



# Cross-cohort comparisons of socio-emotional well-being: Ireland, Scotland and New Zealand

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An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of Children  
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# Project: *Growing Up Healthy in Families Across the Globe*

## ***Growing Up Healthy in Families Across the Globe***<sup>1</sup>:

1. Compare and harmonise data and analysis across 5 child cohort studies
2. To bring together collaborators from longitudinal studies
3. Knowledge transfer

### **The five Studies:**

- **3 New Zealand studies:** Te Hoe Nuku Roa; Pacific Islands Families Study  
Growing Up in New Zealand;
- **Scotland:** Growing Up in Scotland;
- **Ireland:** Growing Up in Ireland.

*(<sup>1</sup>Project P.I. – Prof. Chris Cunningham, Massey University, Wellington, NZ)*





# *Common themes across different countries and their studies.*

## ❖ Comparable domains in all 5 studies

- Child's health
- Child's cognitive development / education
- Child's social-emotional and behavioural well-being and development
- Individual, family and other background variables available for analysis

## ❖ Population size and cultures broadly similar – but different minority groups. New Zealand has a large minority pop of Maori and Pacific Island people



# Proposed parallel waves for harmonised analysis (with ages of children)

	Age of children					
	9-12mth	2yrs	3yrs	4yrs	5yrs	6yrs
<b>Te hoe nuku roa</b>	9-12mths		3-4yrs		5-6yrs	
<b>Pacific Island Families Study</b>	12mth		4yrs		6yrs	
<b>Growing Up in New Zealand</b>	9mth		4.5yrs		6yrs	
<b>Growing Up in Ireland</b>	9mth		3yrs		5yrs	
<b>Growing Up in Scotland</b>	10mth		3.9yrs		5.9yrs	



# Descriptive Statistics from the five Growing Up Healthy studies

	Te hoe nuku roa	Pacific Islands Family Study	Growing up in New Zealand	Growing up in Scotland	Growing up in Ireland
<b>Baseline<sup>1</sup></b>	N = 274	N = 1,376	N=6,846	N = 5,217	N = 8,643
<b>Gender</b>					
Boys	53.2 (146)	51.5 (708)	51.5 (5,326)	51.5 (2,689)	51.1 (5,679)
<b>Maternal relationship</b>					
Not living with a partner	60.9 (123)	19.7 (271)	11.5 (788)	20.3 (1,059)	14.2 (1,230)
<b>Maternal education</b>					
Lower secondary or less	59.9 (121)	38.9 (535)	29.9 (2,047)	44.1 (2,292)	17.7 (1,528)
<b>Smoking in pregnancy</b>					
Yes	-	24.6 (339)	19.4 (1,328)	25.1 (1,282)	18.0 (1,556)
<b>Maternal self-reported health</b>					
Fair	11.4 (23)	15.3 (187)	8.1 (554)	12.1 (628)	5.8 (501)
Poor	4.5 (9)	1.2 (15)	2.2 (151)	2.5 (132)	0.8 (69)
<b>Maternal long-standing illness</b>					
Yes	27.2 (55)	18.0 (248)	14.1 (965)	16.3 (843)	12.3 (1,063)

<sup>1</sup> Baseline for PIFS 6wks, GUINZ, GUS 10mths, GUI 9mths



# Example comparing child's socio-emotional well-being – GUiNZ's vulnerability framework

## 12 'risk factors' related to aspects of vulnerability

### Growing Up in New Zealand

Vulnerability Report 2: Transitions in exposure to vulnerability in the first 1000 days of life  
2015



Growing Up  
in New Zealand

### Proximal family characteristics:

- Maternal health
- Maternal depression
- Maternal smoking in pregnancy
- Maternal age (teenage pregnancy)

### Distal family characteristics:

- Family structure – one- or two-parent family
- Maternal education
- Financial stress

### Home environment:

- Deprivation status
- Unemployment status
- Household tenure
- Receipt of income tested benefit
- Bedroom density



# Comparing socio-emotional well-being – GUINZ's vulnerability framework

➤ Socio-emotional well-being at 5 years, according to selection of GUINZ vulnerability parameters

1. Family structure – one- or two-parent
2. Mother's education
3. Maternal physical health status
4. Maternal longstanding/chronic illness
5. Maternal smoking in pregnancy

*plus:*

6. Child's gender
7. Child's health
8. Child's longstanding/chronic illness

➤ Socio-emotional outcome variable – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



