



In 2010, 2,937 S1, S2 and S3 pupils from 7 secondary schools in the central belt of Scotland filled in questionnaires for the **'Adolescent Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe'** study ('ALICE' for short). A year later, over 90% of these pupils completed questionnaires for the second part of the study. The pupils who took part came from a wide range of backgrounds.

'ALICE' is part of an international project which compares young people across six European countries (Scotland, Iceland, Italy, Poland, The Netherlands and Germany). It is finding out whether young people's lifestyles are similar or different in these countries. The questionnaires asked about smoking and drinking, together with a few details about participants' health, well-being and other aspects of their lives at home and at school, including TV and film watching.

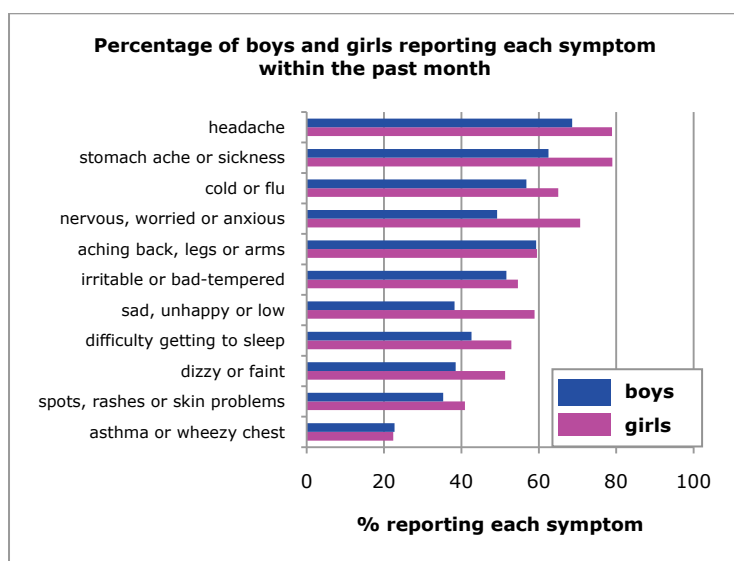
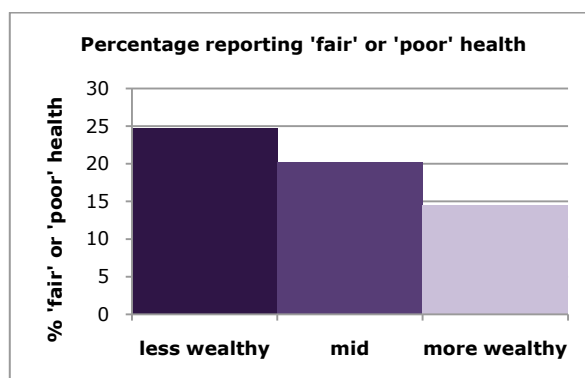
This report describes some of our Scottish findings. Sometimes we highlight differences between boys and girls, older and younger pupils, or between those from more or less wealthy homes. Pupils were classified as wealthier if their family owned more cars and computers, and they had their own bedroom and took more family holidays.

## HEALTH

Our questionnaires asked pupils to rate their health over the past 12 months. In both 2010 and 2011 around four-in-five said it was 'excellent' or 'good', however almost 20% said it was 'fair' or 'poor'.

Girls were more likely than boys to say their health was 'fair' or 'poor', and so were older pupils in comparison with younger pupils.

As the graph to the right shows, those from less wealthy homes were also more likely to say their health was 'fair' or 'poor' than those from more wealthy homes.

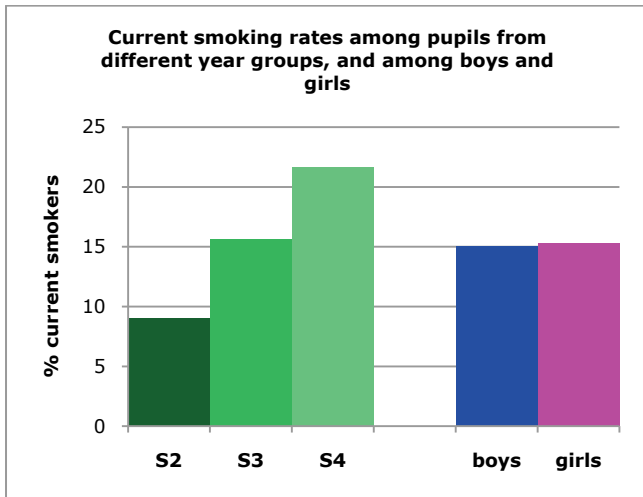


The questionnaires also included a list of symptoms, and pupils were asked to say whether or not they had had each one in the last month.

Many symptoms were very common among these young people, including headaches, stomach problems and colds or flu, as well as those like feeling nervous, irritable or sad.

