

25th year
of data about young people

Young People into 2011

Chapter 8 **Social and Personal**

8 Social and Personal

The questions included in this group refer to social relationships, sources of information about sex, school lessons and problem-sharing. Questions to discover the pupils' awareness about contraceptive methods and services are also included.



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8 Social and Personal

25th year

Question

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Meeting others

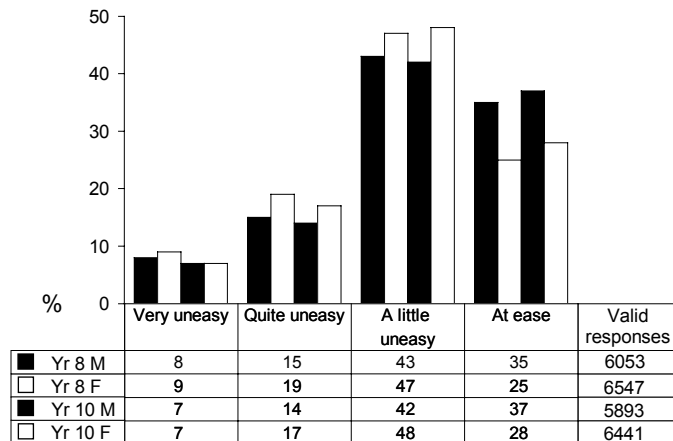
Up to 28%
are *quite* or *very uneasy*

How do you usually feel when meeting people of your own age for the first time?

Comments

1. Males are more likely to say that they are *at ease*. The Year 10 pupils express slightly more confidence than the Year 8 pupils. However, the differences are not very large.
2. Between 21% and 28% are *quite* or *very uneasy*.

1. This question is specific to age and does not refer to the 'opposite sex' as in previous years, and is closely related to our measurement of self-esteem (page 108), which includes questions about self-confidence.
2. Should we be surprised that up to 28% of young people, in a sample of 12-15 year olds, say they are *quite* or *very uneasy* when meeting people of their own age for the first time?



Every Child Matters

Marked difference between the positive responses from 10-11 yr. olds and 12-15 yr. olds

Please think about each of the following statements...

1. There is a marked difference between the positive responses from Primary school pupils (10-11 yr. olds) and Secondary pupils (12-13 and 14-15 yr. olds).
2. Having *work marked* is recognised by 86% of Primary and 57% of Secondary pupils.
3. For Primary pupils, the lowest percentages occur (57%) in the section "school valuing people with different backgrounds".
4. For Secondary pupils, the lowest percentages occur (20%-32%) in the section "school teaches how to manage feelings".

Comments

1. This is the second time accumulated data from the Every Child Matters (ECM) statements have been included in this publication although the statements have been used for some time by survey commissioners.
2. Although the differences between Primary and Secondary pupils are noticeable it is, perhaps, surprising how the percentages remain similar between the genders and age groups in both school settings.
3. Responses to two other related questions are shown below and a similar pattern to the ECM responses ie. High at Primary level. Many more Secondary pupils think their opinions make a difference in school.

% Responses to 'Agree'	Yr 6 M	Yr 6 F	Yr 8 M	Yr 8 F	Yr 10 M	Yr 10 F
The school cares whether I am happy or not	66	69	37	38	31	33
My work is marked so I can see how to improve it	85	87	58	58	56	57
I know my targets and I am helped to meet them	71	72	48	46	46	43
My achievements in and out of school are recognised	63	63	46	45	41	40
The school teaches me how to manage my feelings	60	61	32	29	25	20
The school helps me work as part of a team	76	78	48	51	41	44
In this school people with different backgrounds are valued	57	58	46	48	43	48
The school encourages everyone to take part in decisions	76	80	49	55	45	50
The school encourages me to contribute to community events	60	60	34	31	27	24
Total sample	10258	9845	7824	7833	7650	8123

Do you feel that you are listened to at school?	Yr 6 M	Yr 6 F	Yr 8 M	Yr 8 F	Yr 10 M	Yr 10 F
% responses to – 'Yes, listened to sometimes'	63	67	34	29	28	22
Total sample	8440	8260	3953	4437	3626	4053
Do you think pupils' opinions make a difference at school?			Yr 8 M	Yr 8 F	Yr 10 M	Yr 10 F
% responses to – 'Yes'			62	69	51	56
Total sample			2054	202	2151	2140

Useful school lessons

Most lessons in the list are reported to be less 'useful' as pupils get older

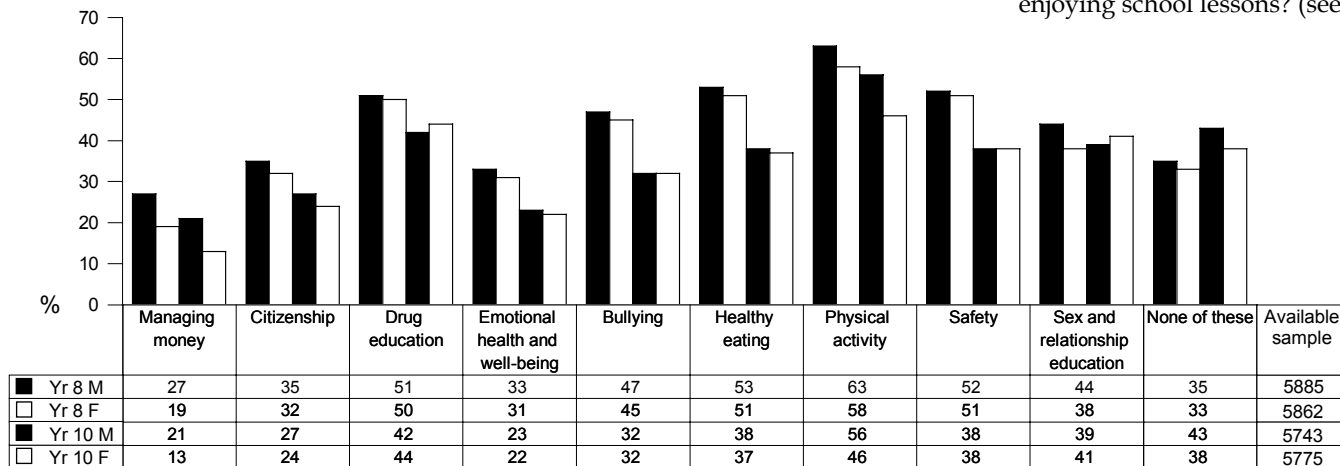
How useful have you found lessons about the following subjects?