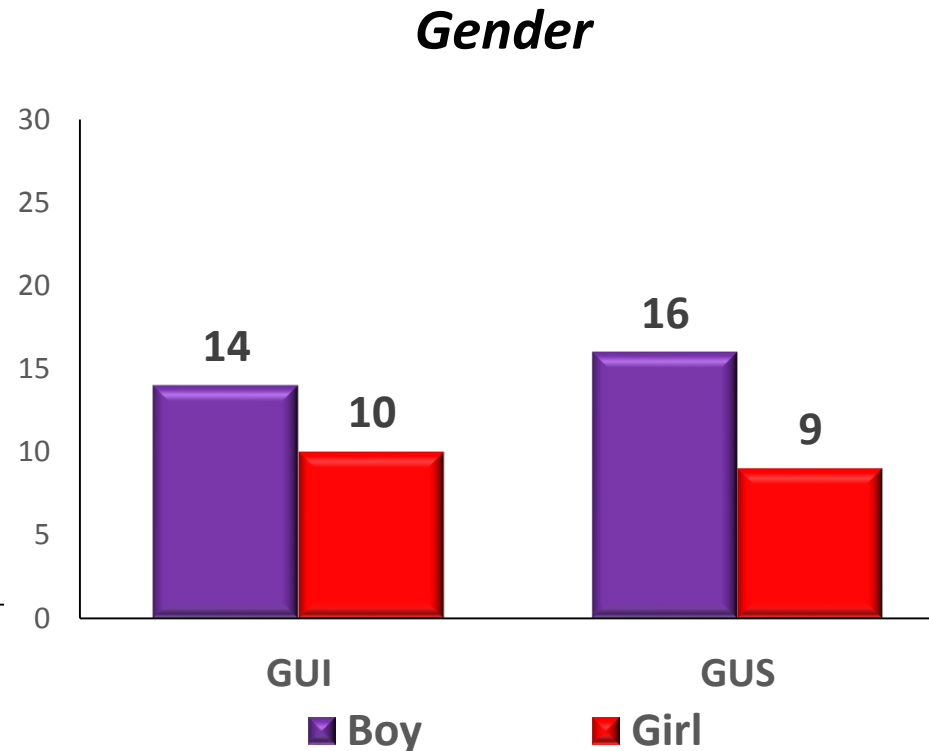
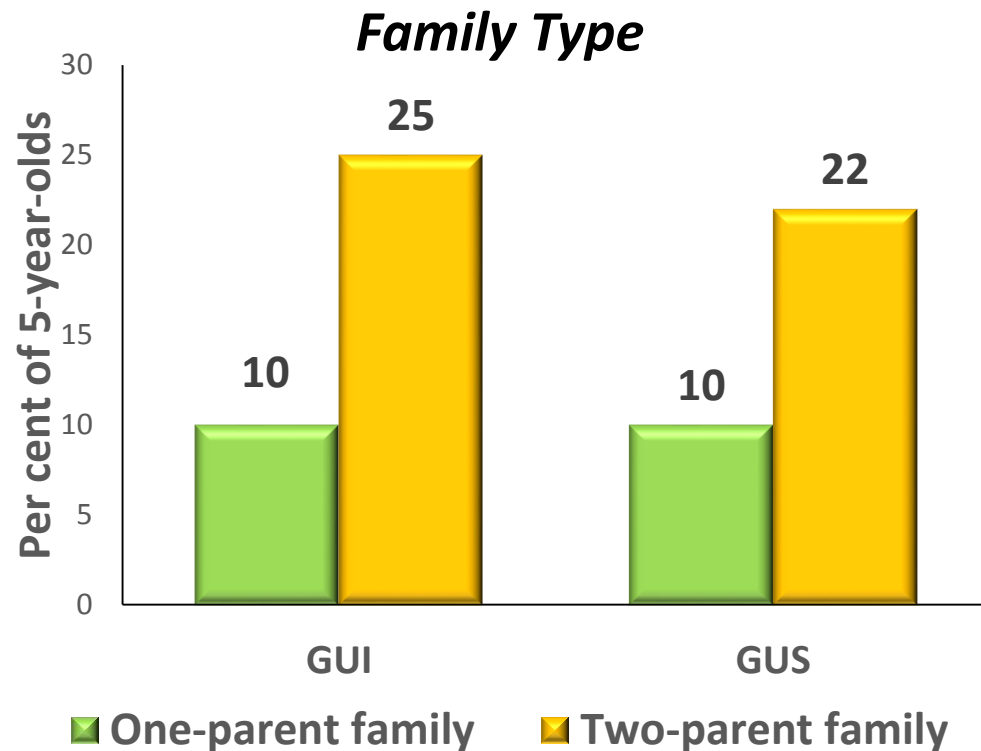
# Child's socio-emotional well-being – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

