



Short Report:

HBSC Ireland 2022: Use of health harming products among school-aged children in Ireland

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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 World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe and runs on a four-year cycle. In 2022, Ireland participated for the seventh time in the HBSC study (www.universityofgalway.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 2022 was funded by the Department of Health. Further information on the HBSC Ireland Study can be found at www.universityofgalway.ie/hbsc/ or at www.hbsc.org, the International HBSC website.

The most recent HBSC Ireland study was conducted in 2022 and included 9,071 school children from 3rd class in primary school to 5th year in post-primary school. Collectively, 191 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 2022 survey see <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/hbsc/hbscireland/2022study/>.

Focus of this report

This short report focuses on the use of health harming products among school-aged children from the 2022 HBSC survey. The data focus on areas including: tobacco and alcohol use, eating and dieting, indoor tanning bed use, tablet/PC ownership, intensive electronic communication and problematic social media use.

The question(s) analysed for this report include:

Tobacco and Alcohol Use

Current smoking status: How often do you smoke tobacco at present? Response options: 'every day', 'at least once a day, but not every day', 'less than once a week', 'I do not smoke'.

Ever smoked cigarettes: On how many days (if any) have you smoked cigarettes in your lifetime? Response options: 'Never', '1-2 days', '3-5 days', '6-9 days', '10-19 days', '20-29 days', '30 days (or more)'.

Electronic cigarette use in lifetime: On how many days (if any) have you used electronic cigarettes (e.g. e-cigarette, vape) in your lifetime? Response options: 'Never', '1-2 days', '3-5 days', '6-9 days', '10-19 days', '20-29 days', '30 days (or more)'.

Electronic cigarette use last 30 days: On how many days (if any) have you used electronic cigarettes (e.g. e-cigarette, vape) in the last 30 days? Response options: 'Never', '1-2 days', '3-5 days', '6-9 days', '10-19 days', '20-29 days', '30 days (or more)'.

Never had an alcoholic drink: On how many days (if any) have you drunk alcohol in your lifetime? Response options: 'Never', '1-2 days', '3-5 days', '6-9 days', '10-19 days', '20-29 days' and '30 days (or more)'.

Lifetime drunkenness: Have you ever had so much alcohol that you were really drunk in your lifetime? Response options: 'Never', 'Yes, once', 'Yes, 2-3 times', 'Yes, 4-10 times', 'Yes, more than 10 times'.

Drunkenness in the last 30 days: Have you ever had so much alcohol that you were really drunk in the last 30 days? Response options: 'Never', 'Yes, once', 'Yes, 2-3 times', 'Yes, 4-10 times', 'Yes, more than 10 times'.

Alcohol availability (HBSC 2018): Children who had ever consumed alcohol were asked how they sourced that alcohol and where they consumed it.

Eating and Dieting

Food frequency questions related to consumption of (1) Sweets (candy or chocolate), (2) Coke or other soft drinks that contain sugar, (3) Diet coke or diet soft drinks, (4) Crisps, (5) Chips / fried potatoes.

How many times a week do you usually eat or drink...? Response options: 'Never', 'Less than once a week', 'Once a week', '2-4 days a week', '5-6 days a week', 'Once a day, every day', 'Every day, more than once'.

Indoor Tanning Bed Use

Indoor tanning bed use, lifetime: How many times have you used an indoor tanning bed (lying down or standing up) in your lifetime? Response options: 'Never', '1 time', '2 times', '3-4 times', '5 times or more'.

Indoor tanning bed use, last 12 months: How many times have you used an indoor tanning bed (lying down or standing up) in your lifetime in the last 12 months? Response options: 'Never', '1 time', '2 times', '3-4 times', '5 times or more'.

Tablet/PC Ownership

How many computers does your family own (including laptops and tablets, not game consoles and smartphones)? Response options: 'None', 'One', 'Two', 'More than two'.

Intensive Electronic Media Communication

How often do you have ONLINE contact with the following people? (1) close friend(s), (2) friends from a larger friend group, (3) friends that you got to know through the internet but didn't know before, (4) Other people than friends (e.g. parents, brothers/sisters, classmates, teachers)? Response options: 'Don't have access', 'Never or almost never', 'At least every week', 'Daily or almost daily', 'Several times a day', 'Almost all the time throughout the day'. Intensive use refers to respondents who answered 'Almost all the time throughout the day' to at least one of the four items.

Problematic Social Media Use

Measured with the nine-item Social Media Disorder (SMD) scale with dichotomous (no/yes) response options.

During the past year, have you....

- (1) Often found that you can't think of anything but the moment that you will be able to use social media again?
- (2) Often felt unhappy because you wanted to spend more time on social media?
- (3) Often felt bad when you could not use social media?
- (4) Tried to spend less time on social media, but failed?
- (5) Often neglected other activities (e.g. hobbies, sport) because you wanted to use social media?
- (6) Often had arguments with others because of your social media use?
- (7) Often lied to your parents or friends about the amount of time you spend on social media?
- (8) Often used social media to escape from negative feelings?
- (9) Had serious conflict with your parents, brothers(s) or sisters(s) because of your social media use?