Responses to 'quite useful / very useful'

1. Lessons about *Drug education, Safety, Sex and Relationship education* and *Physical Activity* are the most useful for both age groups and genders.
2. Least useful is reported to be *Managing Money*.
3. It is noticeable how 'usefulness' declines with age for nearly all subjects.
4. The *Sex and Relationship education* lessons appear to be the only ones where more 14-15 year old females (41%) report a higher percentage compared with 12-13 year old females(38%).

Comments

1. We first asked this question in 1999. The range of lesson topics has changed but the 'usefulness' scale has remained. Pupils are asked to 'circle one number for each answer' and each number refers to a scale of 'usefulness'. This scale ranges from *can't remember any, not at all useful, some use, quite useful, to very useful*.
2. The drugs subject is written as 'Drug education (including alcohol and tobacco)' in the current version of the questionnaire.
3. What factors influence the degrees of 'usefulness' reported for each subject? Is it surprising that the reported levels of 'usefulness' decline with age? How do these data relate to the general question about enjoying school lessons? (see next page)

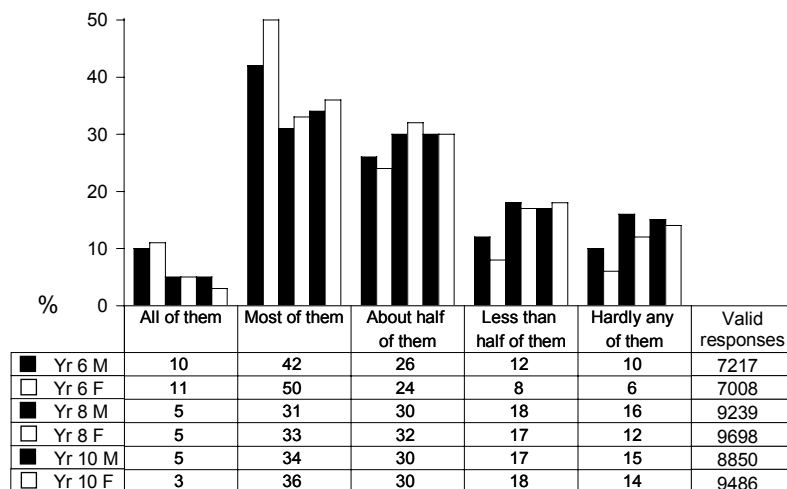


Enjoyable school lessons

Up to 36% of older pupils report enjoying 'most' school lessons

How many school lessons do you enjoy at school?

1. The majority of 12-15 year olds report enjoying 'most' or 'about half' of their school lessons.
2. Up to 36% of older pupils report enjoying 'most' school lessons.
3. The differences between Primary and Secondary levels are noticeable. At Secondary level the percentages remain similar across gender and age groups. Slightly more females compared with males report enjoying 'most' of their lessons.



Comments

1. Since 2002 older pupils have responded consistently to this question and it appears early on in the questionnaire.

Enjoying 'most / all' lessons	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Yr 8 M	33	30	29	29	30	31	34	34	36
Yr 8 F	38	34	35	32	35	37	37	36	38
Yr 10 M	33	34	28	35	37	39	38	37	39
Yr 10 F	34	34	35	36	36	41	38	38	39

2. The question is about school lessons in general and not subject specific.

GCSEs

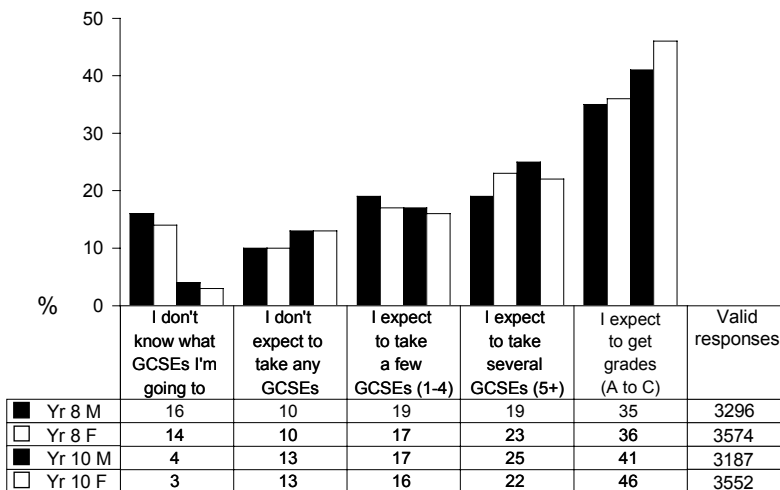
Most pupils expect to take several GCSEs and get grades A-C

Which of these statements about GCSEs best describes you?

1. The majority of 12-15 year olds *expect to take several GCSEs and get mostly good grades (A-C)*.
2. As pupils get older their expectations, about taking more GCSEs and getting good grades, increase.
3. Around 22% of pupils expect to take several GCSEs.

Comments

1. 46% of older females expect good GCSE grades compared with 36% of younger females but 14% (Year 8) compared with 3% (Year 10) don't know what subjects to take.
2. By the time they are 13 years old, around 35% of pupils expect good grades at GCSEs. This figure rises to around 43% by the time they reach 15 years of age.
3. Do the responses confirm our understanding of young people's expectations of involvement with GCSEs? Do we think more young people would expect to get good grades?
4. Across England in recent years, around 56% of pupils have achieved GCSEs at grades A-C.