- ❖ SDQ (Goodman et al. 1997) – child's/young person's socio-emotional well-being
- ❖ Four 'deficit' subscales considered to yield 'Total Difficulties Score' –
  - emotional problems
  - conduct problems
  - hyperactivity/inattention
  - peer relationship problems
- ❖ Questionnaire completed by Primary Caregiver (usually the child's mother)
- ❖ SDQ identifies 'At Risk' group in terms of emotional problems (top 10 per cent or 'decile' of cases) for each of 4 subscales and Total Difficulties Scale. Continuous scores also available from the scale



# *'At risk' among 5-year-olds, by family status and child's gender*

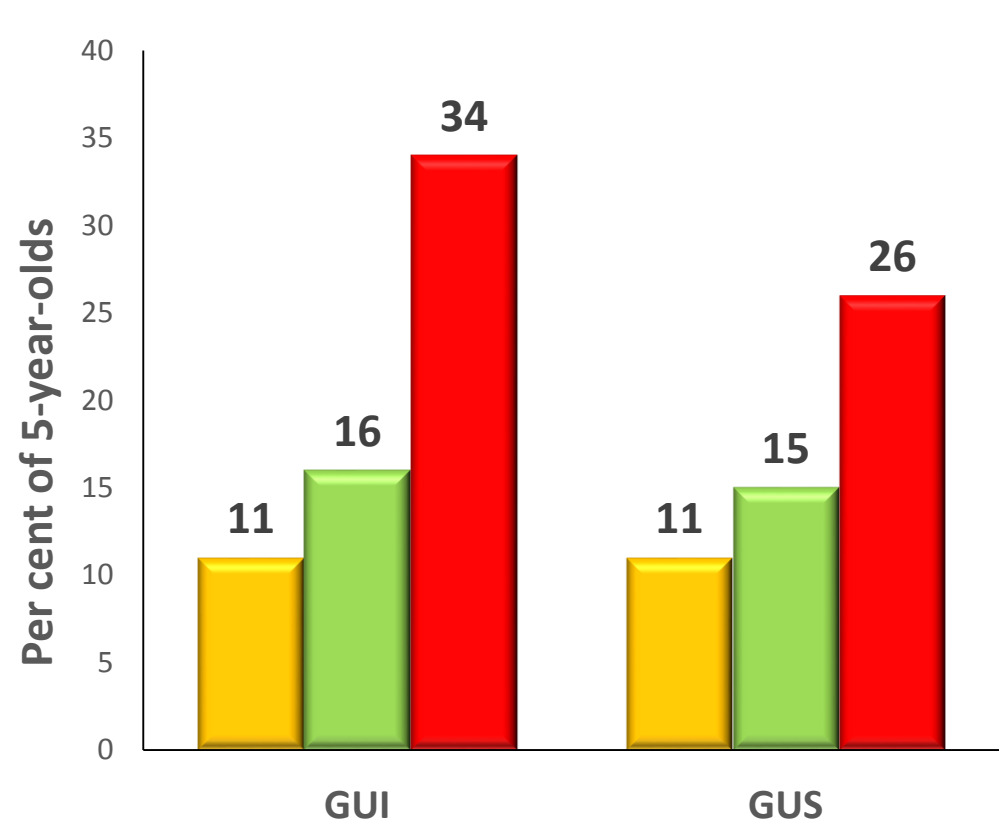
- ❖ Using Total Difficulties Score, 13% of all 5-year-olds in Scotland and 12% of 5-year-olds in Ireland are in the 'At Risk' category





