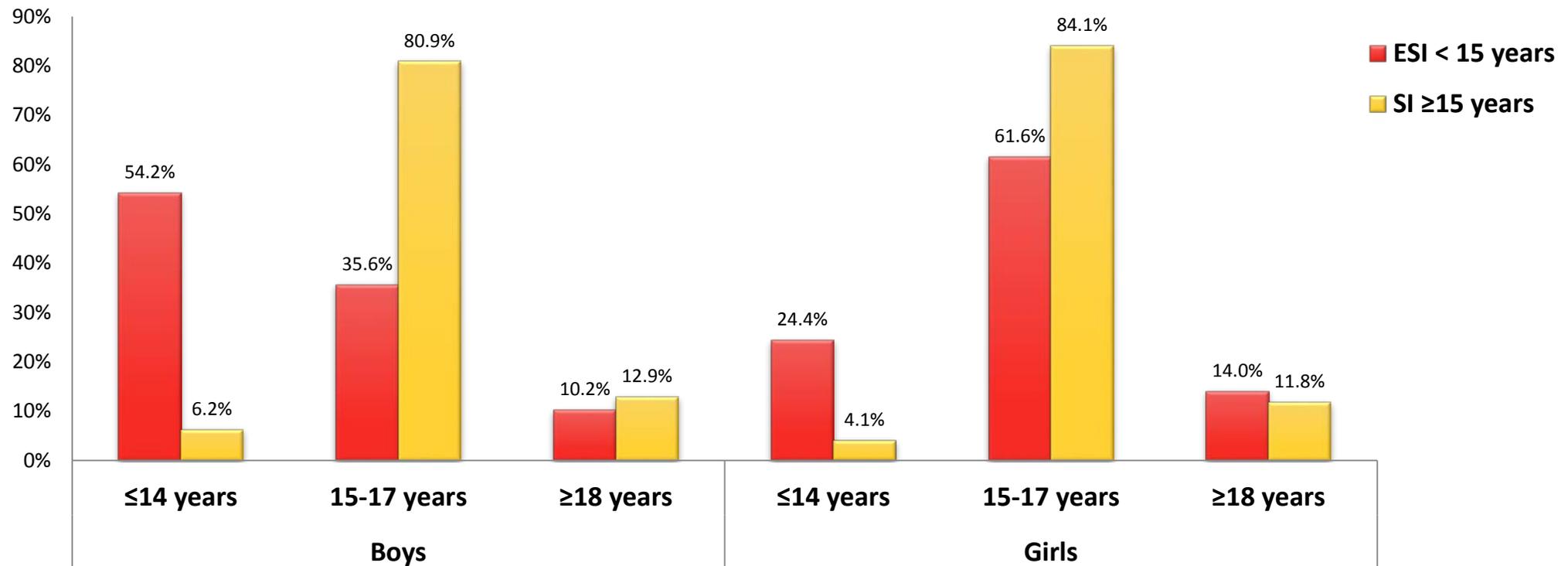


# MEASURES

- Dependent variable
  - Age at first sexual intercourse
- Independent variables
  - Age of partner at first intercourse
  - Condom use at first intercourse
  - Birth control pill use at first intercourse
  - Feelings about the timing of first intercourse
  - Alcohol/drug use before first intercourse