Most symptoms were more likely to be reported by girls than boys, except aches, irritability and asthma.

## SMOKING



The questionnaires in both 2010 and 2011 asked about smoking, including the question 'how often do you smoke at present?' We count any pupil who said they smoked, even infrequently, as a current smoker.

Smoking rates increased steeply with year group, from around 9% in S2 to over 20% in S4, but there was no difference between boys and girls.

Around four-in-ten pupils had a parent who smoked. Those with parents who smoked were more likely to smoke themselves, and more likely to think that most adults and most young people were smokers.

Pupils who smoked themselves were also more likely to think that most adults and most young people were smokers.

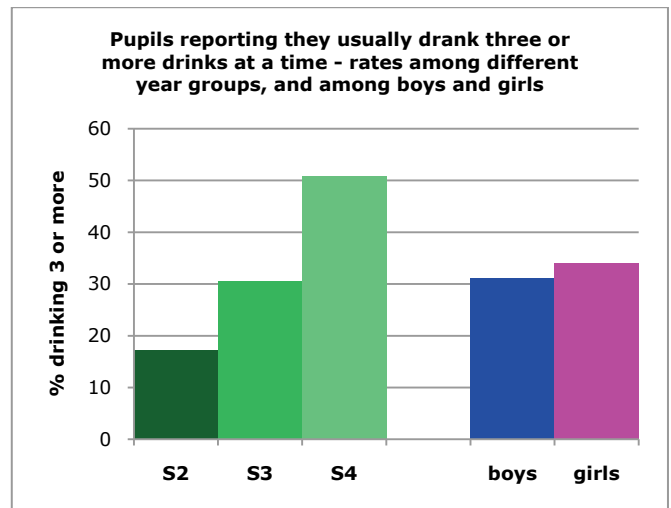
## DRINKING

The questionnaires also asked about drinking. In 2011 around nine-in-ten pupils had ever drunk alcohol and around half had drunk without their parents or guardians knowing about it.

Pupils were also asked how many drinks they usually drank at a time (a drink would be something like a small can of beer or cider, a glass of wine, a small glass of spirits or a small bottle of a breezer or mixer).

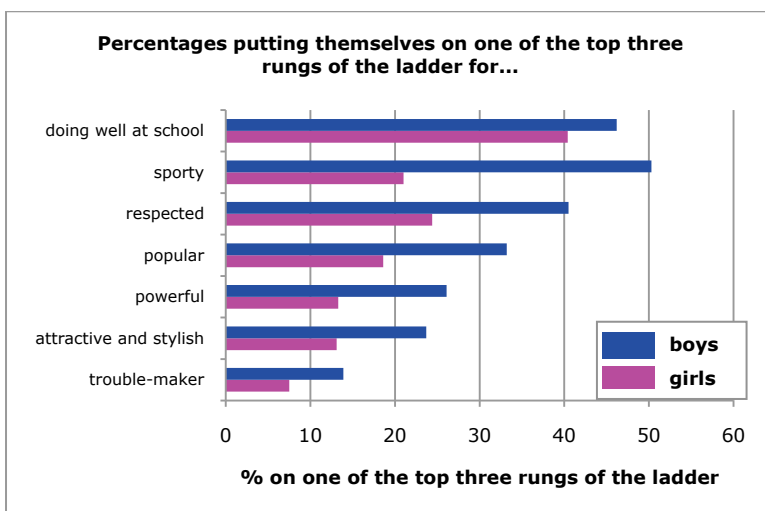
Drinking three or more drinks at a time increased a lot with year group, and half of S4 pupils reported having had three or more drinks at a time. However, there was no difference between boys and girls.

Over eight-in-ten pupils estimated that most or all adults drank alcohol and around half that most or all young people their age drank. Those who drank themselves were much more likely to think that most or all other young people were drinkers.



## SELF-PERCEPTIONS

The questionnaires used pictures of ladders to ask pupils how they thought they compared to other people in their year group. Each ladder was about something different – how well a pupil was doing in school, how sporty they were, how respected, etc.



Boys put themselves higher than girls on every ladder, although the smallest difference was for 'doing well at school'.

There were few differences between the year groups.

However, S4 pupils felt they were doing worse at school, and S2 pupils rated themselves as more sporty.