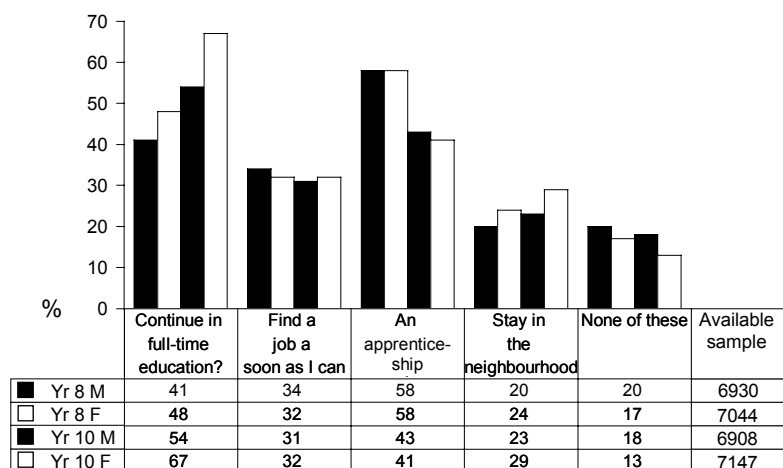
After Year 11

67% of 14-15 year old females want to continue with full-time education

After the end of Year 11 what would you like to do?

Responses to 'Yes'

1. From this sample, 67% of 14-15 year old females want to continue in full-time education after Year 11 and 29% want to stay in the neighbourhood where they live.
2. For the older males, 54% want to continue in full-time education and 31% want to get a job.
3. The aspirations of the younger pupils lie in the direction of skills training and not full-time education. As they get older, we see a reversal of these views.
4. Around 32% responded to the option *Finding a job as soon as you can*.



Comments

1. Pupils are asked to circle a three point scale ranging from 0=No, 1=Don't know and 2=Yes in response to four options.
2. It is noticeable that the gender and age differences show that, as the females get older, more are interested in continuing full-time education and staying in their neighbourhood. As they get older, the females are less interested in *finding a job as soon as you can* and getting training for a skilled job.
3. Both males and females show more of an interest in staying in the neighbourhood as they get older.
4. Over the past eight years the figures, from 14-15 year old females who want to continue in full-time education after Year 11, have risen from 54% to 67%.

Worries

57% of 14-15 year olds females worry about *the way you look*

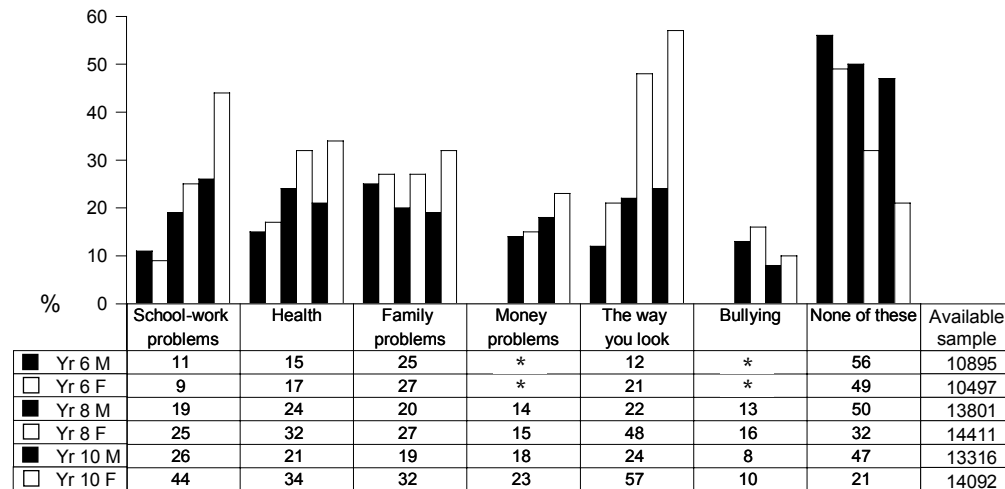
How much do you worry about these problems?

Responses to 'quite a lot / a lot'

1. *Family problems* cause concern for up to 32% of pupils.
2. *The way you look* continues to be a worry for many females
3. Among the highest worries for 14-15 year old males are problems with *school-work*, and *The way you look*.
4. The *none of these* category shows that more females than males worry about things in the list.

Comments

1. These problems do not necessarily concern the respondents themselves, they could indicate worry about family or friends or even 'society'.
2. As girls grow older, higher percentages worry about all the categories listed here apart from *bullying*.



* Options not available

School-work problems

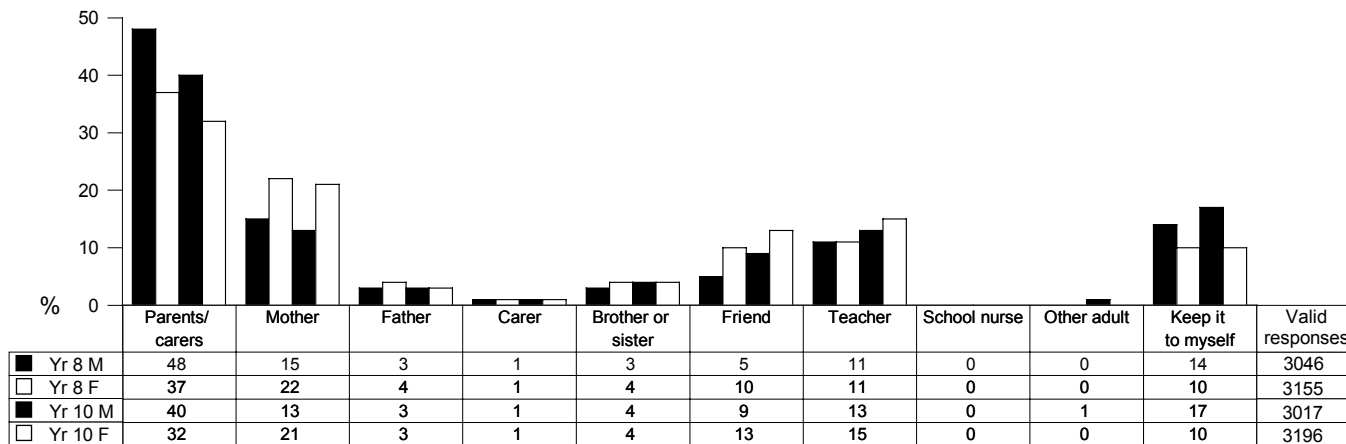
Up to 15% of pupils look to *Teachers* for support

If you wanted to share school-work problems, to whom would you probably turn?

