



# Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey

## Main findings



*“Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey”*, 2013/2014 was conducted by Albanian Institute of Public Health and supported by UNFPA and UNICEF. Opinions and views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of UNFPA and UNICEF.

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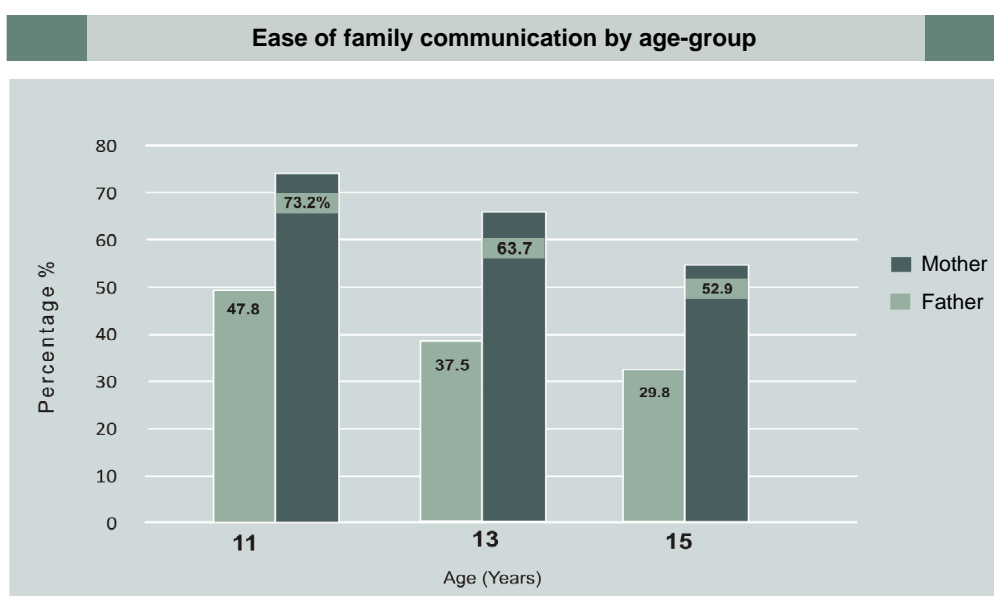
# Health Behavior in School-Aged Children Survey (HBSC 2013/14)

## Report on the main findings

“*Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey*” is a national study including a representative sample of 4898 pupils (2507 girls and 2391 boys) aged 11, 13 and 15 years who attend school. This survey focuses on behaviors which affect the health of adolescents. The information was collected during the period April-May 2014.



In general, children communicate easier with their mothers (61.7%) compared with their fathers (37.4%). An increase of age, in both sexes, is associated with a decrease in the *very easy communication* for both mothers and fathers of the children.



## Quality of communication and family support

The majority of the children who attend school perceive their families as an important environment to discuss main topics (75%), or to resolve misunderstandings (67%) between family members. The vast majority of children aged 11-15 years think that they can rely on their families when they need help (83%), to make decisions (80%), to be supported emotionally (74%) and to talk about their problems (68%).



## School Engagement

61.9% of the children aged 11, 13 and 15 years like the school *very much*, compared with 2.4% who do not like school at all. Boys like school less than the girls (58% vs. 66%, respectively).

## Academic Achievement

57.1% of the children aged 11, 13 and 15 years report a *very good* performance at school, compared with 1.7% who report a performance *below average*. Girls report a higher rate of *very good* performance (66% vs. 48% of the boys), whereas boys report a higher degree of *below average* performance (2.5% vs. 1.1% in girls).



## Relationship with peers

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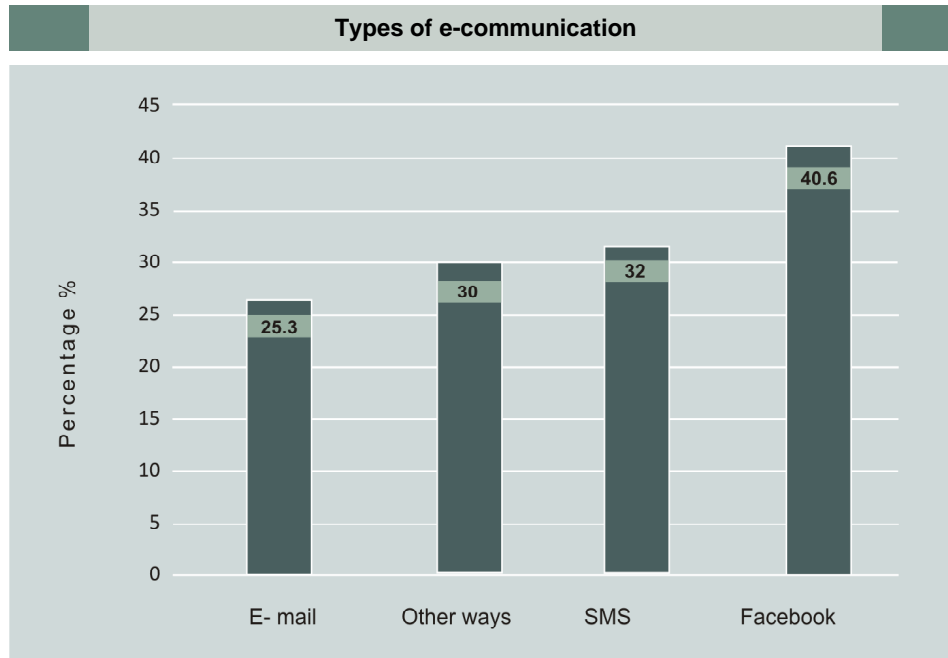
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### Contacts with peers

