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## Angela Balding and David Regis

### ‘Young People into 2015’ : The health related behaviour questionnaire results for over 78,000 young people

The Schools Health Education Unit [SHEU] is an independent research, survey and publishing company and the 'Young People into 2015' report is the 29th in the series.

SHEU provide reliable baseline data for local needs assessment to inform plans in health, education and care.

'Young People into 2015', is a "unique contemporary archive" of young people. Each year, since 1977, SHEU carry out healthy lifestyle surveys with young people and, in 2014, this involved over 110,000 youngsters. This report contains over 100 health-related behaviour questions and answers from over 78,000 pupils between the ages of 10 and 15. They tell us about what they do at home, at school, and with their friends. The data have been collected from primary and secondary schools across England.

#### What's new and different in 'Young People into 2015'?

Some of the differences are not new – they are continuations of trends that we have seen going on for some time.

Dr David Regis, Research Manager of the

Schools Health Education Unit, says,

“This report provides a snapshot of our young people as they were approaching 2015 and also offers some trends where we are able to look back over the last 30 years and more of our research. We have seen a further decline in young people's reported involvement with tobacco, alcohol and cannabis. We saw a peak for all these figures in the mid-1990s, and since then there has been a general decline.”

"Recent news reports have carried stories about mental health awareness (YoungMinds, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. In 2014, SHEU reported on some trends indicating that young people, perhaps particularly older girls, were less confident than were their peers a decade ago. We are still not sure why that is, but we have looked a little closer into our sample for this report. We found, for example, some links between use of social media ('talking and messaging online') and both risky behaviour and poorer emotional well-being.

The table 1 below is from p.44 of the report. It shows differences in the responses of Year 10 females, depending on whether they were light or heavy users of social media.

Table 1. Differences in the responses of Year 10 females, depending on whether they were light or heavy users of social media

Percentages among Year 10 females in one authority	Light social media use (<1h) on the evening before the survey	Heavy social media use on the evening before the survey (3h+)
Low self-esteem	33	50
Worry about their own mental health	26	40
Worry about the mental health of someone in their family	22	37
Know a trusted adult to talk with about worries	67	58
Follow e-safety advice 'always'	77	60
Ate '5-a-day' yesterday	25	9
Ever smoked	22	50
Ever drink alcohol	59	85
Ever offered cannabis	14	38
Believe most in their age group have had sex before 15	16	31

<sup>1</sup> YoungMinds, 2015. "Headteachers say children's mental health is most worrying concern". Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/news/blog/2929-headteachers-say-children-s-mental-health-is-most-worrying-concern>

"There is a very plain association between heavy social media use and poor emotional wellbeing. But the statistics don't tell us anything about cause and effect – for example, it could be that youngsters who are feeling down then spend more time online, maybe to feel better."

"It's a real dilemma – young people want to be fully involved with everything their peer group is doing online, of course, and I would have really loved to see all the great things on the Internet when I was young. But we do worry if so much is good for them."

"Perhaps the standout result for me is the proportion of all of these young women who don't say they have an adult that they trust whom they can talk to if they are worried about something."

Angela Balding, Survey Manager at the Schools Health Education Unit, says,

"We mentioned last year that the rising trend of self-esteem from 1997-2007 stopped in 2008, and the figures we are seeing for high self-esteem in 2014 have fallen again since last year especially for girls (p.94). The 2008 date coincides with the economic recession, so that's a plausible explanation of what we see – but we are also aware of new pressures about being online and spending so much time on social media."

"Social media can be a source of social anxiety and of course cyberbullying and other dangers. For example, the Year 10 Girls who spent 3+ hours messaging online were more likely to say someone they didn't know in person had asked to meet with them, and they report more exposure to other undesirable online behaviours."

Dr Regis adds,

"The range of topics we have been asked to look at with schools continues to expand, but that hasn't made the production of our annual report any easier! We have seen some items dropped from the report, as too few clients chose those questions for their surveys, while a few items have been added to the reports. We have published this year for the second time results about e-safety; second-hand smoke; perceptions of drugs; barriers to exercise; responses to problems and sexuality and we have had another look at religion and belief (p.100)."

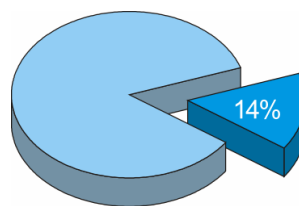
"As regards the aggregate data sets from which we publish this series of reports, they have become more complex and busy. Are the figures

still representative? We reported last year that the characteristics of the schools in the SHEU data sets are reasonably well-matched to the national population of schools, and that is still true in 2015."

## 'Young People into 2015' Summary

### Chapter 1 - Food choices & weight control

In the sample, 64% of 14-15 year old females, 51% of 12-13 year old females and 31% of 10-11 year old females 'would like to lose weight'. This compares with 29% of 14-15 year old males, 32% of 12-13 year old males and 25% of 10-11 year old males who 'would like to lose weight'.



