

Short Report

HBSC Ireland 2010: tobacco use among school children in Ireland 2010, 2006, 2002 and 1998

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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 WHO Regional Office for Europe and runs on a four year cycle. In 2010 Ireland participated for the fourth time in the HBSC study (www.nuigalway.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 is funded by the Department of Health. Further information on the International HBSC study can be found at www.hbsc.org.

The most recent HBSC Ireland dataset comprises of 16,060 schoolchildren from 3rd class in primary school to 5th year in post-primary school. In total 256 schools across Ireland participated in the HBSC 2010 study. The methods employed in Ireland comply with the International HBSC protocol and have been detailed in the national report from the 2010 survey (see http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/nat_rep_hbsc_2010.pdf).

Focus of this report:

This short report provides a brief analysis of the 2010, 2006, 2002 and 1998 HBSC survey data on tobacco use among Irish schoolchildren by age and gender.

The questions analysed for Irish schoolchildren for the survey years 2010 and 2006 were:

- "Have you ever smoked tobacco? with response options – Yes or No.

- “How often do you smoke tobacco at present?” with response options – Every day; At least once a week, but not every day; Less than once a week; I do not smoke.
- “At what age did you first smoke a cigarette (more than a puff)?” with the response options – Never; 11 years old or less; 12 years old; 13 years old; 14 years old; 15 years old; 16 years or older.

The questions analysed for Irish schoolchildren for the survey year 2002 were:

- “Have you ever smoked tobacco?” with response options – Yes or No.
- “How often do you smoke tobacco at present?” with response options – Every day; At least once a week, but not every day; Less than once a week; I do not smoke.
- “At what age did you first smoke a cigarette (more than a puff)?” with the response options – Never; I was years old.

The questions analysed for Irish schoolchildren for the survey year 1998 were:

- “Have you ever smoked tobacco?” with response options – Yes or No.
- “How often do you smoke tobacco at present?” with response options – Every day; At least once a week, but not every day; Less than once a week; I do not smoke.
- Note, there was no question for age of onset of smoking in 1998.

Thus the questions used to derive the data on ever smoking and frequency of smoking were the same in 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010. However the questions used to derive the data on age of onset of smoking differed across the survey cycles; there was no question in 1998, in 2002 the response option was open and children wrote in their age of onset as applicable, while in 2006 and 2010 the children were offered a range of possible response option to choose from. These differences should be taken into account in any interpretation of the data presented below.

Table 1: Percentage of young people who report that they have ever smoked by age and gender

2010	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	16.7	14.6	15.8
14 years	27.9	26.9	27.5
15 years	39.8	39.7	39.7
16 years	46.3	50.2	48.3
17 years	58.4	56.0	57.4
2006	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	27.3	23.4	25.6
14 years	40.8	42.9	41.7
15 years	47.1	52.9	49.7
16 years	53.2	56.5	54.8
17 years	60.5	65.7	63.0
2002	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	33.3	31.5	32.3
14 years	47.8	45.5	46.5
15 years	57.0	58.7	58.1
16 years	64.6	64.1	64.3
17 years	65.4	69.8	67.8
1998	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	52.8	49.2	51.0
14 years	60.1	65.7	62.8
15 years	67.2	67.0	67.1
16 years	69.2	71.5	70.3
17 years	58.8	74.8	67.6

Table 2: Percentage of young people who report that they are current smokers by age and gender

2010	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	6.3	5.1	5.8
14 years	11.4	11.4	11.5
15 years	16.8	18.7	17.7
16 years	20.4	24.7	22.5
17 years	27.6	25.7	26.8
2006	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	9.1	9.2	9.1
14 years	15.6	18.9	17.1
15 years	23.4	24.5	23.9
16 years	22.4	28.9	25.5
17 years	22.2	32.5	27.0
2002	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	11.5	12.3	12.0
14 years	21.2	18.9	19.9
15 years	28.9	31.3	30.4
16 years	29.7	34.3	32.5
17 years	32.8	34.8	33.8
1998	Boys	Girls	All
Age			
13 years	20.0	20.2	20.1
14 years	26.5	28.9	27.7
15 years	32.9	32.6	32.8
16 years	30.8	40.3	35.5
17 years	26.2	50.0	38.8

Table 3: Age of first cigarette by age and gender

2010	Boys					Girls					All				
	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17
Never	85.8	73.8	63.9	57.0	45.7	87.2	73.6	62.8	50.6	44.4	86.5	73.6	63.4	53.9	45.0
11 or less	5.5	7.1	7.8	6.0	5.1	4.4	5.2	5.6	3.8	5.7	5.0	6.2	6.8	4.9	5.5
12	4.7	5.1	5.2	5.8	8.4	4.3	4.2	4.4	5.9	6.0	4.5	4.8	4.8	5.9	7.4
13	4.0	7.2	8.4	7.9	4.9	4.2	9.6	8.0	6.6	9.3	4.1	8.4	8.2	7.3	6.9
14		6.8	10.3	8.5	9.0		7.4	13.0	11.1	11.7		7.1	11.6	9.7	10.2
15			4.4	10.7	12.3			6.1	14.2	12.0			5.2	12.4	12.1
16 or more				4.2	14.6				7.8	10.9				5.9	13.0
2006	Boys					Girls					All				
	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17
Never	76.6	63.9	56.4	51.2	40.7	78.2	59.4	49.4	44.9	37.1	77.4	61.9	53.2	48.1	39.0
11 or less	10.4	12.7	11.1	11.8	10.8	6.9	13.6	10.0	8.9	9.5	8.8	13.1	10.6	10.4	10.4
12	8.8	8.5	7.8	7.0	6.6	9.5	9.6	8.5	11.5	8.3	9.1	9.0	8.2	9.2	7.4
13	4.2	10.4	8.9	9.1	11.6	5.3	11.1	14.0	11.6	12.0	4.7	10.7	11.3	10.3	11.8
14		4.5	10.7	8.0	8.7		6.3	13.0	9.8	11.0		5.3	11.7	8.9	9.8
15			5.0	8.6	11.6			5.1	10.6	12.0			5.0	9.6	11.8
16 or more				4.3	9.8				2.7	10.1				3.5	9.9
2002	Boys					Girls					All				
	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17
Never	70.6	56.7	46.2	41.0	35.6	70.6	58.7	43.0	39.8	30.5	70.6	57.8	44.3	40.3	32.7
11 or less	15.3	18.1	23.9	18.5	21.8	13.0	12.3	15.5	11.1	11.3	14.0	14.7	18.9	14.0	15.7
12	9.3	11.9	11.0	10.3	9.6	9.7	11.8	12.5	13.2	12.5	9.5	11.9	11.9	12.1	11.2
13	4.8	8.3	7.1	10.3	7.4	6.7	12.1	11.4	12.8	10.9	5.9	10.5	9.8	11.8	9.4
14		5.0	8.7	10.9	9.0		5.1	14.4	11.5	14.1		5.0	12.1	11.3	12.1
15			3.1	5.7	6.9			3.1	7.8	11.7			3.1	7.0	9.6
16 or more				3.4	9.6				3.8	9.0				3.6	9.2

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