

Short Report

HBSC Ireland 2010: emotional and physical symptoms and bullying

Lindsay Sullivan and Michal Molcho

HBSC Ireland, Health Promotion Research Centre

National University of Ireland, Galway

January 2013

Introduction:

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is a cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (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). The overall aims of the HBSC study are to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and well-being, 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 2010 was funded by the Department of Health. Further information on the HBSC Ireland can be found at www.hbsc.org, the International HBSC website.

The most recent HBSC Ireland study conducted in 2010 comprises 16,060 schoolchildren from 3rd class in primary school to 5th year in post-primary school. Collectively, 256 primary and post-primary schools across Ireland participated in this study. The methods employed comply with the International HBSC protocol and are detailed in the national report from the 2010 survey (see <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/>).

Focus of this report:

This short report provides a brief analysis of the 2010 HBSC survey data on having been bullied or bullied others in the past couple of months and emotional and physical symptoms among Irish schoolchildren aged 10-17. The questions analysed include:

- “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months” with response options - I have not been bullied at school the last couple of months; It has only happened once or twice; 2 or three times a month; About once a week; Several times a week.
- “How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months?” with response options - I have not bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months; It has only happened once or twice; 2 or three times a month; About once a week; Several times a week.
- “In the last 6 months: how often have you had the following...? Headache, Stomach-ache, Back ache, Feeling low, Irritability or bad temper, Feeling nervous, Difficulty in getting to sleep, and feeling dizzy with response options - About everyday; More than once a week; About every week; About every month; Rarely or never.

Bullying Findings:

Table 1 presents the percentage of schoolchildren who reported that they had been bullied once or more in the past couple months by age and gender. Table 2 presents the percentage of schoolchildren who reported that they had been bullied twice or more in the past couple months by age and gender. Table 3 presents the percentage of participants who reported bullying others once or more in the past couple months. Table 4 presents the percentage of participants who had bullied others twice or more in the past couple months.

Table 1. Percentage of schoolchildren who report having been bullied *once or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	28.2	31.2	29.7
12 to 14	26.1	24.3	25.3
15 to 17	23.7	18.0	21.0

Table 2. Percentage of schoolchildren who reported having been bullied *twice or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	11.7	9.2	10.4
12 to 14	9.6	6.9	8.3
15 to 17	9.0	4.4	6.8

Table 3. Percentage of schoolchildren who reported having bullied others *once or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	16.8	10.2	13.5
12 to 14	21.8	11.2	16.6
15 to 17	24.6	9.4	17.4

Table 4. Percentage of schoolchildren who report having bullied others *twice or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	5.0	1.2	3.1
12 to 14	5.5	1.9	3.8
15 to 17	7.0	1.7	4.5

Symptoms Findings:

Table 5 presents the percentages of schoolchildren who report having emotional symptoms weekly by age and gender. Table 6 presents the percentages of schoolchildren who report having physical symptoms at least weekly by age and gender.

Table 5. Percentage of schoolchildren who report having emotional symptoms *at least weekly*, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	38.5	38.9	38.7
12 to 14	47.3	53.1	50.2
15 to 17	54.8	64.2	59.2

Table 6. Percentage of schoolchildren who report having physical symptoms *at least weekly*, by gender and age group

	Boys	Girls	Total
10 to 11	40.8	43.6	42.3
12 to 14	45.4	55.4	50.2
15 to 17	52.7	67.1	59.5

Bullying and Symptoms Findings:

Table 7 presents the percentages of schoolchildren who report at least weekly symptoms by having been bullied by others once or more in the past couple of months. Table 8 presents the percentages of schoolchildren who report at least weekly symptoms by having been bullied by others twice or more in the past couple of months. Table 9 presents the percentages of participants who report at least weekly symptoms by having bullied others once or more in the past couple of months. Finally, table 10 presents the percentages of schoolchildren who report at least weekly symptoms by having bullied others twice or more in the past couple of months by age group and gender.

