

## Short Report

### **HBSC Ireland 2010: Socio-economic variations in tobacco smoking among school-aged children in Ireland: 2002, 2006 and 2010.**

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#### **Introduction:**

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is a cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe and runs on a four-year cycle. In 2010 Ireland participated for the fourth time in the HBSC study ([www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc)). The overall aims of the HBSC study are to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and wellbeing, health behaviours and their social context. HBSC collects data on key indicators of health, health attitudes and health behaviours, as well as the context of health for young people. The study is a school-based survey with information collected from students through self-completion questionnaires in classrooms. HBSC Ireland has been funded by the Department of Health since 1997. Further information on the HBSC Ireland, including national reports, factsheets and journal articles can be found at [www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc) or [www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org), the International HBSC website.

#### **Focus of this report:**

This short report presents a brief analysis of selected socio-economic factors as related to tobacco smoking in 10-18 year old school students in Ireland. Analyses were based on data collected during the 2002, 2006 and 2010 HBSC survey cycles. The Irish sample consisted of 8,424, 10,334 and 16,060 school children in each respective cycle.

To examine prevalence of tobacco smoking the following questions were asked of the students:

1. How often do you smoke at present? with response options 'yes' and 'no'

2. Have you ever smoked tobacco? with response options 'every day', 'at least once a week, but not every day', 'less than once a week' and 'I do not smoke'
3. At what age did you first smoke a cigarette? with response options ranging from 'never' to '16 years old or older' (with very early initiation defined as being at age 13 or younger, and early initiation at age 15 or younger).

To examine the associations between socio-economic factors and the prevalence of smoking, the following questions and items were selected:

1. How well off do you think your family is? with response options: 'very well off', 'quite well off', 'average', 'not very well off', 'not at all well off'.
2. In your opinion, what does your class teacher(s) think about your school performance compared to your classmates? With response options: 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'below average'.
3. The HBSC Family Affluence Scale (FAS). This scale is based on a set of four questions:
  - How many computers does your family own? With response options: 'none', 'one', 'two', 'more than two'
  - Does your family own a car, van or truck? With response options: 'no', 'yes, one', 'yes, two or more'
  - Do you have your own bedroom? With response options: 'yes', 'no'
  - During the past 12 months, how many times did you travel away on holiday with your family? (in Ireland or abroad) with response options: 'not at all', 'once', 'twice', 'more than twice'.

Students were classified according to the summed score of the FAS items, with the overall score being recoded to give values of low (0-2 score), middle (3-5 score) and high family affluence (6-9 score).

## Findings:

Findings are presented below in series of tables separately for each HBSC Ireland survey cycle, beginning with 2010.

### HBSC 2010

#### *Family Affluence*

**Table 1. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by FAS in 2010**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Yes	26.5	21.2	20.2
No	73.5	78.8	79.8

**Table 2. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by FAS in 2010**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Every day	7.8	4.5	3.7
At least once a week, but not every day	2.4	2.0	1.7
Less than one a week	3.5	3.1	3.3
I do not smoke	86.3	90.4	91.2

**Table 3. Age of first cigarette, by FAS in 2010**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Never	68.3	74.8	76.7
11 years or less	6.4	4.7	4.6
12 years	6.3	4.1	3.4
13 years	6.3	5.3	4.4
14 years	6.5	5.3	5.0
15 years	3.6	3.5	3.5
16 years or older	2.6	2.3	2.4

**Perception of family wealth**

**Table 4. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived family wealth in 2010**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family well-off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Yes	17.1	25.1	28.2	39.8	28.0
No	82.9	74.9	71.8	60.2	72.0

**Table 5. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived family wealth in 2010**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family well-off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Every day	4.8	4.2	5.8	9.9	9.1
At least once a week, but not every day	1.6	2.2	2.5	4.6	3.0
Less than one a week	2.5	3.9	3.8	6.4	4.8
I do not smoke	91.1	89.6	87.8	79.1	83.0