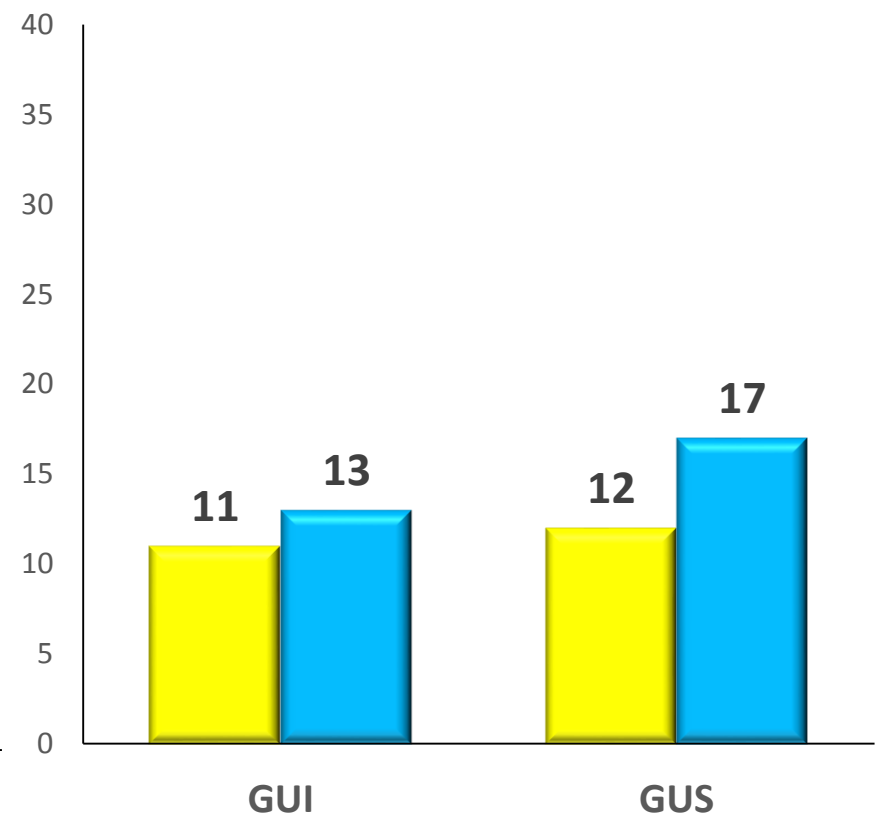
# 'At risk' among 5-year-olds, by child's health status and chronic illness

### Health Status



- Very healthy/no probs
- Healthy, a few minor probs
- S'times quite ill/almost always unwell