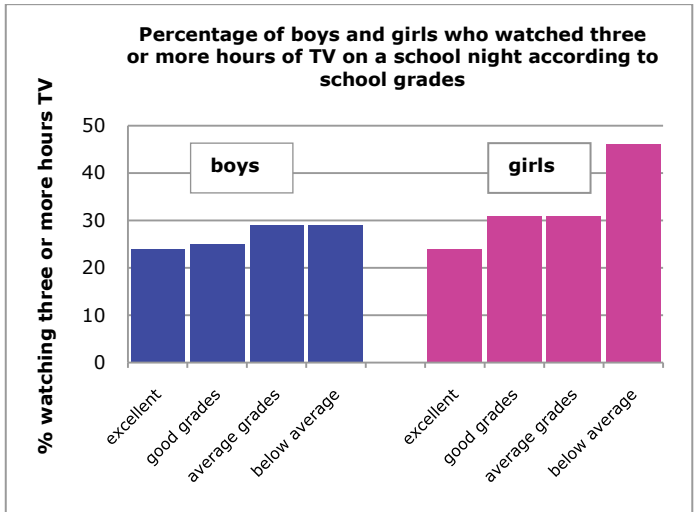
## TV

In 2010 we asked some questions about TV. Around 90% had a TV in their bedroom. Boys (94%) were more likely to have one than girls (87%), but there were no differences between those from more wealthy compared with less wealthy homes.

We also asked pupils how much TV they watched on a school day. Over a quarter watched TV for three hours or more. Girls watched TV more than boys, older pupils watched more than younger pupils, and those from less wealthy homes watched more than those from more wealthy homes.

As the graph to the right shows, among girls (but not boys), those who thought their school grades weren't so good also watched more TV.

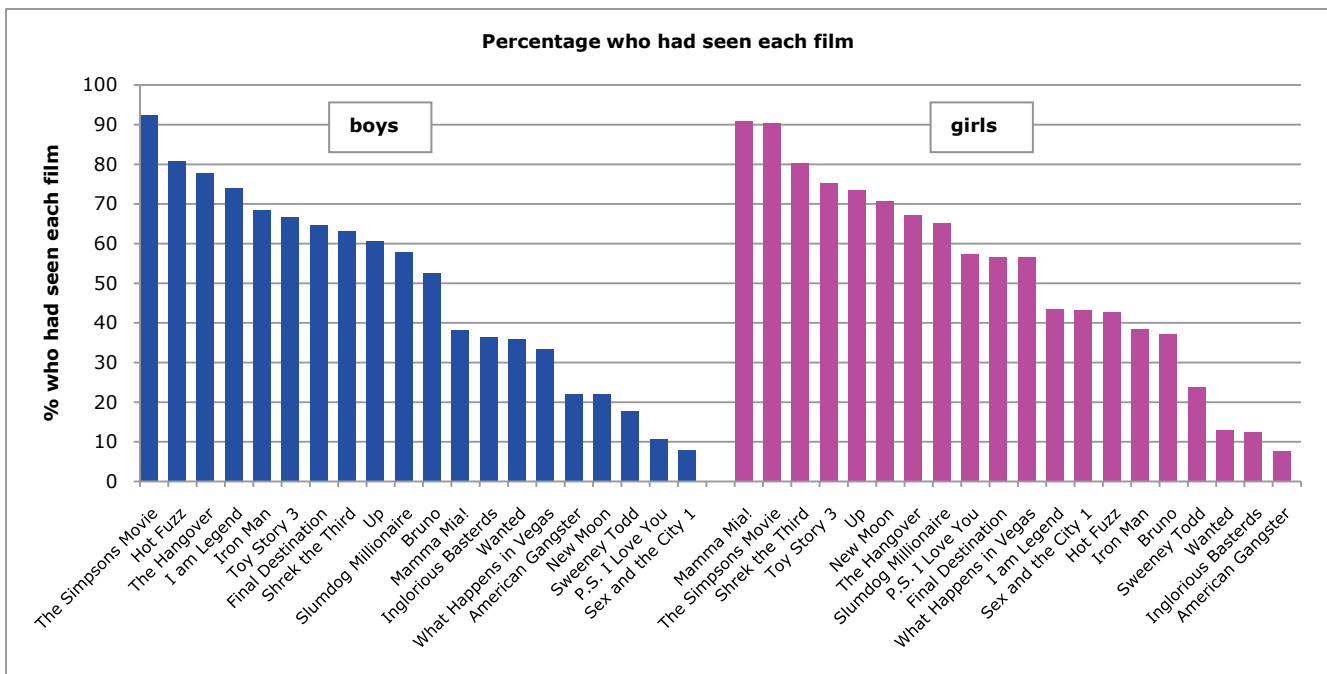
In 2011 we asked whether there were family rules about watching TV or DVDs, going on the internet or playing computer games. More boys (74%) than girls (67%) said they could watch anything they liked. Unsurprisingly, older pupils were also more likely to be allowed to watch anything they liked.



## FILMS

The 2011 questionnaire included a list of 20 films. We asked if pupils had seen each one, and if so, how often and where (cinema, dvd at home etc) and with whom.