*14% of Year 10 females have 'nothing at all to eat or drink for breakfast this morning' and 18% had nothing for lunch on the previous day.*

Less fresh fruit and vegetables are eaten as pupils get older and up to 55% report eating 1-3 portions of fruit and vegetables. 16% of 14-15 yr. olds and 27% of 10-11 yr. olds report eating 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables 'yesterday'.

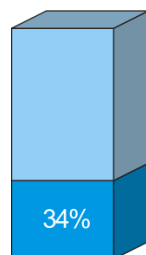
Up to 72% of 12-15 year olds reported drinking less than 1 litre of water.

### Chapter 2 - Doctor & Dentist

Up to 30% of the 12-15 year old females, reported feeling 'quite uneasy' or 'very uneasy' on their last visit to the doctor.

### Chapter 3 - Health & Safety

Most 12-15 year olds report sleeping 8 or more hours 'last night'. There is a strong relationship between sleep patterns and a number of variables. For example, for 14-15 year old females, the more sleep they get they are less likely to: want to lose weight.

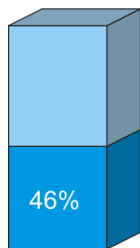


*34% of 10-11 yr. old females feel afraid (at least 'sometimes') of going to school because of bullying.*

As pupils get older fewer say schools take bullying seriously. Up to 88% say they have been advised how to stay safe while chatting online.

## Chapter 4 - Family & Home

As they get older, fewer pupils report living with both parents [59% 14-15 year old females in this sample report living with Mum and Dad together].



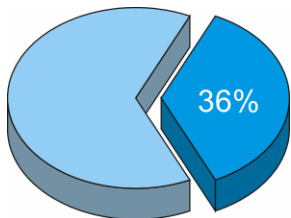
*Up to 46% of the 12-15 year olds walk, at least some of the way, to school.*

More females than males did homework on the evening before the survey, and they tended to spend longer at it.

Up to 80% of males played computer games after school 'yesterday'.

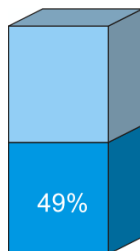
## Chapter 5 - Legal & Illegal Drugs

Since the mid-1990s there has been a general decline in the percentage of 14-15 year olds who smoke regularly. Around 97% of 10-11 year olds say they have never smoked. This figure drops to 71% (males) and 66% (females) by the time they are 14-15 years old.



*Around 36% of 12-15 year olds live in a 'smoky' home.*

18% of 14-15 year old girls reported smoking and 26% reported drinking alcohol 'in the last 7 days'.

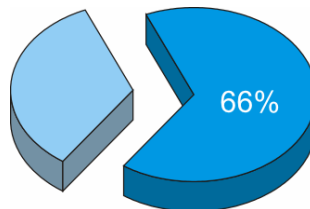


*Around 49% of the 14-15 year olds are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know a drug user.*

12% of 14-15 year olds report taking cannabis and, as they get older, fewer pupils think that cannabis is 'always unsafe'.

## Chapter 6 - Exercise & Sport

Over 91% of the sample of 10-15 year olds report exercising at least on one day 'last week'. Around 67% of all males and 64% of 10-11 year old females report exercising vigorously on 3 or more days 'last week'.

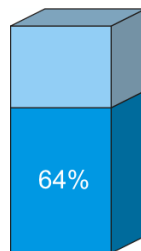


*66% of 10-11 year old females think they are 'fit' or 'very fit'. This falls to 25% by the time they reach 14-15 years of age.*

Since 1991, there is a downward trend for some pupils reporting they are 'fit/very fit'.

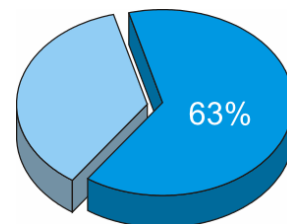
## Chapter 7 - Social & Personal

'School-work problems' are a worry for 14-15 year old females and 'the way you look' remains the main worry for 12-15 year old females.



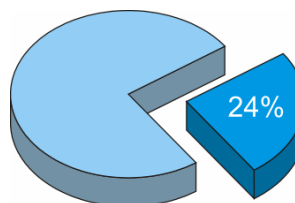
*64% of 14-15 year old females, compared with 49% of 14-15 year old males, want to continue with full-time education after Year 11.*

Statements from the 'Every Child Matters' section show a marked difference between the positive responses from primary and secondary pupils e.g. responses to, 'The school helps me work as part of a team' drop from around 63% (10-11 year-olds) to around 36% (14-15 year-olds).



Younger (12-13 year-old) males continue to be the most satisfied group when 12-15 year olds are asked about how they feel about their life 'at the moment'.

## Chapter 8 - Some responses from primary-age children that are not contained in Chapters 1-7



*Up to 24% of 10-11 year olds report being picked on for 'the way they look'.*

20% of 10-11 year olds report being approached by an adult who scared them or made them upset.