Comments

1. *Mother and father* are the most common source of support which declines as pupils get older.
2. Up to 15% would turn to *Teacher*.
3. Up to 17% would keep such a problem to themselves.
4. The various sources of support rise (*Teacher, Friend*) or fall (*Mother and Father*) with age, and there are some marked gender differences.

1. Since 1999, between 35%-44%, of 14-15 year old females, have reported worrying 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' about school-work problems. The figure for 14-15 year old males rises in 2010 to 26%.
2. 17% of 14-15 year old males report that they would not share a school-work problem but *keep it to myself*.



Sources of support (1)

My family and friends are important for 12-15 year olds

Where would you go first for help or information about the following?

1. *My family* provide the main support and source of information for many of the topics.
2. 25% would look to support from school for school problems.
3. *Friends* remain an important resource when help is needed with *problems with other friends, problems at home and relationships*.

Comments

1. Unsurprisingly, *My family* and *Friends* are the first choices for help and information. However, a successful outcome may depend on the resources known to pupils' family members and friends.

%	My family	Friends	Someone at school	Connexions Personal Adviser	Doctor, nurse, other health worker	Local Advice Centre	Books, Magazines	Internet e.g. web pages	Telephone helpline
School problems	52	12	25	8	0	0	0	1	1
Health	64	6	3	1	16	7	0	1	1
Career	59	15	10	4	4	1	2	0	6
Problems with friends	58	22	17	2	1	0	0	0	0
Parents/carers not getting on with each other/divorce	39	34	16	4	2	2	1	1	2
Problems between children and parents/carers in your family	41	28	17	4	2	2	1	1	3
Feeling sad or upset a lot of the time	57	21	17	1	1	1	0	1	1
Relationships with boy/girlfriends	35	44	13	1	2	2	1	1	1

Sources of support (2)

Healthy eating issues are first discussed at home by 71% of 12-15 year olds

Where would you go first for help or information about the following?

1. *My family* are the usual first source of support for most of the topics.
2. Issues around *Healthy eating* are first discussed by 71% at home.
3. *Friends* are a particularly important source of support for the *way you look* (33%). *Someone at school* is one of the first sources of support for bullying problems for 18% of 12-15 year olds.

Comments

1. *Healthy eating* issues are first discussed by 71% at home and only 3% say that school would be the first source of support. Although the home would traditionally be the first place for this issue, it is perhaps surprising that, given the emphasis on food and healthy eating in school, more pupils do not see it as a resource.
2. From an information and education point of view, should we expect *school* to receive more than a 6% response from pupils for help about drugs?

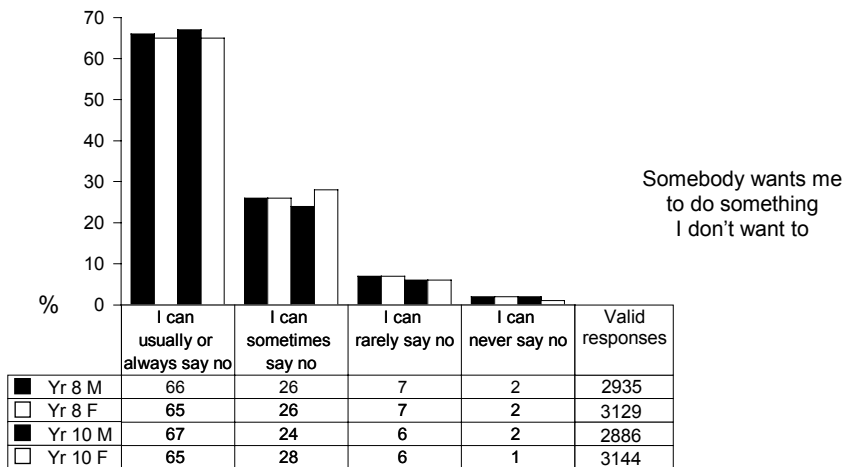
%	My family	Friends	Someone at school	Connexions Personal Adviser	Doctor, nurse, other health worker	Local Advice Centre	Books, Magazines	Internet e.g. web pages	Telephone helpline
Drugs	49	14	6	13	7	2	3	1	4
Healthy eating	71	9	3	4	2	5	1	1	6
Helping and volunteering	58	5	12	11	4	1	2	1	6
Money problems	87	6	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
The way you look	46	33	12	1	2	1	2	2	1
Puberty and growing up	65	11	14	1	1	5	0	1	3
Being bullied	60	16	18	4	1	1	0	0	1
Thinking you are gay, lesbian or bisexual	68	10	11	1	3	2	1	0	3

Peer Pressure/Self-efficacy

More pupils appear able to say no than being able to say what they want

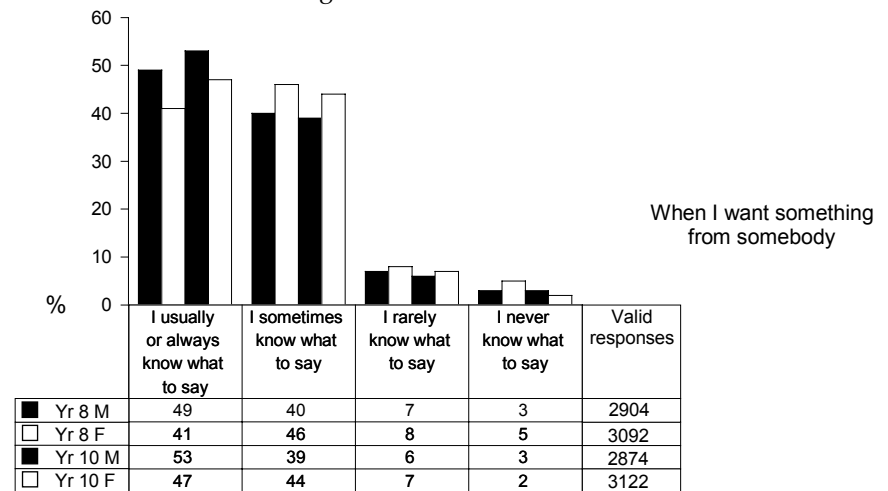
When somebody wants me to do something I don't want to... When I want something from somebody...