**Table 6. Age of first cigarette, by perceived family wealth in 2010**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family well-off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Never	83.8	76.5	72.1	62.3	69.2
11 years or less	4.3	3.9	4.9	8.8	14.3
12 years	2.3	3.4	4.7	6.3	4.0
13 years	3.0	5.2	5.5	7.0	5.4
14 years	3.5	5.1	6.0	7.7	5.4
15 years	1.7	3.5	4.3	4.6	1.3
16 years or older	1.4	2.4	2.6	3.2	0.4

**Perceived academic achievement**

**Table 7. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived academic achievement in 2010**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Yes	16.2	23.3	38.0	57.6
No	83.8	76.7	62.0	42.4

**Table 8. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived academic achievement in 2010**

How often do you smoke at present?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Every day	3.1	3.9	9.4	23.3
At least once a week, but not every day	1.0	2.3	3.6	5.2
Less than one a week	2.3	3.5	5.8	6.2
I do not smoke	93.6	90.2	81.3	65.3

**Table 9. Age of first cigarette by perceived academic achievement in 2010**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Never	85.1	77.1	62.9	43.0
11 years or less	2.7	4.0	7.6	18.8
12 years	1.9	3.3	7.0	10.9
13 years	2.4	4.5	8.4	11.1
14 years	3.1	5.3	7.2	9.9
15 years	2.4	3.3	4.9	4.5
16 years or older	2.4	2.5	2.0	1.7

**Table 10. Current smoking behaviours of 15 year olds, by early/late smoking initiation in 2010**

How often do you smoke at present?	Smoking initiation	
	Very early initiation (%)	Early initiation (%)
Every day	38.3	15.0
At least once a week, but not every day	9.2	10.2
Less than one a week	9.8	15.4
I do not smoke	42.7	59.3

## HBSC 2006

### *Family Affluence*

**Table 11. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by FAS in 2006**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Yes	40.1	34.3	32.8
No	59.9	65.7	67.2

**Table 12. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by FAS in 2006**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Every day	11.3	7.3	6.8
At least once a week, but not every day	3.8	3.0	2.6
Less than one a week	3.5	3.5	3.9
I do not smoke	81.4	86.2	86.7

**Table 13. Age of first cigarette by FAS in 2006**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Never	62.4	68.1	69.9
11 years or less	11.2	9.1	8.0
12 years	7.4	6.7	5.9
13 years	8.1	6.6	6.4
14 years	6.0	4.7	4.8
15 years	2.9	3.4	3.5
16 years or older	2.0	1.5	1.4

### *Perceived academic achievement*

**Table 14. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived academic achievement in 2006**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Yes	21.5	33.2	50.9	73.1
No	78.5	66.8	49.1	26.9

**Table 15. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived academic achievement in 2006**

How often do you smoke at present?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Every day	3.5	6.2	14.9	27.7
At least once a week, but not every day	1.5	2.9	4.4	9.0
Less than one a week	1.9	3.4	5.0	8.2
I do not smoke	93.0	87.5	75.6	55.1

**Table 16. Age of first smoke, by perceived academic achievement in 2006**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Never	81.1	69.3	51.8	29.0
11 years or less	5.8	7.1	14.5	32.1
12 years	3.8	6.5	9.9	12.7
13 years	3.5	6.6	10.6	13.4
14 years	2.5	5.1	7.4	7.6
15 years	1.9	3.6	4.2	3.1
16 years or older	1.5	1.7	1.6	2.2

***Perception of family wealth***

**Table 17. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived family wealth in 2006**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Yes	27.2	35.5	40.3	45.3	31.9
No	72.8	64.5	59.7	54.7	68.1

**Table 18. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived family wealth in 2006**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Every day	5.4	6.8	11.0	11.5	12.1
<b>At least once a week, but not every day</b>	1.9	2.9	3.8	5.4	5.4
<b>Less than one a week</b>	3.3	3.4	4.2	2.3	4.0
<b>I do not smoke</b>	89.4	86.9	80.9	80.8	78.6