About 42% (2045) of the children have *daily* contacts with their peers (47.6% boys and 36.7% girls), and this finding is more evident in 15 year old children. Boys are more likely to meet their peers after 8 o'clock in the evening compared with the girls (25% vs. 7%, respectively), and this finding is more evident in children aged 15 years.

### Electronic Media Communication

As for the *daily* e-communication, 40.6% of children aged 11, 13 and 15 years report that they communicate with their peers through instant messages (e.g., chatting in Facebook); 32% communicate through SMSs; 25.3% through email and 30% through other electronic means employing social networks such as Facebook (by posting in the wall, not through chatting), My Space, Twitter, Apps (e.g. Instagram), games (e.g. Xbox), YouTube etc. Boys report higher levels of e-communication compared with the girls.



### Peer support

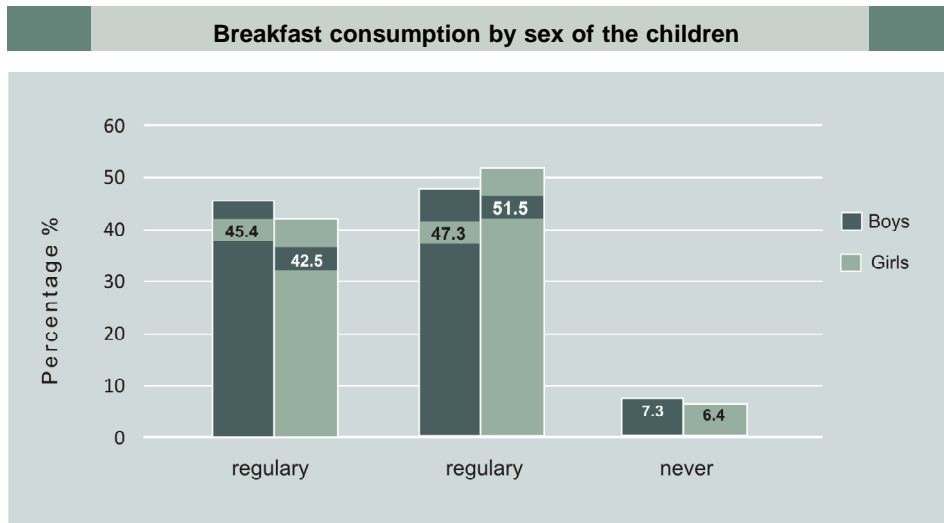
Most of the children aged 11, 13 and 15 years (73%) report that they have friends with whom they share happiness and sorrow, whereas the girls rely more on such friends (76% vs. 69%).



### Breakfast consumption

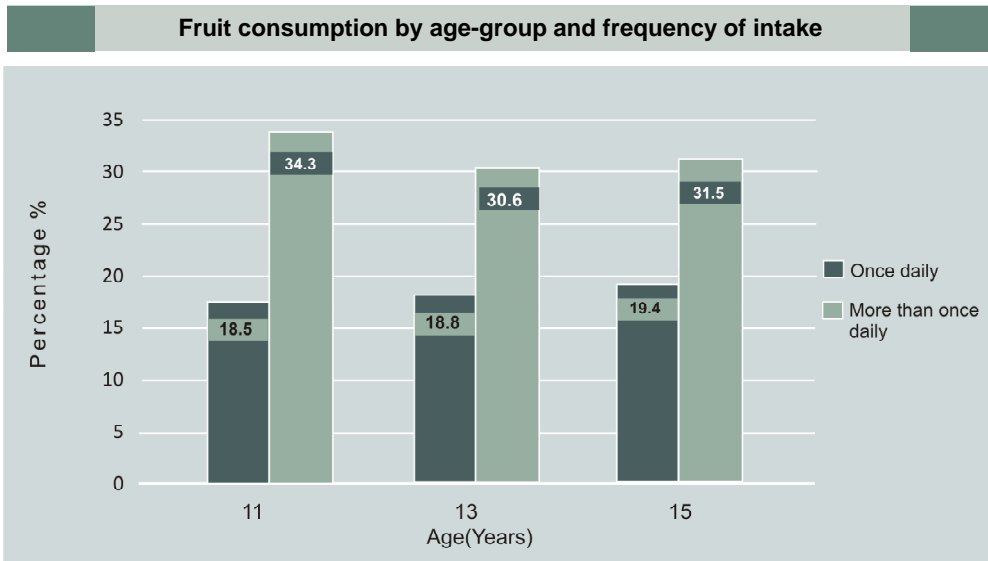
Only 43.7% of the children aged 11, 13 and 15 years eat breakfast *regularly* (every day) compared with 49% who consume breakfast *irregularly* (not every day) and 6.7% of the children who never eat breakfast.

