

International picture of bullying and health among young people

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Outline

- What is bullying
- Why is bullying a concern?
- HBSC study: background and methods
- Cyber bullying – specific characteristics
- General findings
- Time trends
- Vulnerable populations
- Role of observers
- Prevention and mitigation

What is bullying?

- Unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a *real or perceived power imbalance*.
- The behaviour is *repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time*.
- *A relationship problem* based on power imbalance of Power: Use of power -such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, status or popularity—to control or harm others.

Why is bullying a concern?

- Prevalent behaviour in young people
- Violation of a basic human right
- Related to adverse health:
 - psychological maladjustment,
 - psychosomatic health problems,
 - Absenteeism and impaired academic performance,
 - Self harm.
- Bullying behaviour is associated with involvement in a range of risk behaviours
- Long term effects for victims as well as perpetrators

Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) study

- International study, initiated in 1982
- The network currently consists of 43 countries and regions
- Aims to gain better understanding of young people's lives
- Focus on science and policy.

Items

Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way.

How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?

- I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months
- It has only happened once or twice
- 2 or 3 times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week

How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months?

- I have not bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months
- It has only happened once or twice
- 2 or 3 times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week

Items

How often have you been bullied in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?

*I have not been
bullied in this way in
the past couple of
months*

*Only once or
twice*

*2 or 3 times
a month*

*About once a
week*

*Several times
a week*

- 1) I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.
- 2) Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me.
- 3) I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors.
- 4) Other students told lies or spread false rumours about me and tried to make others dislike me.
- 5) I was bullied with mean names or comments about my race or colour.
- 6) I was bullied with mean names or comments about my religion.
- 7) Other students made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to me.
- 8) **Someone mean instant messages, wall postings, emails and text messages, or created a Web site that made fun of me.**
- 9) **Someone took unflattering or inappropriate pictures of me without permission and posted them online.**