Table 7. Percentages of schoolchildren who report *at least weekly* symptoms by having been bullied *once or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All	
	10-11 years		10-11 years		10-11 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		15-17 years		15-17 years		15-17 years	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feeling low	27.3	11.9	30.1	10.7	28.8	11.4	31.0	12.8	45.0	19.5	37.7	16.1	41.5	18.4	55.0	32.6	47.2	25.4
Irritable	36.1	21.2	39.7	18.3	38.0	19.8	45.7	32.1	50.7	36.9	48.1	34.5	57.1	40.4	62.3	47.6	59.3	43.9
Nervous	34.6	19.8	39.1	21.9	34.9	24.2	39.9	21.5	51.3	27.3	36.2	28.1	45.9	24.7	56.8	35.9	40.2	33.2
Headache	22.3	13.7	29.8	14.7	21.0	17.4	30.4	17.2	42.7	26.4	31.7	24.0	33.1	20.2	48.6	37.1	34.0	30.5
Backache	14.8	8.2	13.0	7.0	13.8	7.7	23.2	13.8	28.1	16.2	25.4	14.9	32.5	19.5	34.9	23.2	33.4	21.4
Stomach ache	12.4	9.7	27.9	11.2	20.8	10.4	18.0	8.4	29.4	16.0	23.5	12.2	19.6	10.2	30.9	18.2	24.1	14.3
Difficulty sleeping	40.6	23.7	36.7	24.4	38.5	24.0	34.2	20.4	43.8	26.7	38.8	23.5	42.5	24.8	53.5	35.3	47.0	30.0
Dizzy	25.0	11.3	20.4	9.7	22.5	10.6	21.4	11.7	31.1	17.9	25.9	14.8	27.7	15.8	40.8	24.2	33.1	19.9
1+ physical symptom	58.0	35.2	56.8	37.1	51.7	41.1	58.5	40.8	68.7	51.3	62.1	47.8	67.2	48.3	79.5	64.4	66.7	58.1
1+ emotional symptom	52.5	33.3	54.6	31.4	51.7	36.9	62.3	42.2	71.3	47.7	64.3	47.5	69.0	50.4	79.8	60.7	70.1	56.9

Table 8. Percentages of schoolchildren who report *at least weekly* symptoms by having been bullied *twice or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All	
	10-11 years		10-11 years		10-11 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		15-17 years		15-17 years		15-17 years	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feeling low	42.5	12.8	49.3	13.4	45.6	13.2	42.2	15.0	59.6	23.1	49.5	19.1	56.3	20.6	72.4	12.5	61.3	27.6
Irritable	43.6	23.1	54.0	22.2	48.2	22.6	52.2	33.9	60.2	38.7	55.5	36.3	68.9	42.0	73.6	49.2	70.3	45.5
Nervous	48.7	20.7	53.1	24.6	50.0	24.9	48.0	24.0	59.7	31.2	41.3	29.0	57.4	27.0	72.4	38.1	41.8	34.1
Headache	27.2	14.6	35.7	17.8	35.6	17.4	38.5	18.7	51.6	28.7	43.1	24.6	40.3	21.5	56.2	38.3	44.7	30.4
Backache	22.2	8.5	20.6	7.7	21.5	8.1	29.9	14.8	37.0	17.7	32.8	16.2	43.0	20.5	44.2	24.5	43.6	22.5
Stomach ache	17.3	9.5	39.1	14.1	27.3	11.9	25.0	9.4	37.2	17.9	30.0	13.7	23.5	11.4	40.4	19.6	28.6	15.4
Difficulty sleeping	50.0	25.5	45.5	26.5	47.9	26.0	38.7	22.5	59.1	28.8	46.9	25.6	54.5	26.5	59.6	37.6	56.1	31.9
Dizzy	35.0	12.6	30.8	11.3	33.1	12.0	30.5	12.5	39.8	19.7	34.2	16.1	36.9	16.8	42.5	26.5	38.6	21.5
1+ physical symptom	71.4	37.8	65.7	41.1	57.8	42.1	65.8	43.3	77.4	53.9	72.3	49.4	74.4	50.7	80.9	66.5	72.9	59.0
1+ emotional symptom	68.7	34.8	68.1	35.7	66.7	38.1	70.8	45.0	80.0	51.4	74.5	49.3	80.2	52.3	87.6	63.0	72.9	58.6

