

Short Report

HBSC Ireland 2014: Young Carers in the 2014 HBSC study

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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 WHO Regional Office for Europe and runs on a four year cycle. In 2014 Ireland participated for the fifth time in the HBSC study (www.nuigalway.ie/hbhc). 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 is funded by the Department of Health. Further information on the International HBSC study can be found at www.hbhc.org.

The most recent HBSC Ireland dataset comprises of 13,611 schoolchildren from 3rd class in primary school to 5th year in post-primary school. In total 230 schools across Ireland participated in the HBSC 2014 study. The methods employed comply with the International HBSC protocol and are detailed in the national report from the 2014 survey (see <http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HBSC2014web3.pdf>).

Focus of this report:

This short report presents a brief analysis of the 2014 HBSC survey data on young carers in Ireland. Overall, data from 10,368 school-children aged 10-17 were analysed. The questions analysed for school-children aged 10 to 17 years old are presented by age, gender and social class for the following indicators:

Young Carer

- Do you provide regular unpaid personal help for a family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability? (Includes problems which are due to old age. Personal help includes help with basic tasks such as feeding or dressing) with response options 'Yes' and 'No'.

Self-reported health

- General health: Would you say your health is...? With response options: 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Fair' and 'Poor'. This index was recoded for the purpose of this report: Excellent indicates excellent health; good, fair and poor indicates not excellent health.
- Life satisfaction: Young people were asked to rate their life satisfaction using a visual scale called the 'Cantril ladder'. This scale has 11 steps (0-10), the top of the ladder (10) indicates the best possible life and the bottom (0), the worst. This index was recoded for the purpose of this report: 0-6 indicates low life satisfaction; 6-10 indicates high life satisfaction.

Risk Behaviours

- How often do you smoke tobacco at present? With response options: 'Every day'; 'At least once a week, but not every day'; 'Less than once a week'; 'I do not smoke'. This variable was recoded into current smoker and non-smoker; 'Every day'; 'At least once a week, but not every day' and 'Less than once a week' indicates 'current smoker'; 'I do not smoke' indicates 'non-smoker'.
- Have you ever had so much alcohol that you were really drunk? In the last 30 days with response options: 'Never'; 'Yes, once'; 'Yes, 2-3 times', 'Yes, 4-10 times' and 'Yes, more than 10 times'. This variable was recoded into 'Yes' for response options 'Yes, once'; 'Yes, 2-3 times', 'Yes, 4-10 times'; 'Yes, more than 10 times' and 'No' for response option 'Never'.
- Have you ever taken cannabis (hashish, grass, pot)? In the last 30 days with response options: 'Never'; '1-2 days'; '3-5 days'; '6-9 days'; '10-19 days'; '20-29 days'; '30 days (or more)'. This variable was recoded into 'Yes' for response options '1-2 days'; '3-5 days'; '6-9 days'; '10-19 days'; '20-29 days'; '30 days (or more)' and 'No' for response option 'Never'.

Social Class

Social class is represented by SC 1-2, SC 3-4 and SC 5-6 corresponding to high, middle and low social classes, respectively. The categories used for social class are standard and were determined by the highest reported parental occupation. Social class 1 represents professional occupations (i.e., solicitor, doctor), social class 2 represents managerial occupations (i.e., nurse, teacher), social class 3 represents non-manual occupations (i.e., sales person, office clerk), social class 4 represents skilled-manual occupations (i.e., hairdresser, carpenter), social class 5 represents semi-skilled occupations (i.e., postman, driver), social class 6 represents unskilled occupations (i.e., cleaner, labourer).

Findings:

The findings are presented below in a series of tables. Overall, 11.5% of 10 – 17 year olds reported that they were a carer, 80.6% of 10 – 17 year olds reported that they were not a carer, with 7.9% missing data (weighted percentages to account for gender imbalance in the data).

Tables 1 to 9 describe the young carer sample by gender, age group, social class and geographic distribution. Tables 10 to 14 present data comparing carers to non-carers for general health, life satisfaction and risk behaviours. Findings are broken down by age-group. Unweighted percentages are presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by gender

	Boys	Girls
Yes	12.0	10.6
No	79.0	82.2
Missing	9.0	7.1

Table 2: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by age group

	10 – 11 year olds	12 – 14 year olds	15 – 17 year olds
Yes	9.5	12.1	10.9
No	80.5	79.1	83.2
Missing	10.1	8.8	5.9

Table 3: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by social class

	SC 1-2	SC 3-4	SC 5-6
Yes	12.0	11.1	11.3
No	84.5	84.0	82.4
Missing	3.5	5.0	6.3

Table 4: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by gender and age group

	10 – 11 year olds		12 – 14 year olds		15 – 17 year olds	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Yes	10.4	8.8	12.7	11.6	11.8	10.3
No	79.6	81.1	77.1	80.6	81.2	84.5
Missing	10.1	10.0	10.1	7.8	7.1	5.2

Table 5: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by gender and social class

	SC 1 – 2		SC 3 – 4		SC 5 - 6	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Yes	13.6	11.0	11.9	10.5	10.1	12.1
No	82.5	85.9	83.0	84.6	84.9	80.7
Missing	4.0	3.1	5.1	4.8	5.0	7.1

Table 6: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by age group and social class

	10 – 11 year olds			12 – 14 year olds			15 – 17 year olds		
	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6
Yes	9.6	9.5	10.6	13.1	12.2	11.9	11.6	10.3	10.9
No	82.8	80.3	82.5	83.2	83.5	80.5	86.4	86.3	85.0
Missing	7.6	10.2	6.9	3.6	4.3	7.7	2.0	3.4	4.1

Table 7: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by age group and social class in boys

	10 – 11 year olds			12 – 14 year olds			15 – 17 year olds		
	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6
Yes	10.5	11.2	7.4	14.2	12.9	11.0	13.9	10.8	10.4
No	80.2	80.3	86.8	81.8	82.0	81.9	83.9	85.8	87.7
Missing	9.3	8.6	5.9	4.0	5.2	7.1	2.1	3.4	1.9

Table 8: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by age group and social class in girls

	10 – 11 year olds			12 – 14 year olds			15 – 17 year olds		
	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6	SC 1 – 2	SC 3 - 4	SC 5 - 6
Yes	9.0	8.3	13.0	12.4	11.8	12.4	10.2	10.0	11.3
No	84.5	80.3	79.3	84.3	84.6	79.5	87.9	86.5	83.0
Missing	6.5	11.4	7.6	3.3	3.6	8.1	1.9	3.4	5.7

Table 9: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by health board region

	Carers
South	11.4
Midwest	11.0
West	10.4
Northwest	10.4
Midlands	11.7
Eastern	12.0
Northeast	10.6
Southeast	11.4

Table 10: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by general health

	Carer	Non-carer
Excellent	33.0	33.3
Not excellent	66.0	66.0
Missing	0.9	0.7

Table 11: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years), by life satisfaction

	Carers	Non-carer
Poor	25.0	23.7
Good	72.4	73.7
Missing	2.7	2.6

Table 12: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years) who report they are current smokers

	Carers	Non-carers
Yes	8.5	7.1
No	91.0	92.1
Missing	0.5	0.8

Table 13: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years) who report having had an alcoholic drink in the last 30 days

	Carers	Non-carers
Yes	17.7	17.3
No	73.8	74.1
Missing	8.5	8.5

Table 14: Percentage of young carers (10-17 years) reporting cannabis use in the last 30 days

	Carers	Non-carers
Yes	4.0	3.6
No	88.9	89.0
Missing	7.1	7.3

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