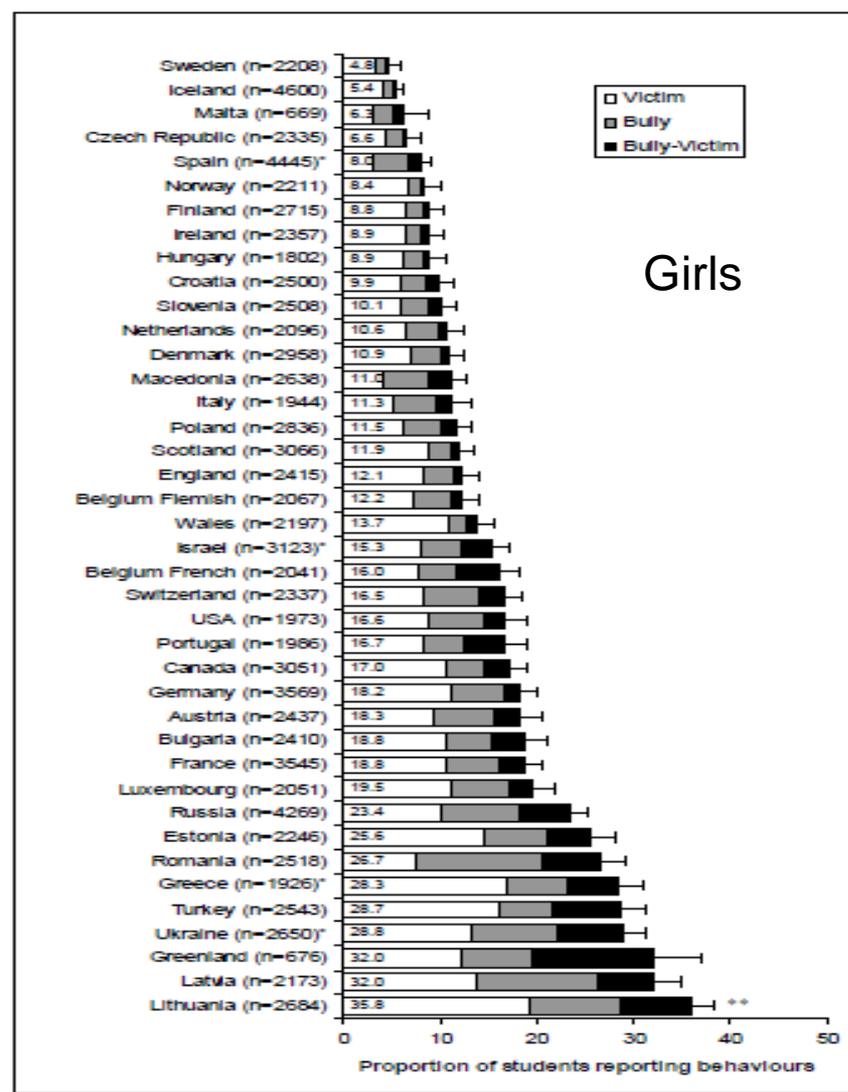
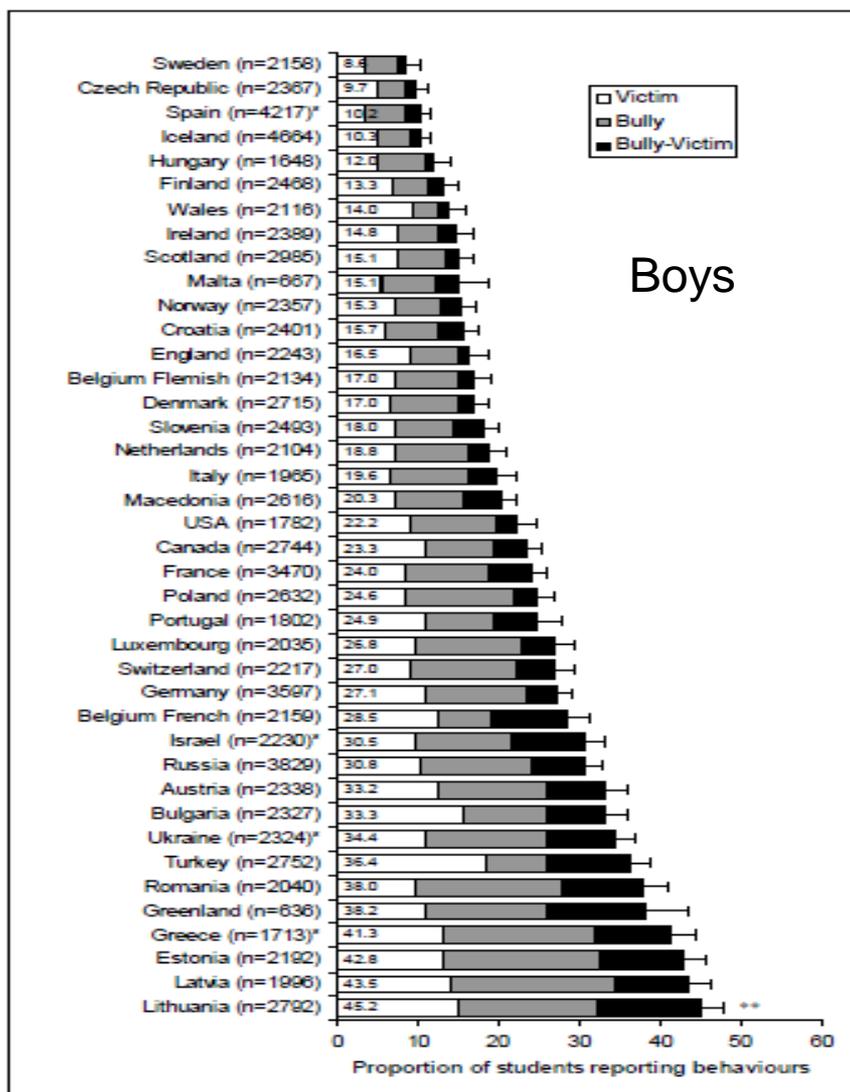
Why study cyber bullying?

- High exposure to cyber media (PCs, smartphones, tablets)
- Rapid / instant
- No safe place
- Wider scope
- Anonymous and detached
- Not witnessing reactions can make actions more aggressive and viscous
- Can result in intense sense of isolation, fear, loneliness and despair.