Breakfast consumption decreases with age. Girls report lower levels of breakfast consumption on a daily basis than boys (42.5% vs. 45.4%).

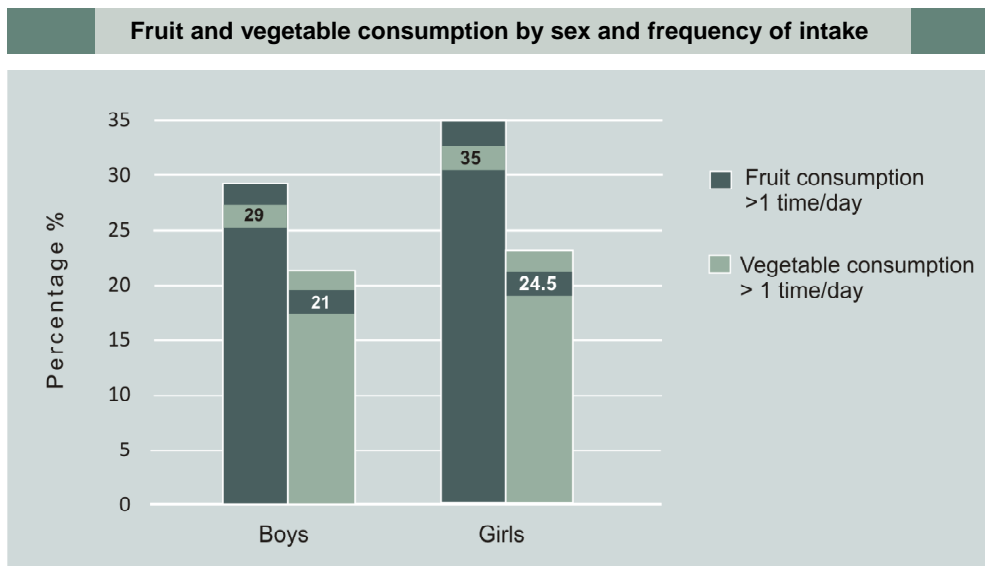


### Consumption of fruits and vegetables

On average, 50% of the children 11, 13, 15 years report a *daily* consumption of fruit, compared with 5.5% of those who report fruit consumption only *once per week*. On the other hand, 32% of the children report that they consume fruits *more than once per day* compared with 1.6% of those who do not consume fruits at all. Girls report a higher level of daily consumption of fruits compared with the boys. The age-group of 13 years olds reports the lowest fruit consumption.



Only 37.2% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years report a *daily* consumption of vegetables compared with 9.4% who report a *weekly* consumption. Furthermore, 22.8% of the children report that they consume vegetables *more than once per day* compared with 2.4% of those who do not consume vegetables at all. There are no differences with regard to the daily consumption, whereas girls report a higher level of fruit and vegetable intake more than once per day as compared with the boys.