1. Up to 67% are usually able or always able to say no when somebody wants me to do something I don't want to.
2. Around 26% are sometimes able to say no.
3. Up to 53% usually know what to say when they want something
4. Up to 46% sometimes know what to say.



Comments

1. These were new additions to the 'Young people' series in 2007. Pupils are asked to circle the number that most closely describes them.
2. More pupils appear to be able to say no to doing something they do not want to than being able to say what they want when they want something.
3. Schools' PSHE programmes often lay some emphasis on young people being able to say 'no'. We have published other work (Trends - Young People and Illegal Drugs) which shows that many young people can and do decline offers of e.g cannabis.



Index of self-esteem

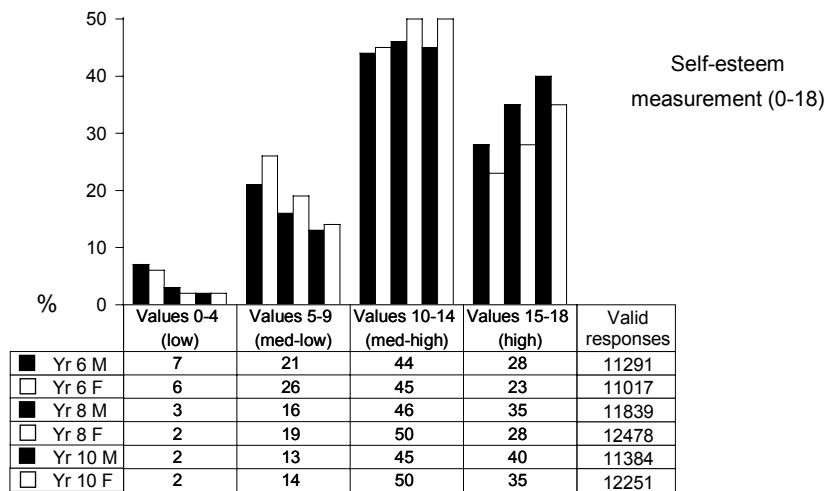
The level of self-esteem tends to increase with age

Self-esteem measurement (0–18)

Comments

1. The *high* group included more males than females.
2. The great majority scored more than 10/14, and more than a third of the whole sample were in the *high* group.
3. The level of self-esteem tends to increase with age.

1. This measurement is derived from the responses to a set of nine statements, taken from a standard self-esteem enquiry method developed by Denis Lawrence (Lawrence 1981).
2. Many health educators believe high self-esteem may motivate positive behaviour, as well as being a general contributor to emotional well-being.
4. The gender differences are a challenge: we do not see them in every school, which means that they are more marked in some other schools.



Control over health (1)

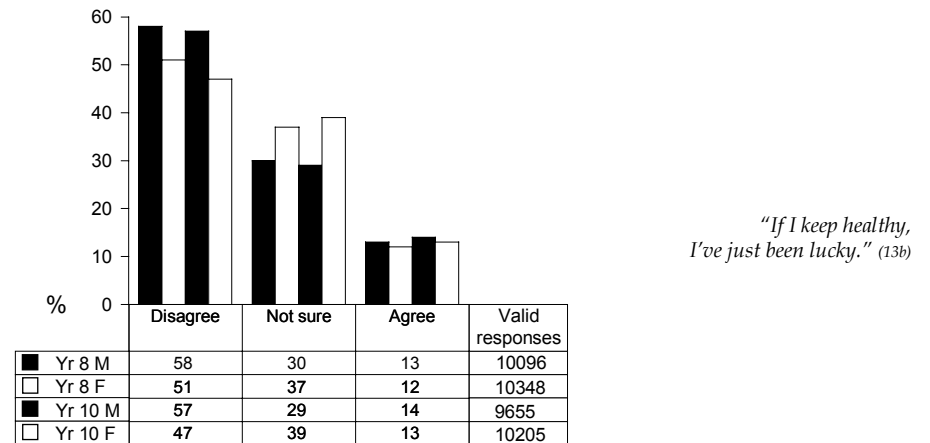
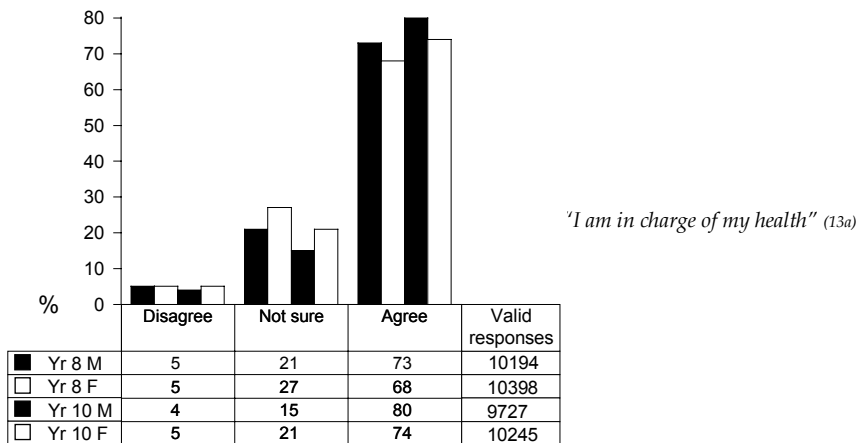
The majority feel they are in control of their health

“I am in charge of my health.”
“If I keep healthy, I’ve just been lucky.”

1. The four groups in the sample were fairly close in their responses, although more males than females agreed with (“I am in charge of my health”) and disagreed with (“If I keep healthy, I’ve just been lucky”).

Comments

1. These two sets of statements are used, together with the two on the following pages to generate a ‘health locus of control’ score.
2. We have discovered some interesting correlations with these responses. For example, a feeling of low health control links with fear of bullying and more smoking (p. 107).