General findings across countries

- **Bullying range from 9 % to 45 % among boys and from 5 % to 36% among girls**
- **Higher rates reported in Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Greenland, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine**
- **Lower rates in Hungary, Norway, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Czech Republic, and Wales**
- **Generally, lower rates reported in North & West Europe and higher in Eastern European countries**

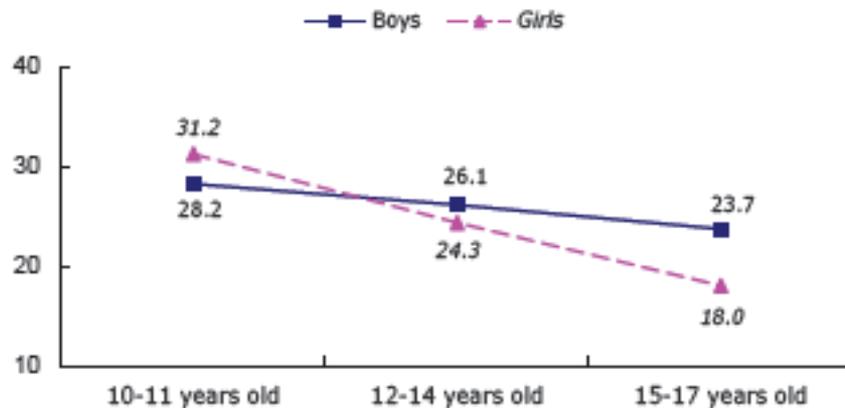
Involvement in bullying behaviour, by country



Gender and age differences

- **Boys bully more than girls in all countries**
 - **And in all types of bullying**
- **In most countries the rate of the victimisation is similar or higher among boys**
 - **In small number of countries more girls are victimised**
 - **Girls are more likely than boys to be victims of relational and cyber bullying**
- **Rates of victimization tend to decrease with age while perpetration tends to increase**