**Table 19. Age of first smoke, by perceived family wealth in 2006**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Never	75.1	67.4	62.3	56.0	71.4
11 years or less	8.8	8.4	10.5	13.9	13.6
12 years	5.6	6.4	7.7	12.0	3.6
13 years	4.4	7.1	8.2	6.0	6.4
14 years	2.6	5.3	6.1	6.2	2.7
15 years	2.5	3.5	3.4	2.9	1.4
16 years or older	1.0	1.8	1.7	3.1	0.9

**Table 20. Current smoking behaviours of 15 year olds, by early/late smoking initiation in 2006**

How often do you smoke at present?	Smoking initiation	
	Very early initiation (%)	Early initiation (%)
Every day	35.5	21.6
At least once a week, but not every day	7.3	10.4
Less than one a week	7.8	11.9
I do not smoke	49.4	56.1



## 2002

### *Family Affluence*

**Table 21. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by FAS in 2002**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Yes	43.4	38.8	40.5
No	56.6	61.2	59.5

**Table 22. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by FAS in 2002**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Every day	13.7	9.4	8.7
At least once a week, but not every day	4.1	3.2	3.4
Less than one a week	5.1	5.5	4.9
I do not smoke	77.1	81.8	83.0

**Table 23. Age of first cigarette by FAS in 2002**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family Affluence Scale		
	Low (%)	Mid (%)	High (%)
Never	58.3	63.6	61.9
11 years or less	16.0	13.3	13.7
12 years	8.1	8.7	8.5
13 years	7.2	6.2	6.4
14 years	5.3	4.8	5.6
15 years	2.8	1.7	2.4
16 years or older	1.7	1.0	1.1

### *Perceived academic achievement*

**Table 24. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived academic achievement in 2002**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Yes	27.1	35.1	49.1	71.6
No	72.9	64.9	50.9	28.4

**Table 25. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived academic achievement in 2002**

How often do you smoke at present?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Every day	4.0	6.5	13.8	32.9
At least once a week, but not every day	2.0	2.9	4.5	6.2
Less than one a week	3.6	4.9	5.6	10.1
I do not smoke	90.4	85.8	76.1	50.7

**Table 26. Age of first cigarette by perceived academic achievement in 2002**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Academic achievement			
	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Below average (%)
Never	75.3	67.7	52.9	30.1
11 years or less	8.4	10.6	17.1	33.6
12 years	4.6	7.6	10.7	16.9
13 years	4.4	5.9	8.1	9.3
14 years	4.3	4.3	6.8	6.2
15 years	1.5	2.1	2.5	2.7
16 years or older	0.8	1.1	1.4	0.8

***Perception of family wealth***

**Table 27. Percentages who reported ever smoking, by perceived family wealth in 2002**

Have you ever smoked tobacco?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Yes	28.6	40.7	42.4	56.7	44.2
No	71.4	59.3	57.6	43.3	55.8

**Table 28. Percentages who reported that they are current smokers, by perceived family wealth in 2002**

How often do you smoke at present?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Every day	6.1	8.5	11.6	16.8	19.6
At least once a week, but not every day	2.7	3.5	3.7	3.1	1.8
Less than one a week	4.2	5.2	5.4	9.2	3.6
I do not smoke	87.0	82.8	79.4	71.0	75.0

**Table 29. Age of first smoke, by perceived family wealth in 2002**

At what age did you first smoke a cigarette?	Family well off				
	Very well off (%)	Quite well off (%)	Average (%)	Not very well off (%)	Not all well off (%)
Never	72.2	62.1	60.1	48.7	55.9
11 years or less	11.5	13.0	13.6	23.6	29.7
12 years	6.2	8.9	9.3	8.5	3.6
13 years	4.3	6.9	7.0	6.6	5.4
14 years	2.9	5.5	5.7	8.1	1.8
15 years	1.4	1.9	2.5	3.0	1.8
16 years or older	0.3	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.0

**Table 30. Current smoking behaviours of 15 year olds, by early/late smoking initiation in 2002**

How often do you smoke at present?	Smoking initiation	
	Very early initiation (%)	Early initiation (%)
Every day	36.4	24.4
At least once a week, but not every day	7.2	9.2
Less than one a week	9.4	15.6
I do not smoke	47.0	50.8

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