Control over health (2)

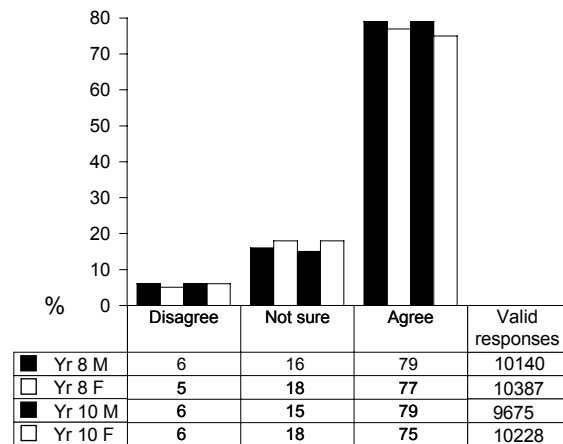
Most feel they can do something about their health

“If I take care of myself I’ll stay healthy.”
“Even if I look after myself, I can still easily fall ill.”

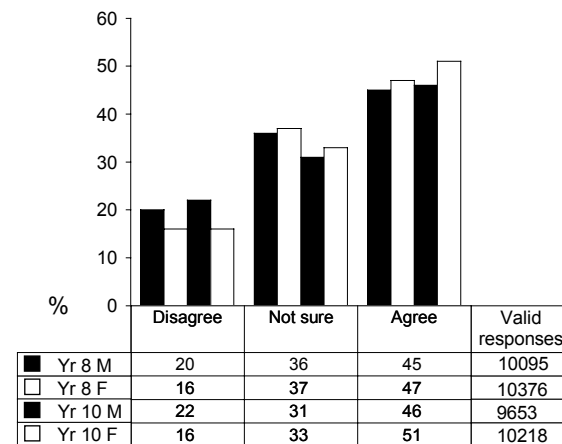
Comments

- The four groups in the sample were fairly close in their responses, although slightly more males than females agreed with (“If I take care of myself I’ll stay healthy”) and disagreed with (“Even if I look after myself, I can still easily fall ill”).

- We find that about 78% think they will stay healthy if they take care, and around 47% think that they can still fall ill even if they do take care. The apparent contradictions between the items seem to be more in the mind of the logician than the young person.



“If I take care of myself I’ll stay healthy.” (13c)



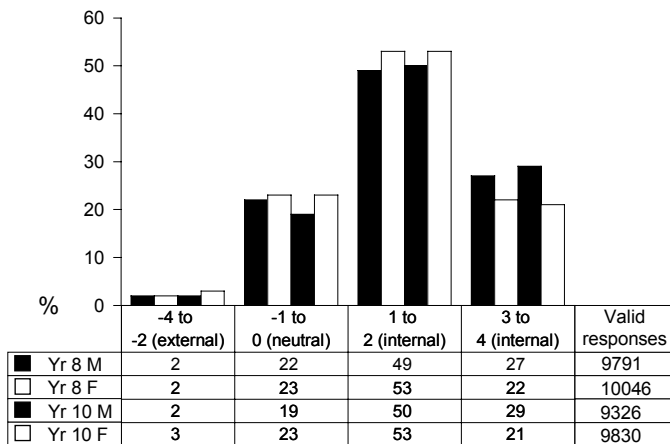
“Even if I look after myself, I can still easily fall ill.” (13d)

Control over health (3)

The majority recorded positive control

Health locus of control score (-4 to +4)

1. Half of all the groups recorded positive control at the +1 to +2 level.
2. Slightly more males than females felt that they were in positive control of their health.



Comments

1. 'Health locus of control' is an attempt to establish whether young people feel in control of their health (positive score) or unable to influence it (negative score).
2. The HLOC score reflects the person's overall perception of whether they are personally in control of their health ('internal locus of control') or not and are thereby at the mercy of outside influences ('external locus').
3. We learn from these results that at least a quarter of all the groups do not think that they can influence their health much by their own efforts.
4. We know from the work of ourselves and others that the answers to these questions can be strongly correlated with behaviours. For example:



We have found that 54% of Year 10 females with scores of 3 or 4 on this scale have never smoked at all, whereas of the females whose replies yield neutral or negative scores 36% have never smoked.

In *Bully Off* (Balding, 1996), we described a strong link between scores of these questions and fear of going to school because of bullying.

Trustworthy adults

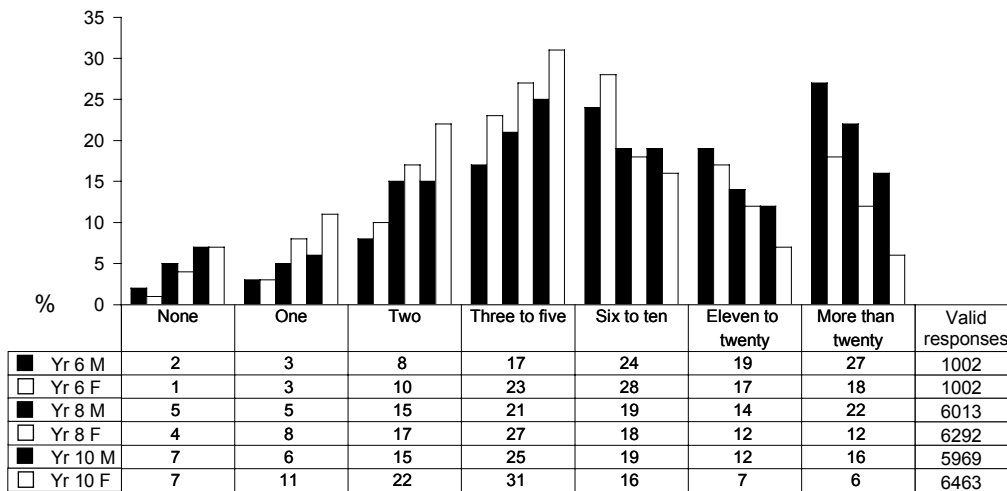
7% of older pupils trust no one

How many adults can you really trust?

1. Most pupils trust 3-5 adults.
2. We notice that trustworthiness levels drop slightly in Year 10, and that more males than females are inclined to trust a lot of adults.

Comments

1. The group that demand particular attention are those responding 'none' - 4% in Year 8 and 7% in Year 10. The percentages rise slightly as pupils get older.
2. There are age and gender difference - more females than males report higher percentages from the 'none' to 'three to five' categories. Older females report higher percentages, for these categories, compared to younger females. Does this suggest that female pupils, and in particular younger female pupils, trust fewer adults than male pupils?