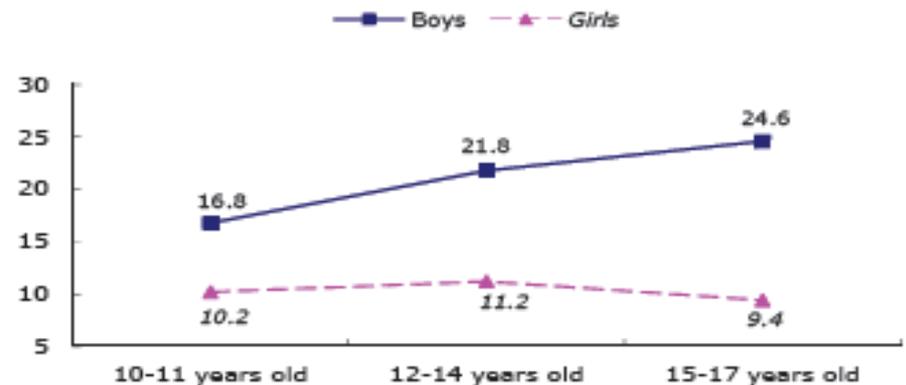
Gender and age differences in Ireland



Percentage of children who have been bullied, by age and gender

- Overall, 17% reported having bullied others in the past couple of months

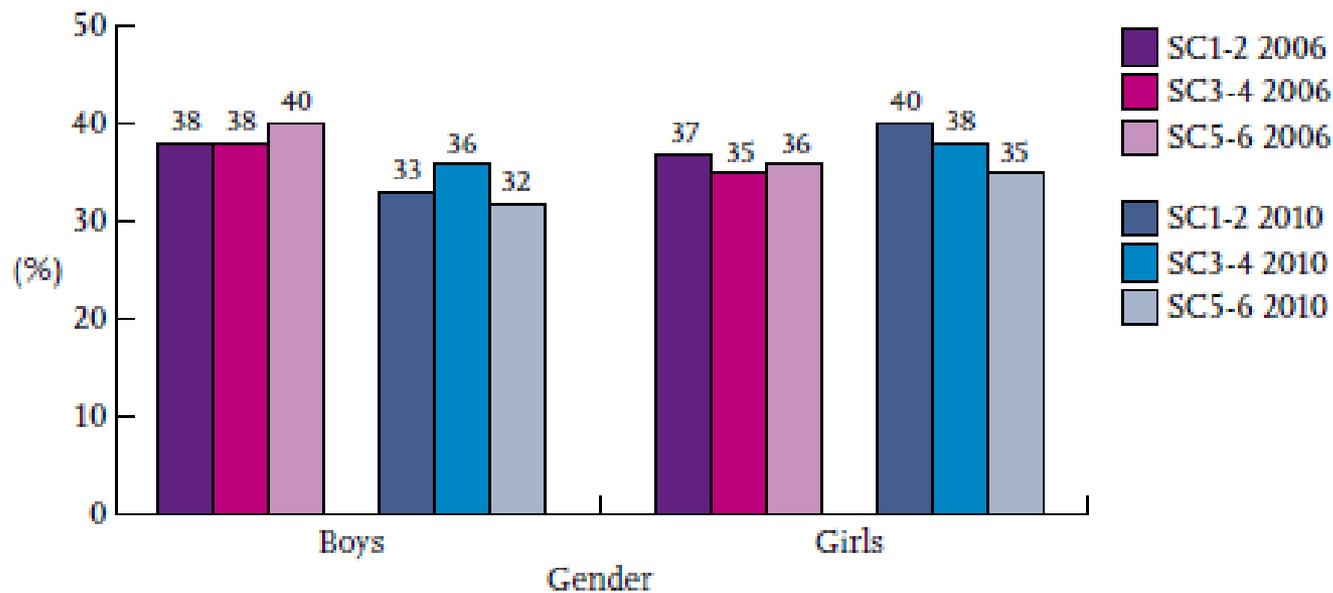
- Overall, 24% reported having been bullied in the past couple of months



Percentage of children who have bullied others, by age and gender

In Ireland: 9 year olds

Figure 68: Percentages of 9 year old boys and girls who report ever being bullied in the past couple of months



Time trends (1994-2006)

- **Consistent decrease in the prevalence of bullying in most countries, West and East**
- **The largest decrease was reported in the Czech Republic, followed by Denmark**
- **An increase or no change in most English speaking countries**