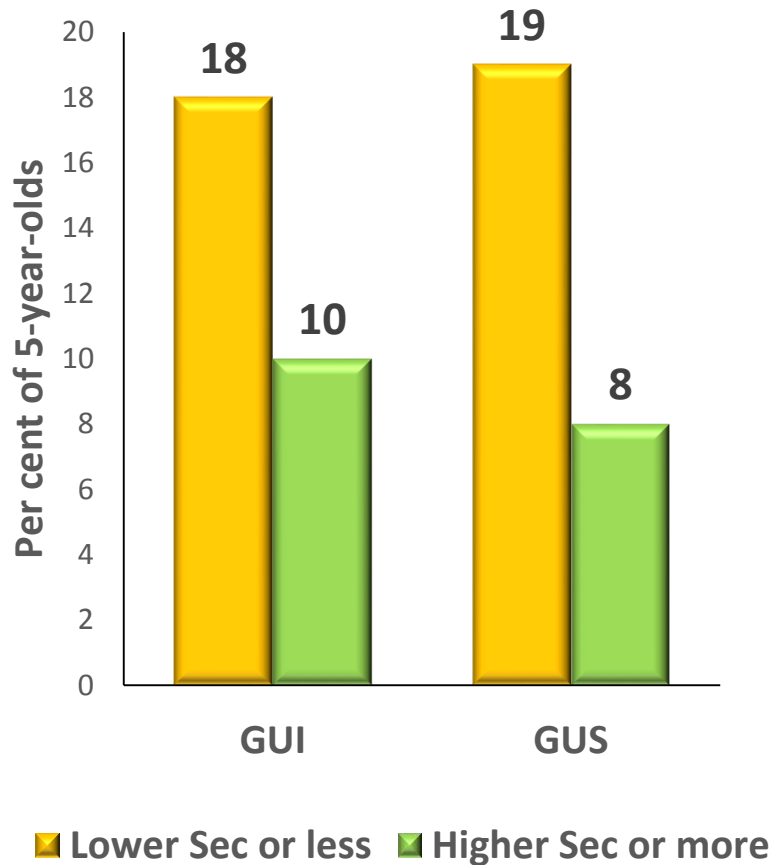
### Chronic illness



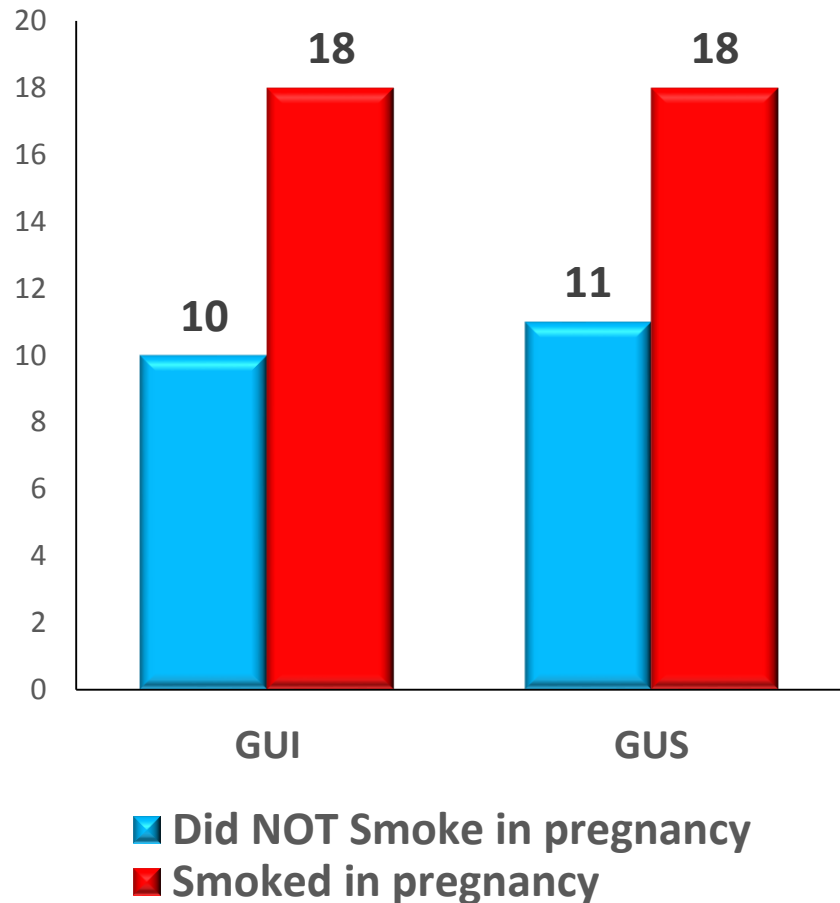
- NO chronic illness/disab
- HAS Chronic illness/disab