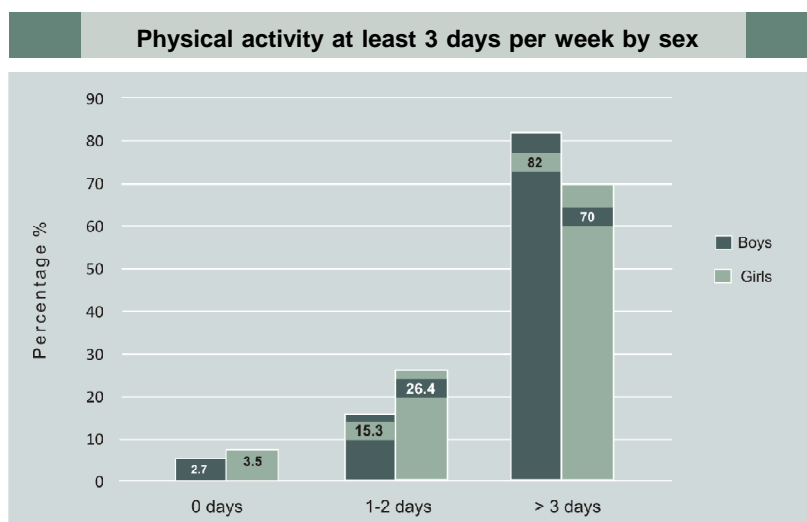


# Physical activity

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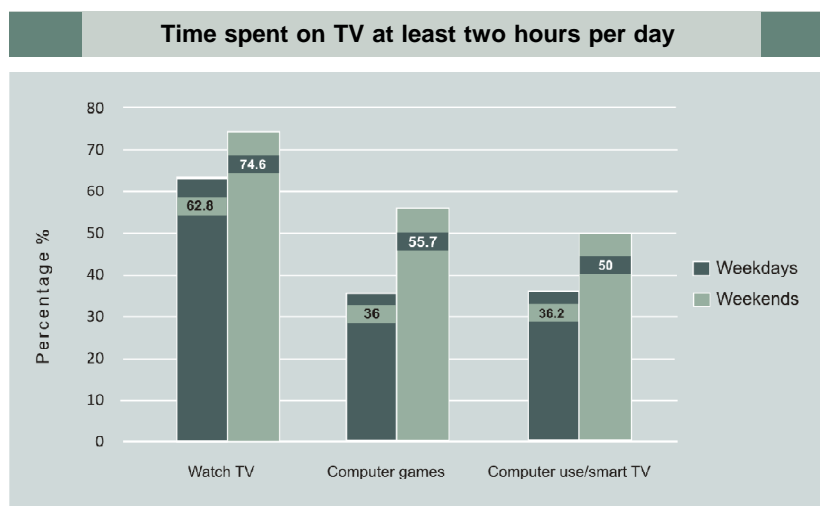
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The engagement in physical activity *at least 3 days per week* is 74.2%. Boys report a significantly higher level of physical activity compared to the girls (82% vs. 70%, respectively).



## Television use

During weekends, 74.6% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years spent *two or more hours* watching TV, VCRs, or other entertainment on screen. In general, there are no significant age-differences, whereas the boys spent more time on TV compared with the girls.







## Weight control and body image

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### Weight reduction behaviour

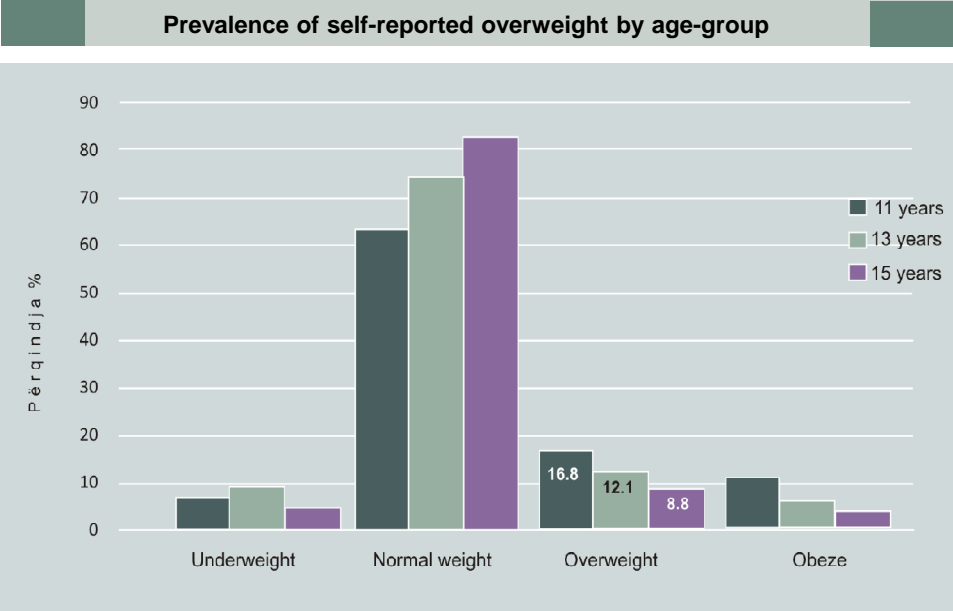
6.7% of the children 11, 13, 15 years report that they are on diet, with a female predominance (7.9% vs. 5.6%). The engagement with diet increases with age of the children.