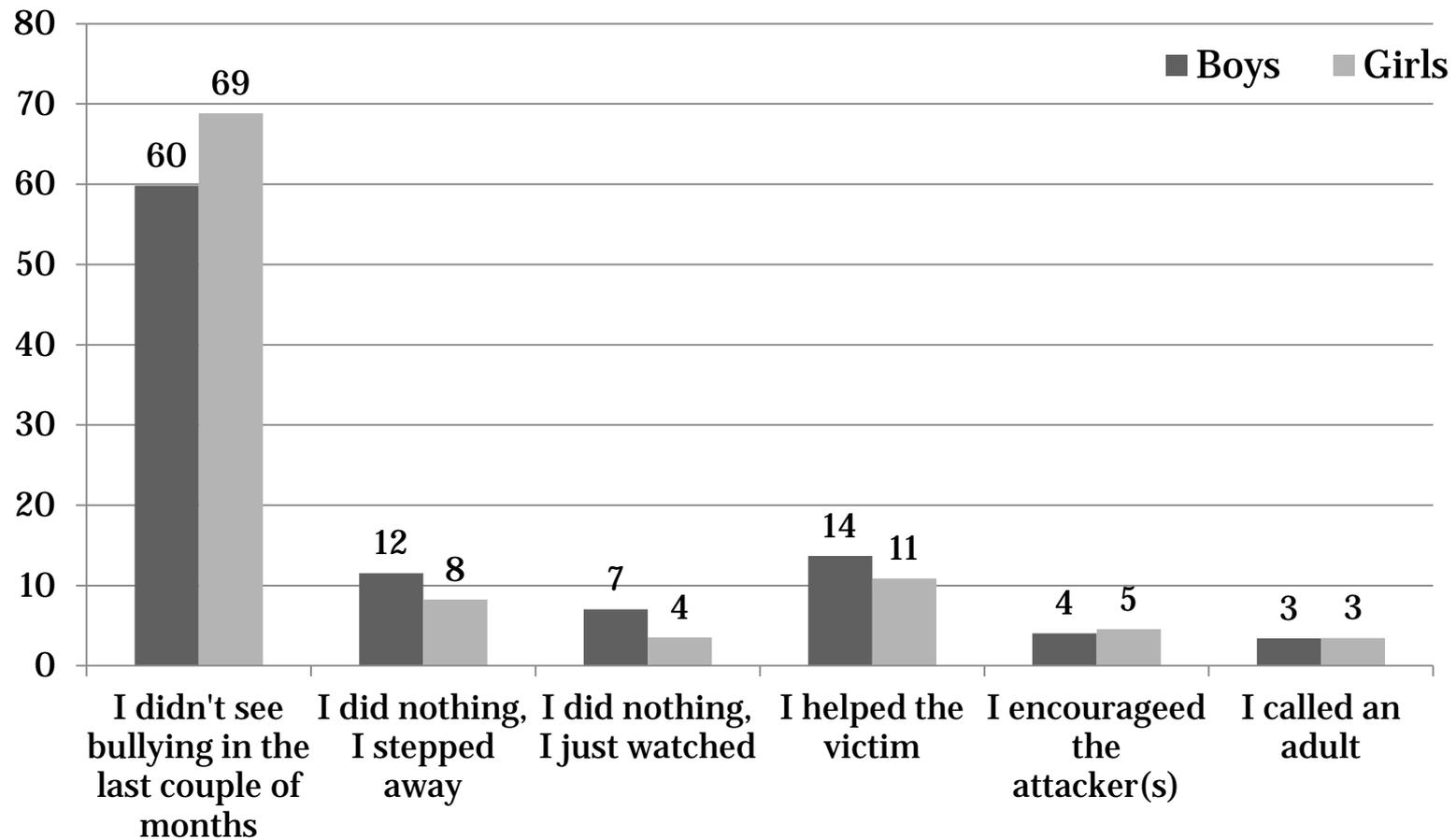
Time trends summary table

	Occasional bullying				Occasional victimization				Chronic bullying				Chronic victimization			
	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2006	Overall change	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2006	Overall change	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2006	Overall change	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2006	Overall change
All																
Increase	4	5	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	1
Decrease	11	16	11	16	8	14	10	19	8	18	9	19	8	19	7	21
No change	6	6	12	8	10	9	14	5	11	8	14	5	11	7	18	5
Boys																
Increase	3	4	4	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	4	2	0	1	1	1
Decrease	10	16	10	18	7	15	10	19	7	18	8	18	8	18	6	19
No change	8	7	13	6	12	11	15	6	13	7	15	7	13	8	20	7
Girls																
Increase	3	5	5	5	3	6	2	6	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	1
Decrease	9	13	9	13	6	12	10	12	6	15	6	16	5	15	4	18
No change	9	9	13	9	12	9	15	8	15	12	18	10	14	11	21	8

Vulnerable populations

- **Migrant children:**
 - Higher rates of bullying in Ireland, Scotland, Spain and Italy
- **Traveller children**
 - Especially girls
- **Disability / chronic illness:**
 - Students reporting a D/CI were more exposed to peer victimization at school

What about observers? (HBSC Ireland 2010)



Why do observers matter?

- Observers – by not doing anything – encourage the attacker
- Observers – by not doing anything – reaffirm this behaviour as normative
- Observers can make a difference through calling an adult to intervene
- Little is known about the health outcomes of observers and the role they are taking

Prevention and mitigation

- **Adult intervention**
- **Whole school approach**
- **Making children part of the solution, not the problem**
- **Society**

Conclusion

- **Bullying is a prevalent problem among young people**
- **Traditional bullying is globally on decline**
- **Exposure to internet increases risk for cyber bullying**
- **There is strong and consistent evidence about mitigating factors**
- **No child should feel insecure or leave in fear**



Thank you