Respondents with a sum score of 6 or higher (answered yes to 6 or more of the questions) are categorised as 'problematic user'

Results

Tobacco and Alcohol Use

Table 1: Current tobacco smoking status

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	4.7	95.3
Boys	4.5	95.5
Girls	4.9	95.1
10 to 11	0.4	99.6
12 to 14	1.8	98.2
15 to 17	9.0	91.0

Table 2: Ever smoked cigarettes, lifetime

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	9.3	90.7
Boys	8.4	91.6
Girls	10.3	89.7
10 to 11	0.9	99.1
12 to 14	3.3	96.7
15 to 17	18.3	81.7

Table 3: E-cigarette use, lifetime

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	18.2	81.8
Boys	15.2	84.8
Girls	21.2	78.8
10 to 11	2.2	97.8
12 to 14	9.8	90.2
15 to 17	32.0	68.0

Table 4: E-cigarette use, last 30 days

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	12.9	87.1
Boys	10.0	90.0
Girls	15.8	84.2
10 to 11	1.2	98.8
12 to 14	5.8	94.2
15 to 17	23.6	76.4

Table 5: Been really drunk, lifetime

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	17.8	82.2
Boys	16.0	84.0
Girls	19.6	80.4
10 to 11	1.3	98.7
12 to 14	4.5	95.5
15 to 17	37.2	62.8

Table 6: Been really drunk, last 30 days

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	8.7	91.3
Boys	7.2	92.8
Girls	10.3	89.7
10 to 11	0.3	99.7
12 to 14	1.9	98.1
15 to 17	18.6	81.4

Table 7: Never had an alcoholic drink

	Never had drink	Had an alcoholic drink
	%	
Overall	69.1	30.9
Boys	70.7	29.3
Girls	67.5	32.5
10 to 11	95.1	4.9
12 to 14	84.6	15.4
15 to 17	44.4	55.6

Table 8: Source where children got alcohol from, at last occasion (source: HBSC 2018)

	Overall	Boys	Girls	12-14	15-17
	%	%			
A parent/guardian gave it to me	34	32	36	34	34
I took it from my home	11	10	12	16	10
Bought in a supermarket/convenience store	6	8	5	1	8
Bought in a garage shop	1	1	1	0	1
Bought in a pub/bar/disco	17	19	16	2	21
Bought in an off-licence	5	6	4	2	5
Ordered online or by phone and delivered	0	1	0	0	1
Friends gave it to me	30	27	32	31	30
Brothers/sisters gave it to me	9	8	10	10	9
I gave someone else money to buy it for me	21	18	24	13	23
Some other way	7	9	6	13	6

*Percentages will not add to 100 as respondents were given the option to tick multiple responses

Table 9: Venue where children got alcohol, at last occasion (source: HBSC 2018)

	Overall	Boys	Girls	12-14	15-17
	%	%			
At home	26	26	27	37	24
At someone else's home	30	28	31	26	31
On the street, in a park, beach or open area	15	15	14	18	14
At a bar of a pub	20	21	18	6	23
In a disco	11	10	11	7	11
In a restaurant	4	4	5	5	4
Some other place	11	11	10	14	10

*Percentages will not add to 100 as respondents were given the option to tick multiple responses

Eating and Dieting

Table 10: Sweets, daily or more

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	23.9	76.1
Boys	21.9	78.1
Girls	25.9	74.1
10 to 11	20.3	79.7
12 to 14	22.0	78.0
15 to 17	26.9	73.1

Table 11: Coke or other soft drinks containing sugar, daily or more

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	6.6	93.4
Boys	7.1	92.9
Girls	6.0	94.0
10 to 11	4.3	95.7
12 to 14	6.0	94.0
15 to 17	7.9	92.1

Table 12: Diet coke or diet soft drinks, daily or more

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	4.7	95.3
Boys	5.0	95.0
Girls	4.4	95.6
10 to 11	1.9	98.1
12 to 14	3.7	96.3
15 to 17	6.6	93.4

Table 13: Crisps, daily or more

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	4.8	95.2
Boys	5.5	94.5
Girls	4.1	95.9
10 to 11	3.9	96.1
12 to 14	4.2	95.8
15 to 17	5.8	94.2

Table 14: Chips / fried potatoes, daily or more

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	4.1	95.9
Boys	5.0	95.0
Girls	3.1	96.9
10 to 11	3.0	97.0
12 to 14	3.9	96.1
15 to 17	4.5	95.5

Indoor Tanning Bed Use

Table 15: Indoor tanning bed use, lifetime

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	5.2	94.8
Boys	5.4	94.6
Girls	4.9	95.1
10 to 11	5.9	94.1
12 to 14	5.0	95.0
15 to 17	5.2	94.8

Table 16: Indoor tanning bed use, last 12 months

	Yes	No
	%	
Overall	4.4	95.6
Boys	4.3	95.7
Girls	4.6	95.4
10 to 11	4.6	95.4
12 to 14	3.9	96.1
15 to 17	5.0	95.0

Tablet/PC Ownership

Table 17: Tablet/PC Ownership in the family home

	None	One	Two	More than two
	%			
Overall	2.4	10.3	21.2	66.2
Boys	2.9	10.6	21.0	65.5
Girls	1.8	10.0	21.4	66.8
10 to 11	1.9	7.4	19.6	71.1
12 to 14	2.2	8.6	21.1	68.1
15 to 17	2.7	13.1	21.8	62.4

Intensity of Electronic Media Communication

Table 18: Intensive electronic media communication

	Intensive Use	Not Intensive Use
	%	
Overall	42.3	57.7
Boys	37.2	62.8
Girls	47.4	52.6
10 to 11	23.6	76.4
12 to 14	41.1	58.9
15 to 17	49.3	50.7

Problematic Social Media Use

Table 19: Problematic social media use

	Problematic Use	Not Problematic Use
	%	
Overall	67.6	32.4
Boys	74.2	25.8
Girls	60.8	39.2
10 to 11	76.2	23.8
12 to 14	68.0	32.0
15 to 17	64.6	35.4

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