

## Metadata – Adolescent mental health

<b>Description</b>	<p>Proportion of adolescents aged between 11 and 18 years with an excellent perception of their health.</p> <p>Proportion of adolescents aged between 11 and 18 years who are experiencing symptoms once a week or more.</p> <p>Proportion of adolescents aged between 11 and 18 years who are moderately to highly satisfied with their life.</p>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>For adolescents, the latest UNICEF estimates for 2022 (1) indicate that over 16.3% of young people aged 10 to 19 in Belgium are diagnosed with a mental disorder. These estimates are probably the tip of the iceberg, as many children go undiagnosed, and the COVID-19 pandemic has raised immense concerns about the well-being of young people. The 2018 HBSC surveys reveal that the mental health of adolescents in Belgium deteriorates with age. Girls and teenagers from less affluent families are all the more exposed to mental health problems. Although networks offering mental health support to young people are developing in Belgium, to date there are relatively few studies that provide national estimates on children's mental health, especially among the youngest age groups.</p>
<b>Primary Data source</b>	<p>Health behavior in school-aged children (HBSC) surveys 2014, 2018.</p> <p>Two distinct HBSC surveys are conducted in Belgium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- HBSC in the French community (conducted by the Université libre de Bruxelles - SIPES)</li><li>- HBSC in the Flemish community (conducted by the University of Ghent)</li></ul>
<b>Indicator source</b>	<p>HBSC French community 2014, 2018</p> <p>HBSC Flemish community 2014, 2018</p> <p>HBSC international report 2017/2018</p>
<b>Periodicity</b>	<p>Every 4 years</p>
<b>Calculation, technical definitions, and limitations</b>	<p>The perceived state of health of teenagers attending school was assessed using the question: "Would you say that your health is...". Four response categories were proposed: "excellent", "good", "rather good" and "not very good". Students who rated their health as "rather good" or "not very good" were considered to have a rather negative perception of their health.</p> <p>Psychosomatic symptoms are considered as "symptoms caused by stress and worry, rather than by a physical problem such as an infection". This indicator includes a list of eight symptoms, for which adolescents were asked to report the weekly frequency with which they have experienced them over the past six months. Five frequency categories, ranging from "about every day" to "rarely or never," were provided. This indicator was also used to calculate the MHC (multiple health complaints), which represents adolescents reporting at least two of the eight listed symptoms with a frequency of at least weekly.</p> <p>Adolescents' level of satisfaction with their lives is measured using the Cantril scale. It is graduated from 0 to 10, with the value 10 representing "the best possible life" and the value 0, "the worst possible life". Following the international protocol of the HBSC study, adolescents with a level between 6 and 10 were considered to have moderate to high satisfaction with their lives.</p> <p>For national figures, an unweighted average of the results in the French and Flemish Community was computed.</p> <p>These questions are self-reported by the participants which can lead to bias in the responses.</p>
<b>International comparability</b>	<p>Availability: Yes, the HBSC is realized across 50 countries and regions.</p>

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Comparability: The HBSC international standard questionnaire enables the collection of common data across participating countries. These data allow cross-national comparisons.

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1. Rapport des enfants et des jeunes concernés par la santé mentale en Belgique, UNICEF, 2022.  
<https://www.unicef.be/sites/default/files/2022-06/Rapport%20What%20do%20you%20think%202022%20FR%20LR.pdf/>