Research Summaries

Their voice: Involving Adolescents in Developing Questions to Capture Factors Influencing Body Image Perceptions in Ireland

Ursula Kenny[1], Lorraine Burke[1], Kathy Ann Fox[1] and Colette Kelly[1]

[1] NUI Galway

Introduction

In Ireland, young people have highlighted body image as an issue of concern (O'Connell and Martin 2012). Consequently, the Department of Health requested that the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC) collect data on the factors that influence adolescent body image in the HBSC Ireland survey. The aim of this study was to develop and test a question for use in the HBSC Ireland 2013/14 study.

Methods

The HBSC study is a cross-sectional study that collects data on children's health and well-being. To date the HBSC study has examined body image through a measure of body dissatisfaction, with no question(s) on factors influencing body image. To begin the question development process a literature review was conducted to investigate whether other cross-national surveys had included a question exploring body image influences.

International experts on body image were also contacted to assist in identification of a question. A single item was not identified thus two open ended questions were developed by the Irish HBSC team which include the following: "What influences how you feel about your body image?" and "What influences how you feel about your body shape?". Adolescent views and opinions of these questions were collected from 75 young people, aged 13-17 years from two post-primary schools. A workshop, which consisted of group discussions with young people was conducted in each school. During the workshops young people were asked to explain how they would answer both questions, their opinions on each question and which question they preferred. Data were transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes from the research.

Young people showed a preference for the use of the term "body image" as opposed to "body shape"

Results

Key themes identified from the discussions are illustrated with quotes in Figures 1 and 2.

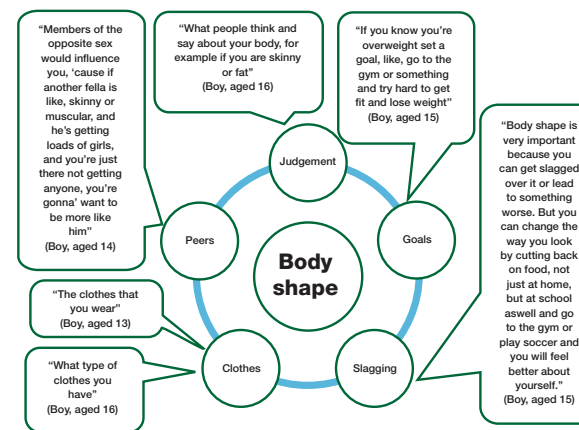*Figure 1. Perception of factors influencing adolescent body image in Ireland.*

Figure 2. Perception of factors influencing adolescent body shape in Ireland.

Conclusion

Overall, young people showed a preference for the use of the term "body image" as opposed to "body shape", thus a question on factors influencing body image was included in the HBSC 2013/14 survey cycle. It is anticipated that the input gathered from young people during the question development process will serve to provide a greater insight into the factors influencing adolescent body image in Ireland.

References

O'Connell, A. and Martin, S. (2012) Dáil na nÓg report 'How we see it: Survey on Young People's body image'. Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Author Information

Ursula Kenny is a PhD student within the Discipline of Health Promotion, NUI Galway. She is a graduate of University College Cork with a BSc in Nutritional Science. Her current research interest is on adolescent body image and her PhD focuses on peer influences on adolescent body image in Ireland. She is a member of the Irish HBSC team, The Nutrition Society and The Children's Research Network.

Lorraine Burke is a researcher within the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway. She is a graduate of the National University of Ireland, Galway with a BSc in Physiology and also a MA in Health Promotion. Her current research interest is in adolescent sexual health. Lorraine has considerable experience in participative research with young people.

Kathy Ann Fox is a research assistant within the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway. She has an honours degree in Public Health and Health Promotion from the Institute of Technology, Sligo, and a Masters in Health Promotion from the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her research interests include; health communication, e-health literacy, youth and adolescent health.

Dr Colette Kelly is a lecturer in the Discipline of Health Promotion and a project leader in the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway. Colette has been involved in the HBSC survey since 2005 and is chair of the Eating and Dieting focus group within the HBSC network. Colette is a registered Public Health Nutritionist with experience working with non-governmental organisations. Colette was educated at the University of Reading (PhD), University of Aberdeen (MSc), and University College Galway (BSc (Hons).

Developing an eHealth intervention to prepare and support young people (with long-term illnesses) for transition to adult healthcare services.

Imelda Coyne[1], Geraldine Prizeman[1], Aisling Sheehan[1], Aisling While[2]

[1] Trinity College Dublin, [2] King's College, London

Introduction

This project emerged from a research study called TRYCIS (Transition from child to adult care for young people with chronic illness) and funded by the Health Research Board Ireland. Among the study objectives is to investigate how young people with long-term conditions experience the process of transition to adult healthcare services. We found that the transition from child to adult services can be very difficult. Young people want advice, information, support and signposting in relation to transition, but they encounter obstacles to having these needs met. Many young people receive inadequate information and preparation and the move from child to adult services was generally experienced as an abrupt transfer rather than a gradual and smooth transition. Hence, we co-developed this intervention with young people, as an innovative way of providing relevant information and better preparation for the transition process.

Young people want advice, information, support and signposting in relation to transition

Methods

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethics committees. The research was conducted in two phases. During the first phase we needed to identify young peoples' preferences for e-Health technologies and information provision. Using a mixed methods design, we conducted a survey (n= 207) and focus group interviews to elicit young people's preferences. The young people were aged 14 to 25 years and were from three disease groups: diabetes, cystic fibrosis and congenital heart disease. The survey data revealed that almost six in ten young people (57.1%) believed that a website would be quite or very useful for receiving information about their illness. Mobile phones/apps were deemed most useful (76.9%), while technologies such as Skype (15.7%), social networks (50.8%) and chat rooms (25.2%) were viewed as not very useful. Email (34.5%) and web pages (33%) were the preferred options for the exchange of information about the disease and for receiving advice/support and information on healthcare facilities. The interview data indicated that young people would value a website that contained information about key hospital personnel, differences between child and adult services, location and configuration of services, transition stories, FAQs and illness management.

During the second phase, the aim was to develop an appropriate e-health intervention using a participatory approach underpinned by four key principles: consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, experimentation with alternative designs, contextualisation (testing with users and providers), and iterative development (modification in response to evaluation) (Waller, Franklin, Pagliari and Greene, 2006). Using this approach we set up a co-design group comprising young people with long-term conditions from the three disease groups. We also set up two additional advisory groups comprising stakeholders from voluntary organisations, disease support groups, healthcare professionals, parents, young people, in addition to the web designer and developer, and a digital technology expert. Prior to the development of the site a name was chosen. To choose a name for the website, a survey was distributed to young people and participants (n=74) and they were given ten possible names