# RESULTS

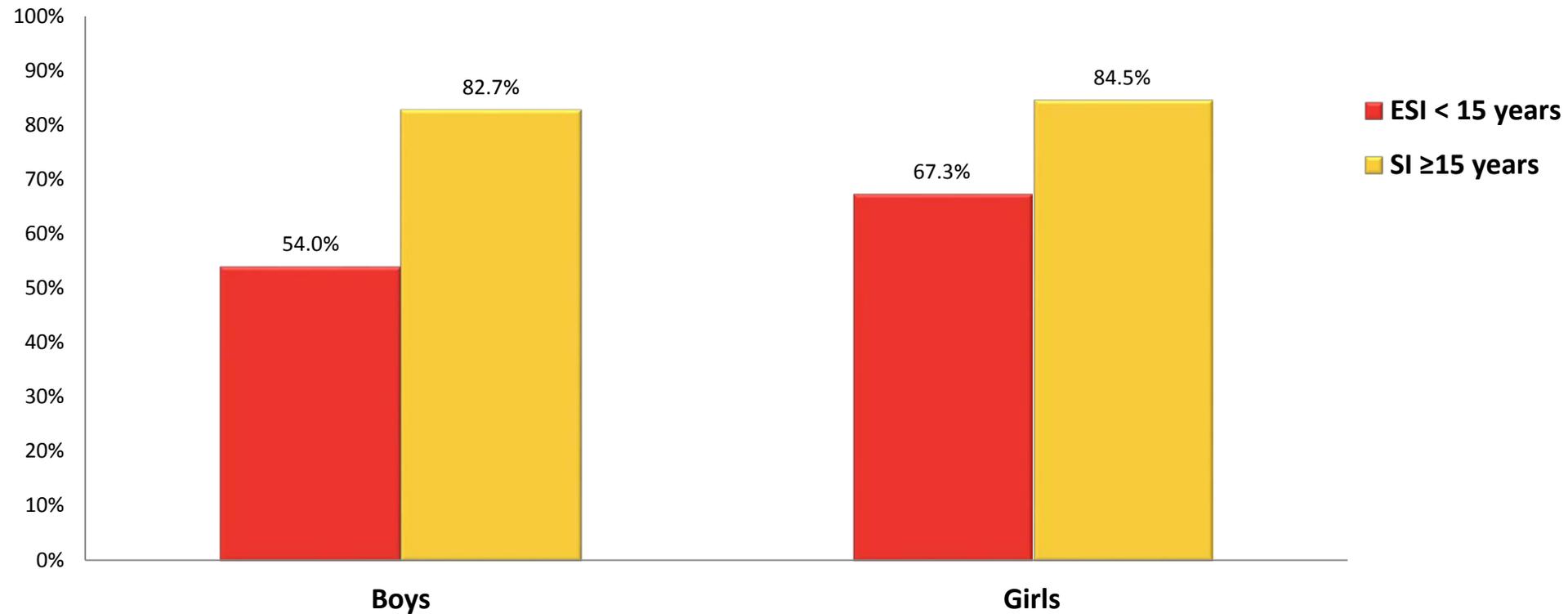
## Age of partner at first intercourse



- **Boys:**  $\chi^2 (2) = 98.276, p < .001$ ; **Girls:**  $\chi^2 (2) = 34.634, p < .001$