Overall, the most popular film was 'The Simpsons Movie', while 'American Gangster' was least popular, but there were some big differences between boys and girls. The top three films among boys were 'The Simpsons Movie', 'Hot Fuzz' and 'The Hangover'. Boys were least likely to have seen 'Sex and the City' and 'P.S. I Love You'. The three films that most girls had seen were 'Mamma Mia', 'The Simpsons Movie' and 'Shrek the Third', while girls were least likely to have seen 'American Gangster' and 'Inglorious Basterds'.

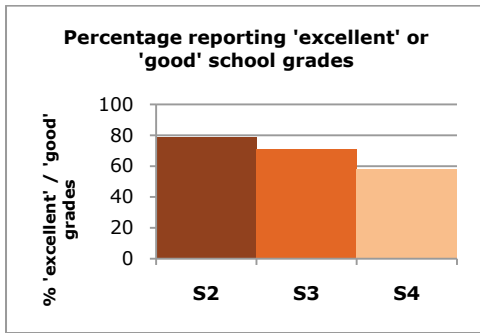


## MONEY

We asked how much money pupils had to spend as they liked each week. In 2011, half the pupils said they had £10.00 or less and around one-fifth had over £20.00.

Almost two-thirds received regular pocket money, about half got money for doing jobs around the house and about a fifth had other paid jobs. Around half also reported that they just asked for money when they wanted something.

## SCHOOL



The 2011 questionnaire included some questions about school. Almost 60% of pupils said they liked school. Girls (62%) were a bit more likely than boys (56%) to say they liked school, but there were no differences between the year groups in liking school.

Results for what pupils thought about their school grades showed the opposite pattern. There were no differences between boys and girls. However, as the graph to the left shows, younger pupils were more likely than older ones to report 'excellent' or 'good' grades.

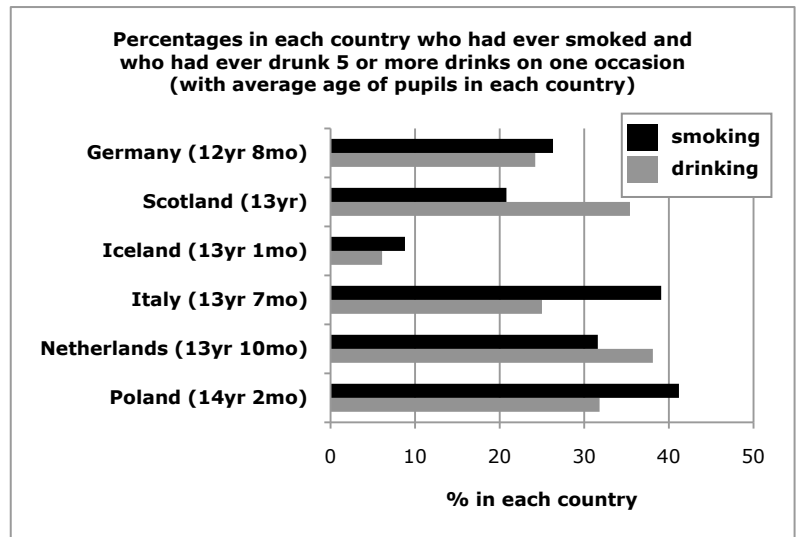
## COMPARISONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

We have only just started to make comparisons with other European countries in the study, using the information we all collected in 2010. This is complicated because those who took part had slightly different ages in each country. German pupils were the youngest (12 years, 8 months on average), followed by those from Scotland (13 years), while those in Poland (14 years 2 months) were the oldest.

The graph shows the percentages in each country who had ever smoked and who had drunk five or more drinks on one occasion (binge drinking). The countries are ordered according to pupil age. We would expect smoking and drinking rates to be higher for older pupils.

The graph shows particularly low levels of both smoking and drinking among pupils from Iceland. Rates of smoking in Scotland also seem relatively low. We know from other studies that rates of smoking are also lower amongst Scottish teenagers than 10 years ago.

However, rates of binge drinking in Scotland are high. This is in line with other studies which have shown high levels of drinking in Scottish teenagers compared with those from other parts of the world.



## AND FINALLY

We hope you have enjoyed reading these results from the Scottish 'ALICE' study. We are doing some more work now to see how different areas of life at home and at school affect health and rates of smoking and drinking. We have begun to present our results to other researchers, health professionals and policy makers at conferences, and to write them up for publication.

Our findings will also contribute to an important European study on whether seeing smoking in films influences teenagers' own smoking. Many films include images of people smoking, and they can make smoking seem more common and acceptable than it really is. Recent studies, mostly carried out in America, have shown a link between the amount of smoking teenagers see in films and starting to smoke themselves. First analyses from the European study, including our Scottish data, are in line with the American findings. You can find out more via this website: <http://www.smokefreemovies-europe.eu/en/proj>.

We would like to thank all of the pupils who took part in 'ALICE'. We hope that your school year has been a good one, that the exams have gone OK, and that you all have a great summer.

Professor Kate Hunt

Dr Helen Sweeting