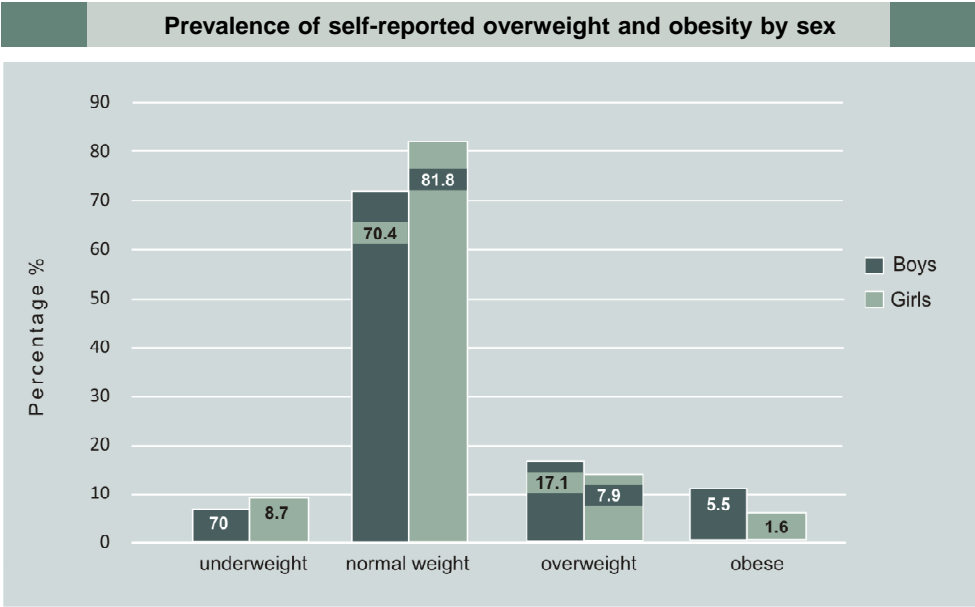
2.6% of the children 11, 13, 15 years think that their body is too fat, and 2% think that their body is too thin. Girls have a higher level of negative perception of their body weight compared to the boys.

### Body mass index

Overweight, underweight and obesity are more frequently reported by children aged 11 years compared with those aged 15 years.



Conversely, girls report a higher level of normal weight than the boys. A higher proportion of girls (8.7%) compared with the boys (7%), based on weight and height reports, were classified as underweight, whereas a higher proportion of boys (17% vs. 8% of the girls) were classified as overweight.



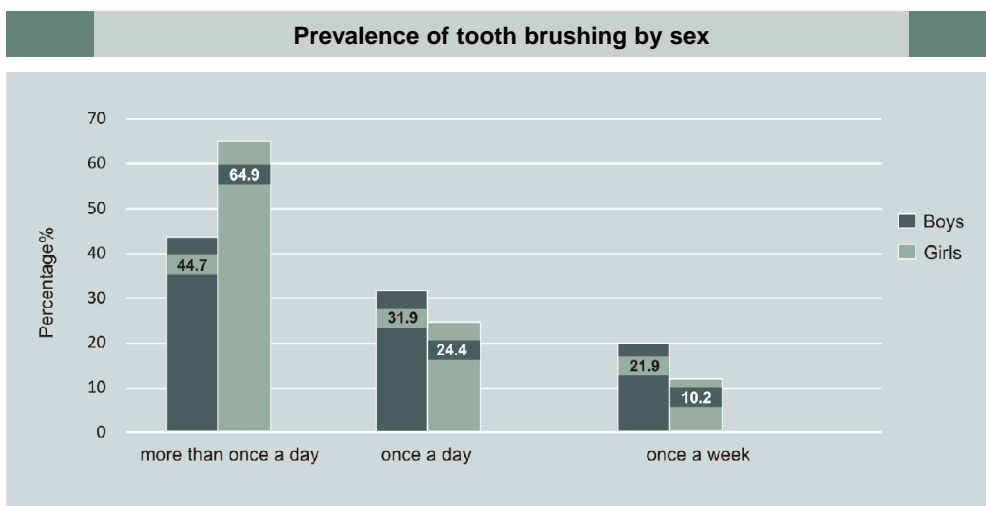


# Tooth brushing

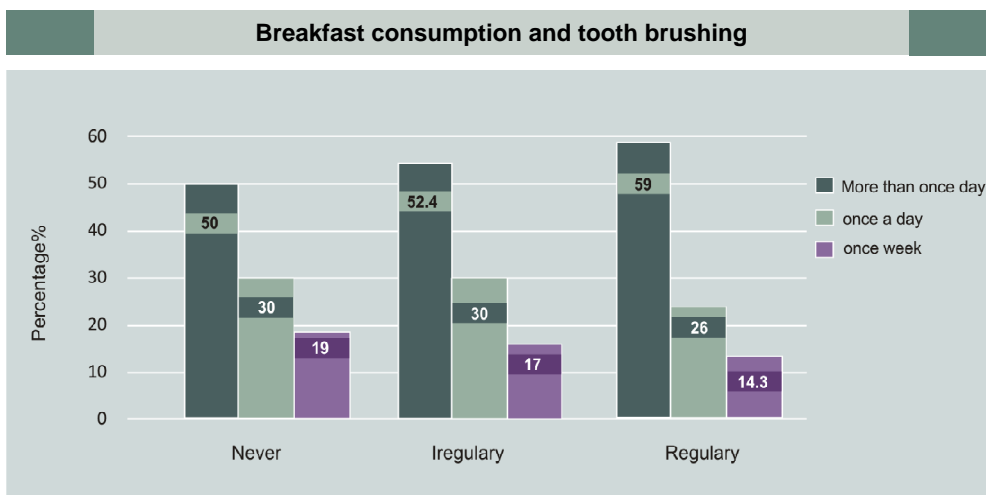
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About 55% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years report that they brush their teeth *more than once per day*. Compared with the boys, girls report a higher level of tooth brushing *more than once per day* (65% vs. 44.7%).