# RESULTS

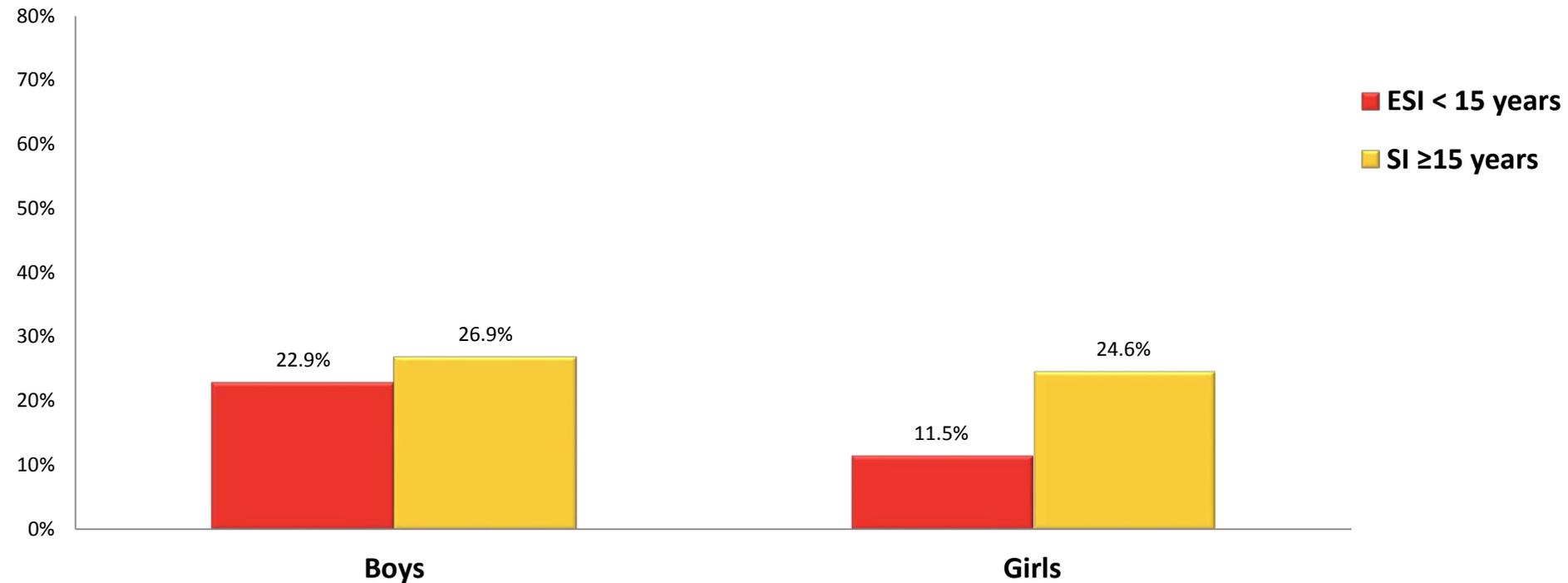
## Condom use at first intercourse



- **Boys:**  $\chi^2 (1) = 33.829, p < .001$ ; **Girls:**  $\chi^2 (1) = 13.991, p < .001$

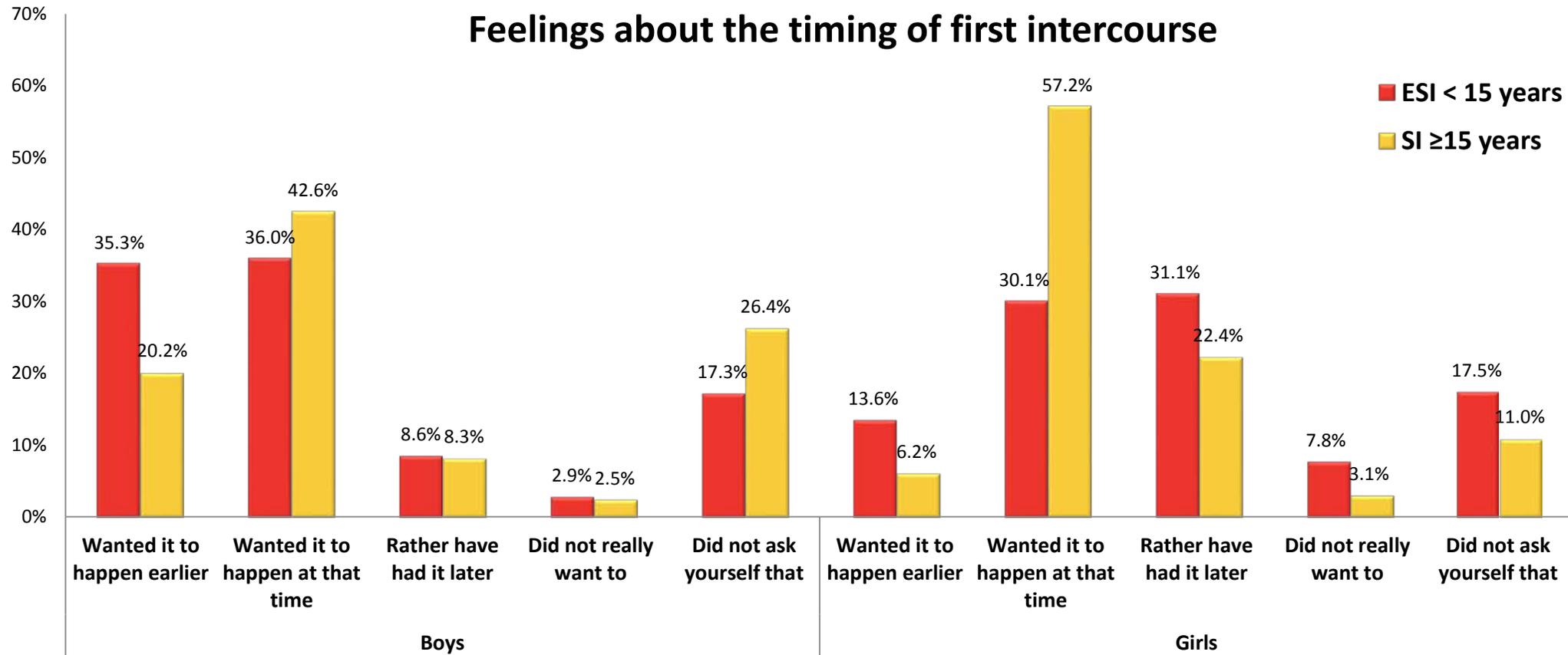
# RESULTS

## Birth control pill use at first intercourse



- **Boys:**  $\chi^2 (1) = .630, p >.05^*$ ; **Girls:**  $\chi^2 (1) = 7.442, p <.01$