# *'At risk' among 5-year-olds, by mother's education and whether smoked in pregnancy*

***Mother's education***



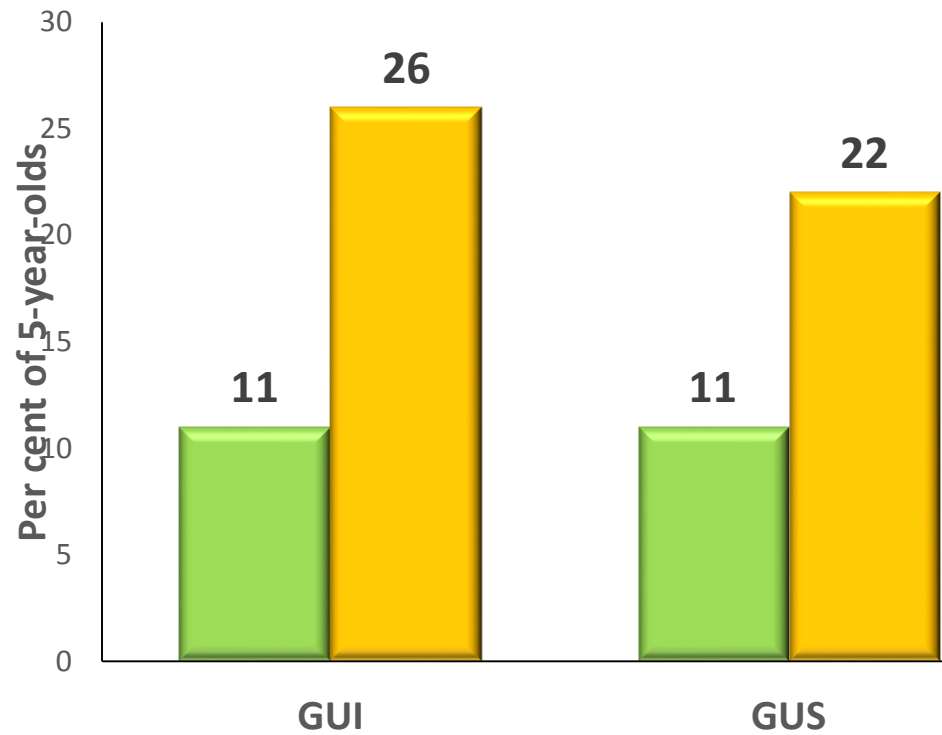
***Mother smoke in pregnancy?***



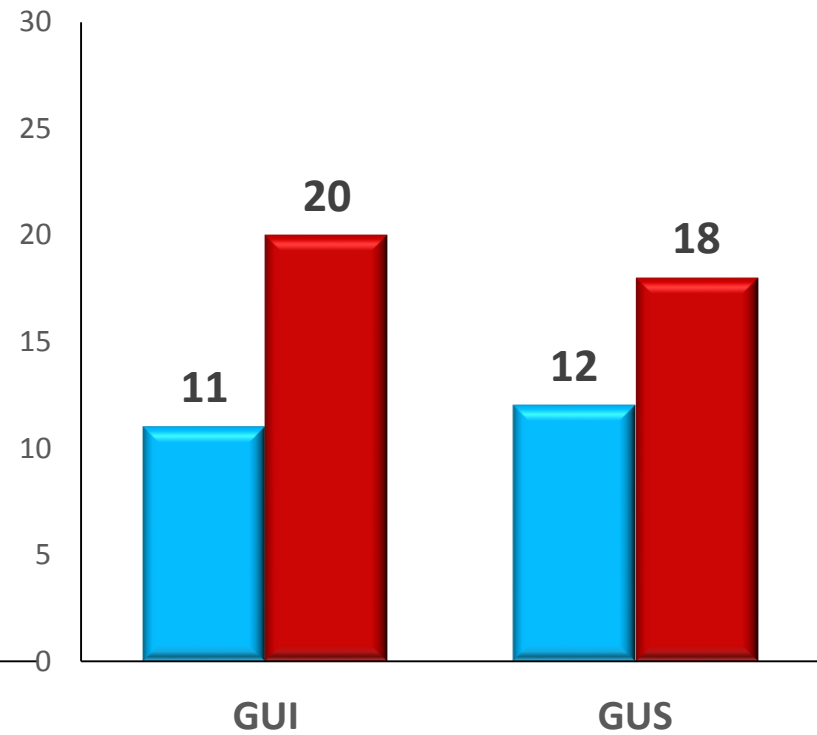


# 'At risk' among 5-year-olds, by mother's health and disability status

## Mother's Health



## Mother's Disability Status



■ Good and above

■ Fair/Poor

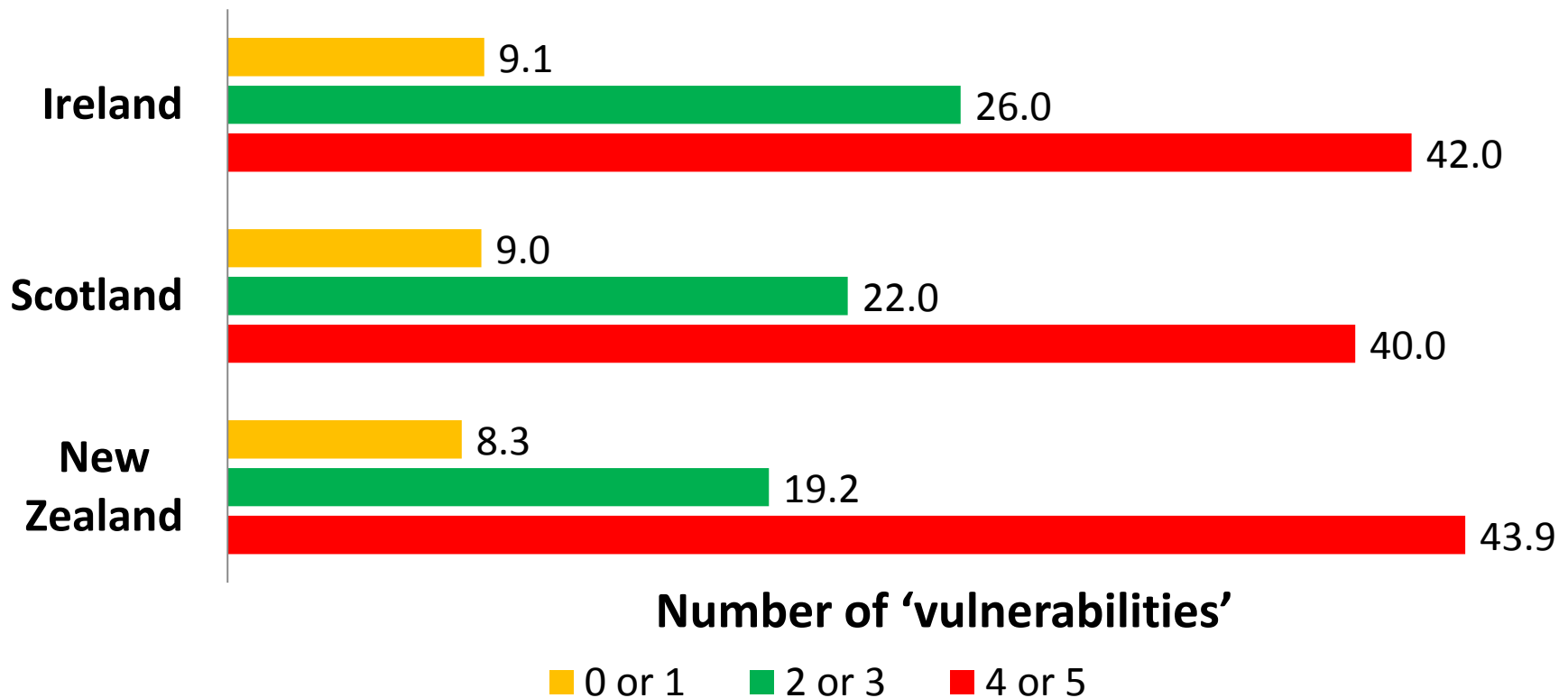
■ NO Chronic illness

■ Chronic illness



# 'At risk' among 5-year-olds, by number of core vulnerability factors

Percentage of 5-year-olds in Total Difficulties 'At Risk' range by number of vulnerability factors at earlier age



❖ 'Dose' effects of vulnerability factors have substantial (and similar) effects in all 3 countries



# Odds of being in the 'At Risk' category in Ireland and Scotland at 5 years of age

<i><b>Characteristic</b></i>	<b>Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)</b>	<b>Growing Up in Scotland (GUS)</b>
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
<b>One-parent family</b>	2.6*	1.8*
<b>PCG lower secondary education or less</b>	1.3*	2.3*
<b>PCG health Fair/Poor</b>	2.0*	1.8*
<b>PCG longstanding illness/disability</b>	1.6*	1.2
<b>Mother smoked in pregnancy</b>	1.3*	1.0
<b>Study child is a boy</b>	1.6*	2.0*
<b>Study Child fair/poor health</b>	4.1*	2.1*
<b>Study Child has longstanding illness/ disability</b>	1.2	1.0

\*p value<0.05



# Summary

- ❖ Preliminary results from some analysis from *Growing up healthy in families across the globe* – principally looking at post hoc data harmonisation
- ❖ Results presented emotional outcomes in Scotland, Ireland and (to lesser extent) New Zealand
- ❖ Ex post harmonisation works – very well. Allows comparison of outcomes under different policy and other regimes
- ❖ Much more work on definitions necessary and ex-ante harmonisation preferable but value of ex-post illustrated
- ❖ International comparative research hugely important in understanding child development – major policy implications



# Summary

- ❖ On the substantive issue of children's emotional well-being we demonstrated higher risk of emotional problems in Ireland and Scotland among:
  - One-parent families in both Ireland and Scotland
  - Children with lower levels of parental education
  - Children whose Main Caregiver (mostly mother) has physical health issues
  - Boys
  - Children who have poorer health
  
- In Ireland:*
  - Main caregiver's longstanding illness/disability and whether mother smoked in pregnancy also significantly related to being in 'At Risk' category – but not Scotland





# Summary

- ❖ Multiple vulnerabilities clearly matters in Ireland, Scotland and New Zealand – substantially higher chance of being in the ‘At Risk’ category in all 3 countries with more risks
- ❖ Extend work to more sophisticated analysis – including interaction effects. e.g. is education more protective across some family types in one country rather than another?



*Questions?*

**Thank you**  
**Questions?**



PACIFIC ISLANDS  
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