On the other hand, children who eat breakfast regularly (seven days a week) brush their teeth more frequently compared with those who do not eat breakfast at all (59% vs. 50%).



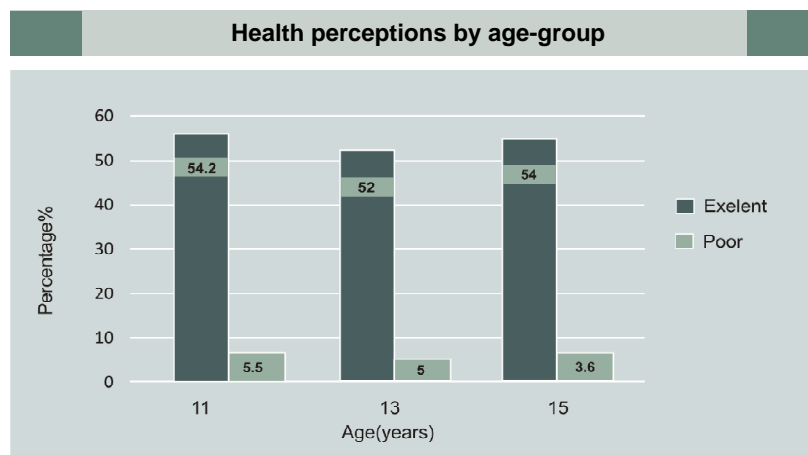


# Health and Welbeing

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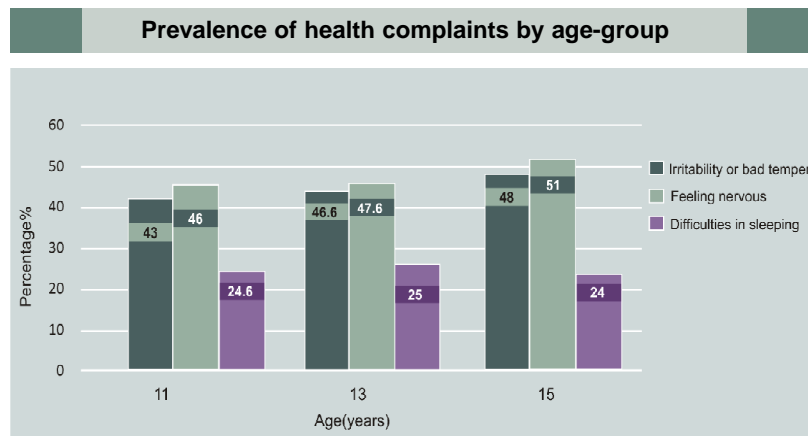
50% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years perceive their health as *very good* compared with 5% of those who perceive their health as *bad*. In general, boys are more positive about their health status compared with the girls, a finding which is more evident among younger children.



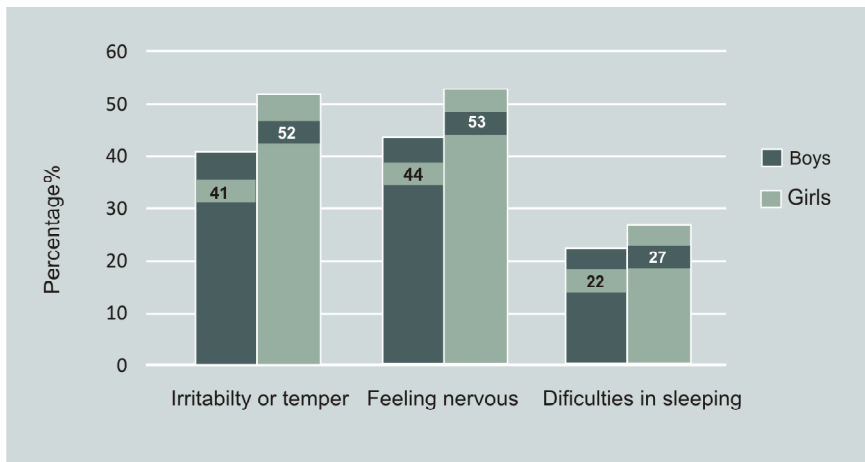
## Health complaints

40.5% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years report headache at least once per month, 22.4% report stomachache and 27.3% back pain.

As for the mental health, 45.3% of the children report that they feel low or irritated at least once per month, 47.6% report that they are nervous and 24.2% report sleep disorders. The older children and girls report a higher level of mental health disorders.



