

Report shows improvement in child health in England

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(Medical Xpress)—Research published today gives an improved picture of child health in England. Young people in England were eating more fruit and smoking less and fewer were overweight.

The report, concerning young people aged 13–15, presents data from the 2006 [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\)](#) study, focusing on data collected from young people in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

University of Hertfordshire researchers Professor Fiona Brooks, Ellen Klemra, Antony Morgan and Josefine Magnusson authored the report. This showed that young people in England who reported daily consumption of fruit were highest at 43.6% compared to Scotland (38.7%), Ireland (36.5%) and Wales (34.6%).

Other encouraging findings was that daily smoking levels in England were the least at 5.1%, followed by Ireland (6.5%), Wales (6.7%) and Scotland (7.1%). Less encouragingly, the report shows there is still a gap between the health of those from affluent backgrounds compared to the less well off. Those from affluent backgrounds were more likely to engage in physical activity and less likely to spend time with friends after school more than four nights a week. Going out with friends at night is a major risk factor for many [health risks](#), including [drug use](#).

Fiona Brooks, Professor of Health Services Research at the University of Hertfordshire said: HBSC offers a unique international analysis of

young people's own experiences and perceptions of their lives and the factors that influence their well being. This report therefore represents a key resource for those working with young people, whether as an educator, health professional or policy maker as it provides s a comprehensive update of the health and well-being of young people in England."

The report is part of a [World Health Organisation](#) collaborative cross-national study and expands on findings from the International Report 'Inequalities in Young People's Health (Currie et al, 2008). The report will be published on the *HBSC* website: www.hbscengland.com

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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