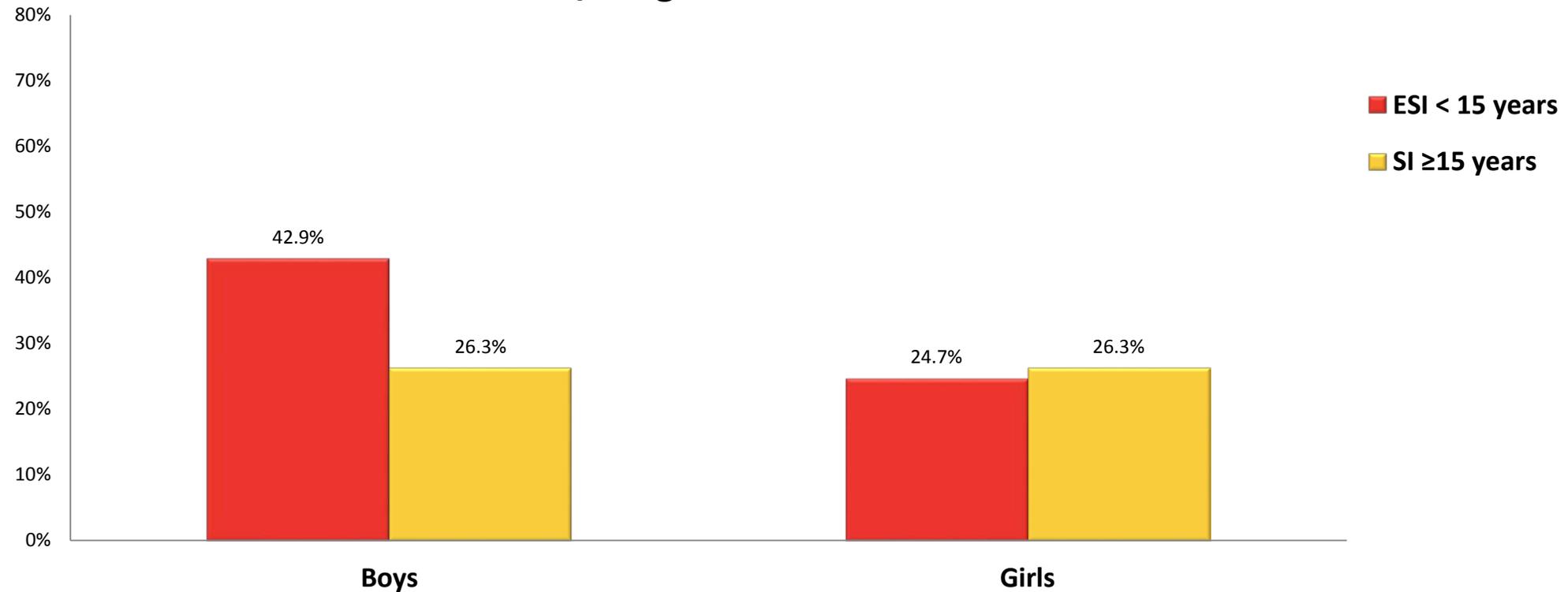
# RESULTS



- **Boys:**  $\chi^2 (4) = 11.971, p < .05$ ; **Girls:**  $\chi^2 (4) = 24.869, p < .001$

# RESULTS

## Alcohol/drug use before first intercourse



- **Boys:**  $\chi^2 (1) = 10.170, p < .01$ ; **Girls:**  $\chi^2 (1) = 0.09, p > .05^*$

# SUMMARY

- 37.4% of boys and 26.5% of girls reported early sexual intercourse (ESI)

ESI Boys	ESI Girls
↓ likely to use a condom	↓ likely to use a condom
↓ likely to use birth control pills*	↓ likely to use birth control pills
↑ likely to have partner ≤14 years	↑ likely to have partner ≤14 years
↑ likely to have wanted sex to have happened earlier	↓ likely happy with the timing/↑ likely to have wanted it to happen later
↑ likely to use alcohol or drugs before	↓ likely use alcohol or drugs before*

*\*Not statistically significant*

# ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

## Predictors of feelings about timing of first intercourse

- Ordinal regressions – **earlier timing/ happy with timing/ later timing**
  - Age of partner at first sex
  - Alcohol/drug use at first sex
  - Condom use at first sex
  - Birth control pill use at first sex
  - Gender
  - Social class
  - School type
  - Age at first sex

# REFERENCES

- Magnusson, C., & Trost, K. (2006). Girls experiencing sexual intercourse early: Could it play a part in reproductive health in middle adulthood? *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 27(4), 237-244.
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**Questions??.....Advice!!**