Satisfaction with life

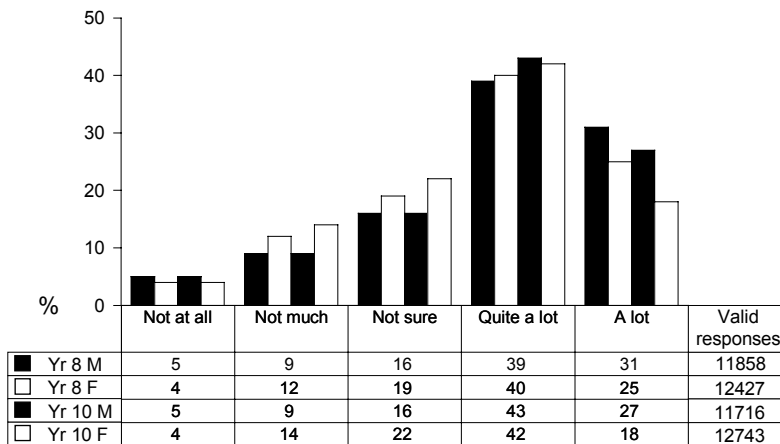
Males express greater satisfaction than females

In general, how satisfied do you feel with your life at the moment?

1. Slightly more males record *a lot*; and slightly more females record *not much*.
2. Overall, more than 60% report *quite a lot* or *a lot*, and up to 18% are dissatisfied to some extent (reporting *not much* or *not at all*).
3. The females' level of dissatisfaction increases a little with age.

Comments

1. The difference in the percentage of satisfied males and females is in line with other evidence that females worry about more things than males.
2. Since 1995, there has been (in general) an upward trend for all groups choosing the satisfied *a lot* option. Males more than females have consistently reported higher levels of satisfaction with life. Younger males have always been the most satisfied group. Older females have consistently been the group most likely to report *not much* satisfaction with life *at the moment*. (SHEU, 2004, 'Trends-Young People and Emotional Health and Well-Being 1983-2003').



Sexually transmitted diseases

Up to 12% think HIV/AIDS can be treated and cured

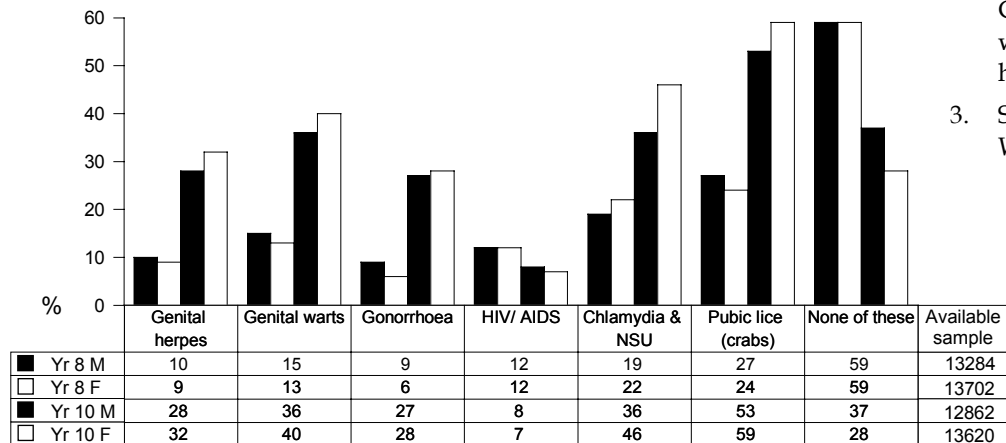
What you know about sexually transmitted diseases and infections?

Responses to 'Can be treated and cured'.

1. Most commonly identified treatable infections are warts and pubic lice.
2. Up to 12% of Year 8 pupils think that HIV/AIDS can be treated and cured.
3. Older females, compared with males, responded most frequently across categories (apart from 'HIV/AIDS').

Comments

1. This was a new question in 2002 that provides four possible options: *Never heard of it*, *Know nothing about it*, *Can be treated but not cured* and *Can be treated and cured*. Responses *Can be treated and cured* are shown in the chart opposite. This need not mean that the remainder of young people think sexually transmitted diseases/infections (STDs and STIs) cannot be treated and cured, they may have opted for one of the other options.
2. Of those on the list that can be treated and cured e.g Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and pubic lice, we see the highest percentages for pubic lice which may be due to the pupils' knowledge of treatment and cure for head lice.
3. Should the apparent lack of knowledge about Gonorrhoea and Genital Warts, and in particular the older females, cause us concern?



Methods of contraception

Condoms - selected by up to 80%

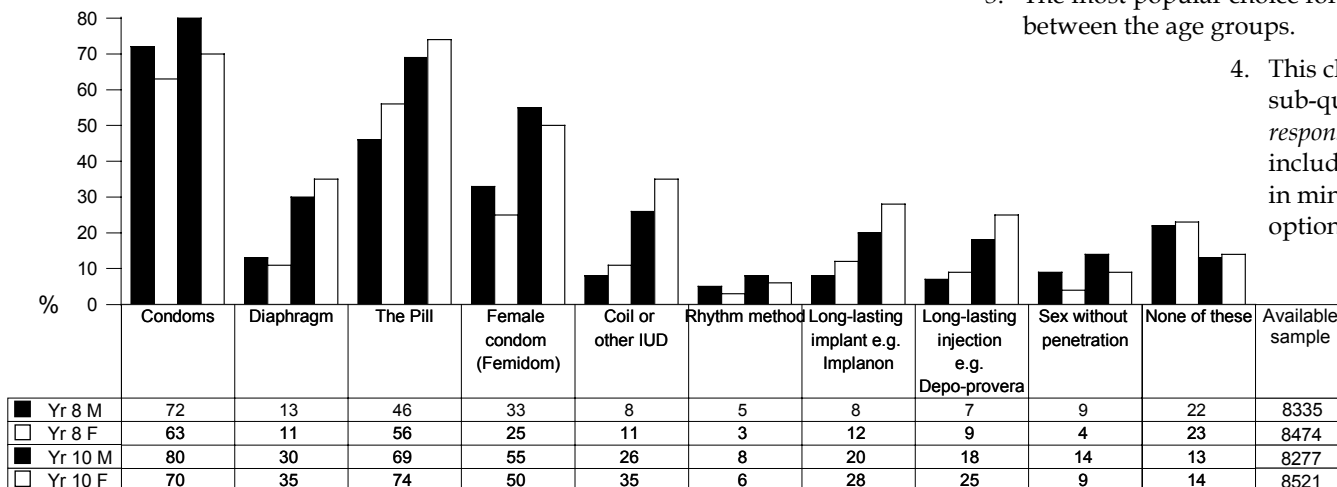
What do you know about methods of contraception?