### Prevalence of health complains by sex





# Social inequalities

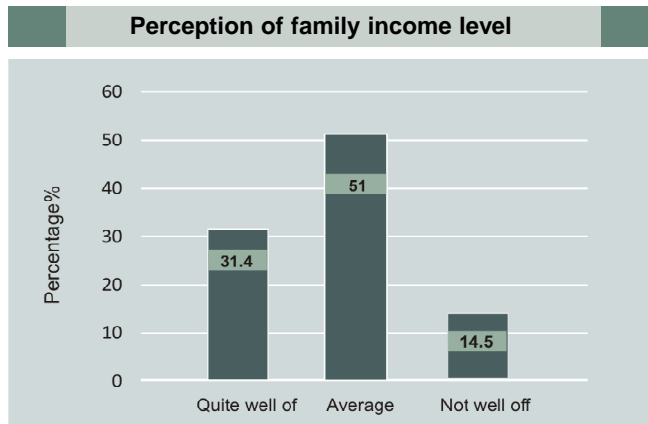
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## Perceived Family Wealth

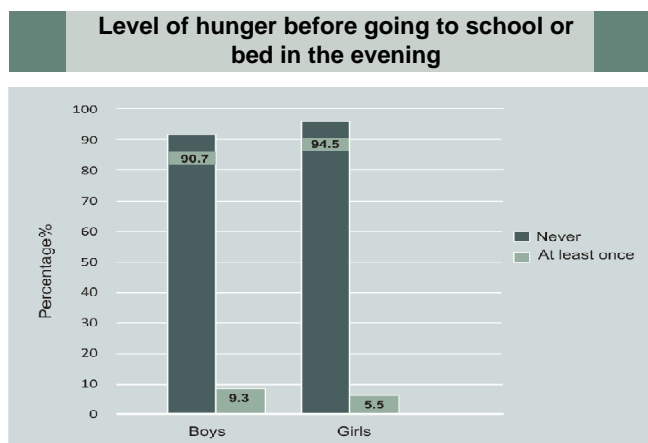
Overall, 24% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years have unemployed fathers and 58.4% have unemployed mothers.

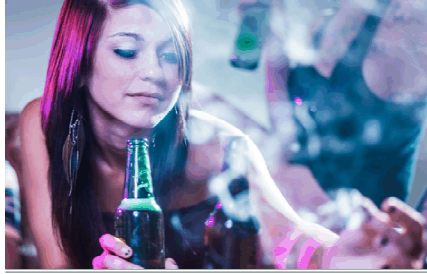
One out of two children report an average family income; about one out of three children report a good income level and 14.5% report a low income level. On the other hand, one out of two children reports possession of a computer.



## Social inequalities

Overall, only 8% of the children 11, 13, 15 years report that they are hungry *at least once* always time before going to bed in the evening or before going to school, compared with 92% who are never hungry. There are no age-differences, whereas boys tended to report a higher degree of hunger compared with the girls.



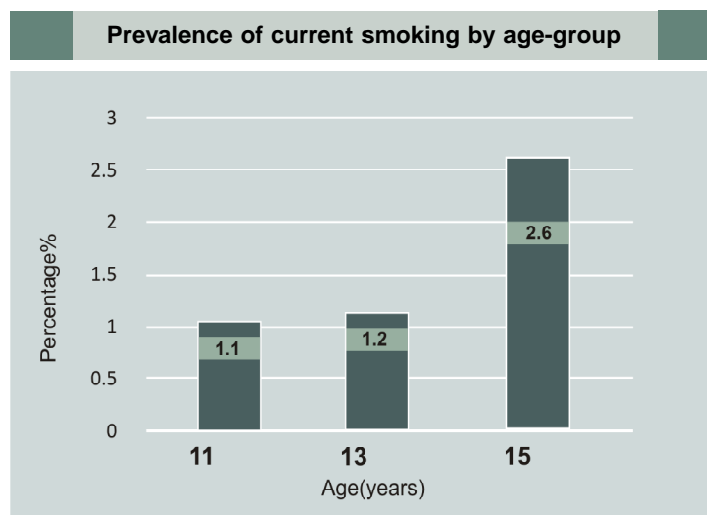


## Substance use

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2.6% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years are occasional smokers, whereas 1.7% are regular smokers. Smoking prevalence is higher among boys (2.6% vs. 0.8% in girls). Smoking prevalence increases with the age of children.



### Alcohol intake

Only 11.2% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 have consumed alcohol *occasionally* during the past 30 days, compared with 3.4% of the children who report *regular* alcohol intake.

As for the typical amount of alcohol consumption, 1.4% of the children report that they consume at least *5 alcohol units*, compare with 13.5% of the children who consume only *1 alcohol unit*.

### Use of cannabis

Only 5.7% of the children 15 years have used cannabis at least once in their life, whereas 2.3% of the children have used cannabis at least once during the past 30 days (before the interview). The use of cannabis is higher among boys (10.5% vs. 1.4% among girls).

