

An Exploration of Dissemination tools and Mechanisms among Young People

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Introduction

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Ireland (HBSC) study collects data on children and adolescent's health and well-being, social environments and health behaviours. An important part of the HBSC research process is ensuring that data and findings are used to improve the lives of children as well as to inform the broader research area. This is of particular significance when data is collected from young people, as it is important to honour their contribution to the knowledge generation process.

The main aim of this study was to identify alternative and suitable methods of disseminating to young people and to collate feedback on existing resources. Traditionally, research findings tend to take the form of academic documents and papers targeting a professional or scientific audience.

Methods and Findings

Focus groups were carried out with young people aged fifteen years and older in a range of settings (schools, youth groups). Feedback was collected on the young people's interest in the HBSC research findings, reactions

to existing materials and recommendations for more appropriate materials and modes of dissemination to young people. The findings demonstrate that young people were interested in having information about the health behaviours of young people their own age in Ireland. They saw the value of knowing the

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facts in the case of behaviours such as engaging in sexual intercourse. Most agreed that this sort of knowledge would lessen peer pressure in the lives of many adolescents. While young people were interested in receiving health behaviour information, they were very clear that it should be short, concise, have little text and

have a focus on visual aspects such as colour and images. The majority of young people also suggested that social media such as Facebook and YouTube were the best modes of distributing information to them. Many were interested in the use of short video clips made by young people themselves as a method of disseminating research findings.

Conclusion

These data provided valuable and constructive insights into suitable approaches to the distribution of research findings to a youth audience. Young people had clear priorities for the type of materials that are useful and the best modes of communicating these materials among their peers. These findings have provided valuable guidelines which will benefit the dissemination of both existing and future research in the area of children and adolescent health behaviours. Further information is available from www.nuigalway.ie/hbcs or hbcs@nuigalway.ie

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