Responses to 'Reliable to stop pregnancy'

1. The most popular method chosen by the males, that is *reliable to stop pregnancy*, was *Condoms*. For older females, the most popular methods chosen were *The Pill*, *Condoms* and *Female Condoms*.
2. Up to 80% selected *Condoms*.

Comments

1. Pupils have a choice of four answers to describe best what they know about the list of contraceptive methods. The answers are *Never heard of it*, *Know nothing about it*, *Not reliable to stop pregnancy*, and *Reliable to stop pregnancy*. Responses shown in the chart are from the last answer.
2. The data show clear gender and age differences. For many of the contraceptive methods there is a marked shift in response rates particularly between the females from 12-13 years old to 14-15 years old. The most noticeable – *Female Condom* methods show a 25% difference. The most popular choice for the females, *Condoms*, shows a 7% difference between the age groups.
3. The most popular choice for the males, *Condoms*, shows an 8% difference between the age groups.
4. This chart presents combined responses to several sub-questions. There is no single value for *valid responses*, the percentages of *missing data* are included in the *None of these* column. With this in mind, up to 22% did not respond to the answer option *Reliable to stop pregnancy*.



Contraception and HIV/AIDS

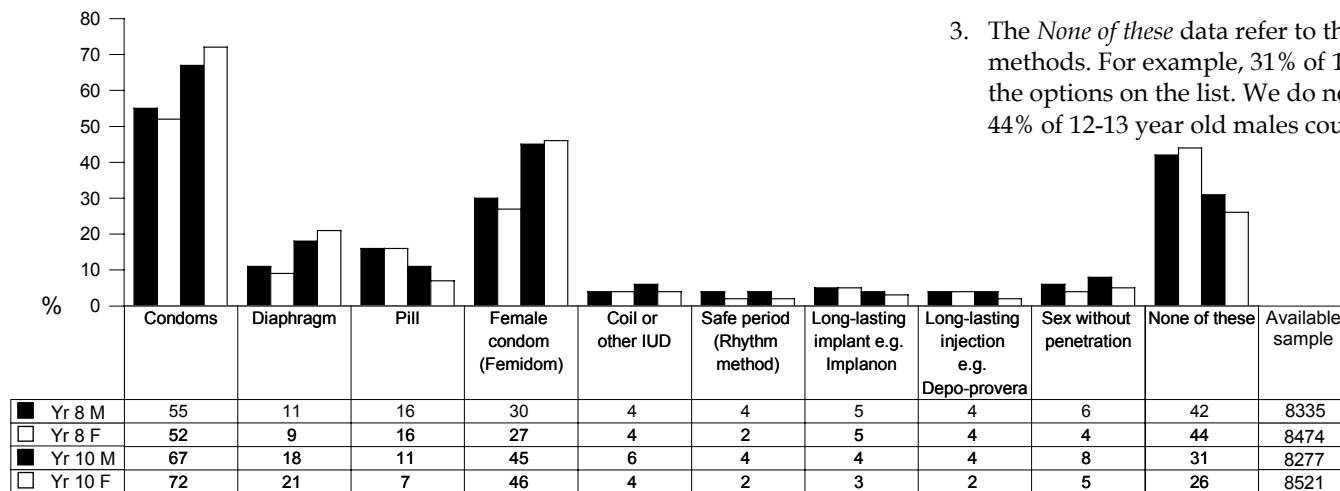
21% of 14-15 year old females selected *Diaphragm*

Which contraceptive methods are reliable to stop infections like HIV/AIDS?

Comments

1. *Male condoms* was selected by up to 72% of all pupils and up to 46% selected *Female condoms*.
2. There are differences in percentages between some choices made by Year 8 and Year 10 pupils. For example, as they get older 20% more females choose *Condoms* and 19% more choose *Female condoms*.
3. Around 20% of 14-15 year olds chose *Diaphragm*.

1. In the questionnaire, this question follows the question on the previous page. Pupils are asked to circle each letter, corresponding with a list of contraceptive methods, that they think is reliable to stop infection like HIV/AIDS.
2. If we accept that the barrier contraceptive methods (male and female condoms) and 'sex without penetration' offer protection against infections (see www.fpa.org.uk and www.avert.org.uk) then should the apparent level of knowledge of the 12-15 year olds in this sample cause us concern?
3. The *None of these* data refer to those pupils who did not choose any of the options on the list. For example, 31% of 14-15 year old males did not choose any of the options on the list. We do not know the reasons for this choice but 44% of 12-13 year old males could not decide which contraceptive methods are reliable to stop infections.
4. Often in a question we can distinguish between missing data and a definite *No* response. Because of the design of this particular question no such distinctions can be made.



Birth control service

49% of 14-15 year olds are *not sure* about local services

Is there a special birth control service for young people available locally?

1. The younger males and older females were more likely to know if there was one, and knowledge was much greater in Year 10.
2. Up to 63% are *not sure* about a local service and up to 49% are aged 14-15 years old.

Comments

1. With the continuing concern over teenage pregnancies, as well as the spread of STI's, a lot of money and effort is being directed towards this area of health education.
2. Local knowledge will be required to assess the responses to this question. Districts vary in the amount of publicity given to contraceptive services for young people, as well as in the nature and scale of provision.
3. Is it a satisfactory state of affairs when up to 63% of 12-13 year olds and 49% of 14-15 year olds are *not sure* about local services?