Table 9. Percentages of schoolchildren who report *at least weekly* symptoms by having bullied others *once or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All	
	10-11 years		10-11 years		10-11 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		15-17 years		15-17 years		15-17 years	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feeling low	29.7	13.0	30.8	15.9	29.9	14.6	24.8	15.6	43.5	23.3	30.9	19.6	31.8	21.3	52.2	35.2	37.0	28.5
Irritable	39.5	22.5	47.3	22.6	42.3	22.6	49.8	31.9	61.8	37.4	53.8	34.8	57.7	40.0	67.9	48.6	60.4	44.5
Nervous	30.4	22.2	42.1	25.9	37.0	20.9	31.1	24.8	46.6	31.3	45.2	24.3	35.2	28.0	54.8	38.0	50.3	30.2
Headache	21.1	15.2	19.7	19.3	26.4	14.4	26.2	19.1	42.9	28.6	36.2	21.7	28.9	21.8	48.7	38.3	39.3	28.6
Backache	17.4	8.6	15.8	8.4	16.7	8.6	22.1	14.5	27.4	17.9	23.8	16.3	28.6	20.6	31.0	24.9	29.4	22.8
Stomach ache	19.5	8.7	22.1	16.2	20.4	12.6	16.4	9.3	31.9	17.7	21.6	13.7	19.2	10.2	38.1	18.7	24.2	14.7
Difficulty sleeping	37.3	26.1	35.5	27.3	36.4	26.7	28.8	22.2	46.4	29.0	34.6	25.7	38.4	25.9	50.0	37.3	41.3	31.8
Dizzy	20.2	13.4	17.8	12.9	19.7	13.1	21.8	15.6	32.1	19.9	25.1	16.2	28.7	15.6	41.1	25.9	31.9	21.0
1+ physical symptom	50.0	39.5	53.8	42.5	57.4	36.3	55.7	42.3	75.3	53.0	63.3	46.0	63.2	49.4	76.6	66.1	72.1	56.3
1+ emotional symptom	63.9	37.4	77.8	38.7	53.6	32.4	70.1	46.1	87.0	52.6	66.5	44.9	70.1	53.6	85.7	63.7	73.4	55.4

Table 10. Percentages of schoolchildren who report *at least weekly* symptoms by having bullied others *twice or more* in the past couple of months, by gender and age group

	Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All		Boys		Girls		All	
	10-11 years		10-11 years		10-11 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		12-14 years		15-17 years		15-17 years		15-17 years	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feeling low	61.8	23.5	55.6	24.7	60.5	24.2	64.5	34.1	81.1	39.4	68.9	36.7	65.4	42.8	79.4	49.9	67.9	46.3
Irritable	45.5	22.5	66.7	27.1	50.7	22.8	38.3	26.1	50.0	32.7	52.6	27.5	38.4	29.1	57.6	39.3	62.1	32.4
Nervous	33.3	15.3	44.4	19.1	31.1	16.4	39.6	19.6	51.9	29.8	43.7	23.7	41.7	22.2	58.8	38.9	45.0	29.8
Headache	25.7	9.2	33.3	8.9	27.3	9.1	32.0	15.3	26.9	18.8	30.7	17.0	38.3	21.4	41.2	25.2	38.8	23.3
Backache	26.5	9.7	44.4	16.4	30.2	13.1	32.1	9.7	48.1	18.7	36.5	14.1	28.8	11.2	58.8	19.8	34.2	15.5
Stomach ache	42.4	27.3	75.0	27.7	48.8	27.4	40.7	22.6	60.4	30.4	46.1	26.5	44.1	27.8	62.9	38.5	47.6	32.8
Difficulty sleeping	36.4	13.4	37.5	13.1	36.6	13.3	30.3	13.4	54.2	20.7	35.8	17.0	37.7	17.4	57.1	26.8	41.4	22.0
Dizzy	52.8	40.7	77.8	43.2	68.8	39.6	69.0	43.9	81.5	54.9	70.3	48.5	70.1	51.5	85.7	66.8	76.5	58.4
1+ physical symptom	48.4	36.7	57.7	37	68.4	35.3	59.6	44.0	74.0	50.7	74.5	48.2	66.0	51.1	81.7	62.3	82.5	57.5
1+ emotional symptom	61.8	23.5	55.6	24.7	60.5	24.2	64.5	34.1	81.1	39.4	68.9	36.7	65.4	42.8	79.4	49.9	67.9	46.3

Acknowledgements:

HBSC Ireland is funded by the Department of Health. This short report was stimulated by a query from Hugh Magee of the Department of Health. We would like to acknowledge the children and parents who consented and participated, the management authorities, principals and teachers who helped us to collect the data, the staff at the Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway, the HBSC Ireland Advisory Board and the International coordinator of HBSC, Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Further information on HBSC Ireland is available at www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc.