Adolescent Mental Health & Wellbeing

Findings from the Scottish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study

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HBSC International Coordinator
Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study

- World Health Organisation collaborative study
- 45 countries across Europe and North America
- International Coordinating Centre based at University of St Andrews
- Focus on health and wellbeing, health behaviours and social context
- Survey of 11, 13 and 15 year olds every 4 years
- 200,000+ students took part in the 2013/14 survey

Findings are used to:
- Better understand young people’s health and well-being
- Inform policy and practice to improve young people’s lives
How are young people in Scotland doing?

• High life satisfaction overall
• Increasing happiness since 1994
• Increasing self-rated health since 2002

• Marked gender differences
• Declines in mental wellbeing with age
• Sharp increases in health complaints
• Low levels of confidence
Confidence: 1994-2014

Figure 11.7: ALWAYS FEEL CONFIDENT 1994 – 2014

HBSC Scotland 1994 – 2014 Surveys

% who always feel confident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trends in confidence by age and gender

Boys

% often/always confident

11-years old
13-years old
15-years old


Girls

% often/always confident

11-years old
13-years old
15-years old


www.st-andrews.ac.uk
Happiness: 1994-2014

Figure 11.4: FEEL VERY HAPPY 1994 - 2014

HBSC Scotland 1994 - 2014 Surveys

% who feel very happy with their life


Boys
Girls

39 45 51 52 48 47
30 33 40 45 39 38
Trends in happiness by age and gender

Boys

Girls

% very happy

11-years old
13-years old
15-years old

www.st-andrews.ac.uk
Health complaints

In the last 6 months, how often have you had the following: headache, stomachache, backache, feeling low, irritability, nervousness, sleep difficulties, feel dizzy
Trends in health complaints by age and gender

Average health complaints score

Boys

- 11-years old
- 13-years old
- 15-years old

Girls

- 11-years old
- 13-years old
- 15-years old
Why?
% Feeling “too fat”

Boys

- 11-years old
- 13-years old
- 15-years old

Girls
Bullying 1994-2014

Figure 14.2:
BEEN BULLIED 2-3 TIMES A MONTH IN PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS 2002 – 2014

HBSC Scotland
2002 – 2014 Surveys

% who have been bullied 2 or 3 times per month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bullying (at school)

Figure 14.1: Been bullied at least 2-3 times a month in past couple of months

HBSC Scotland 2014 Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cyberbullying

Figure 14.5: Bullied via electronic media messages at least twice a month

- HBSC Scotland 2014 Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
% feeling some or a lot of pressure from school work

Boys

- 15- years old
- 13- years old
- 11- years old


Girls

80% of 15 year old girls

Protective factors

• Family
  • Family support
  • Communication with parents

• School
  • Positive school experience
  • Teacher support
  • Classmate support
  • Manageable academic workload

• Friends
  • Peer support
Summary

1. Worsening over time for several indicators of mental health and wellbeing

2. Decline is steeper than in other countries

3. Gender and age differences: girls and older adolescents are at greatest risk

4. Adolescence provides an important window of opportunity for prevention and intervention
“Adolescence is not only a time of vulnerability, it is also an age of opportunity....... By giving all young people the tools they need to improve their own lives, and by engaging them in efforts to improve their communities, we are investing in the strength of their societies”

Adolescence: An age of opportunity, UNICEF, 2011
International report
www.hbsc.org

Scottish report
www.cahru.org

With thanks to: All young people who took part in the HBSC survey; participating schools and local authorities; NHS Health Scotland; the HBSC Scotland team