**Lifetime prevalence of cannabis use  
by sex**







# Sexual health

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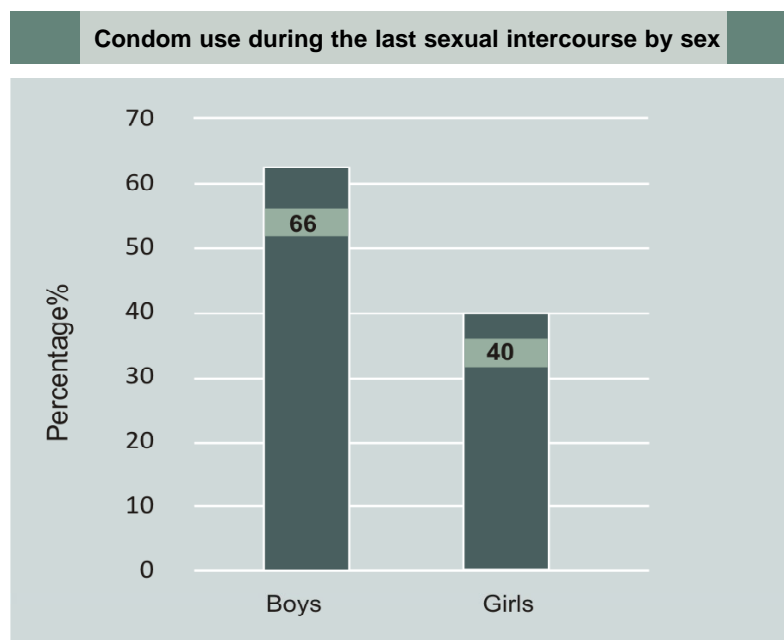
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## Sexual intercourse

19.5% of the children aged 15 years have had sexual intercourse (95% are boys and only 5% girls). The most frequent ages of commencement of sexual relations include the age of 14 years and 15 years.

## Contraceptive use

Of the children 15 years old who have experienced sexual relations, 64.7% use contraceptives during sexual intercourse. 66% of boys and 40% of girls who have experienced sexual intercourse have used condom during their last sexual intercourse, whereas the other contraceptive methods are not frequently used by children.





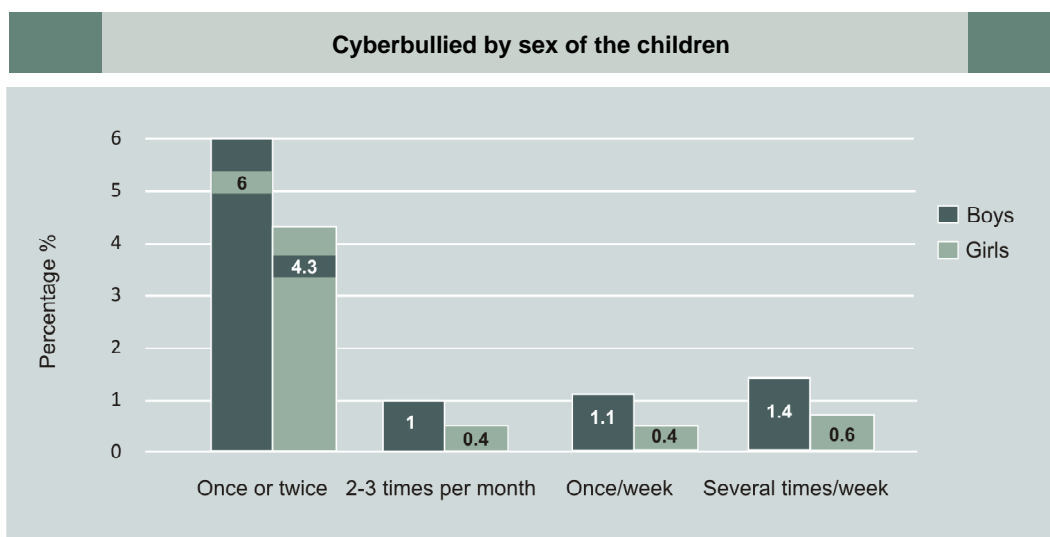
# Bulling, fights and injuries

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## Cyberbullying

About 7% of the children aged 11, 13, 15 years report being cyberbullied through messages or pictures. In all cases, boys report a higher degree of being bullied compared with the girls.



## Injuries

35% of the children 11, 13, 15 years report that during the past year they have been injured *at least once*, in such a manner that they needed medical intervention. Of these, 11% have required serious medical interventions up to hospitalization. Home surroundings (11%), sport facilities (8%), school (6%) and streets (4%) are the most frequent environments for the occurrence of injuries among children. About 14% of the children have been injured during workout, whereas 7% of the children have been injured while walking in the street. In all cases, boys have been substantially more injured compared with the girls.

**Environments where injuries take place**

