

GENERAL TRENDS IN SELF-RATED  
SUBJECTIVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
IN BULGARIAN ADOLESCENTS:  
DATA FROM A REPRESENTATIVE STUDY  
“HEALTH BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN”  
IN 2017/18 AND A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Evelina BOGDANOVA, Bogdana ALEXANDROVA

*Institute for Population and Human Studies,  
Department of Psychology  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences*

BULGARIA, Sofia 1113, Akad. G. Bonchev St, bl. 6

[evelina\\_bogdanova@yahoo.com](mailto:evelina_bogdanova@yahoo.com)

---

**Abstract: Objective:** *The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the data concerning the subjective health of Bulgarian adolescents from the “Health behavior in school-aged children” study carried out in 2018, and to compare our data to the international data as well as with the results from the previous wave.*

**Methods:** *A national representative sample of 4548 Bulgarian students aged 11-, 13- and 15 years was investigated as part of the international network “Health behavior in school-aged children”. All of them filled in a computer variant of the questionnaire. The adolescents rated their health by means of three different instruments – Self-rated health, Psychosomatic complaints and Life satisfaction. Written consent was given by the parents for all of the participating students.*

**Results:** *Bulgarian adolescents as a whole show the main tendencies outlined in the international study: age, sex and family wellbeing prove to be important factors that have an impact on subjective health: at age 15 adolescents have lower levels of life satisfaction, are less likely to report excellent health and experience more frequent health complaints, more pronounced for girls; adolescents from high affluence families report higher levels of excellent health and life satisfaction and lower levels of health complaints compared to those coming of low affluence families. On the other hand, Bulgarian adolescents occupy some of the leading places for reporting nervousness and irritability, as well as multiple health complaints. The 2018 survey shows slight positive change in self-rated health and life satisfaction but at the same time an increase in subjective health complaints that is entirely due to the increased rate for boys.*

**Relevancy and contributions:** *This report shows how indeed adolescents feel about their health that can be used to monitor progress on health priorities and compare with other similar countries/regions. The*

---

*results allow us to identify key challenges at different life stages and highlight priority areas for action. The differences in findings provide a road map to engage across sectors to promote the health and well-being of adolescents, as well as to improve and equalize health inequalities in adolescence.*

**Keywords:** self-rated health; psychosomatic complaints; life satisfaction; health behavior in school-aged children (HBSC); adolescents aged 11; 13 and 15 years.

---

*The article can be cited as follows:*

**Bogdanova, E., Alexandrova, B.** (2020). General trends in self-rated subjective health and wellbeing in Bulgarian adolescents: Data from a representative study “Health Behavior in School-aged Children” in 2017/18 and a comparative analysis. *Psychological Research*, Volume 23, Number 3, 2020, 298-313. ISSN 0205-0617 (Print); ISSN 2367-9174 (Online).

© E. Bogdanova, B. Alexandrova, 2020

*Contribution:*

**Evelina Bogdanova** – Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Data processing and graphics, Results & Discussion, Conclusions, References.

**Bogdana Alexandrova** – Abstract, Introduction, Theoretical background, Methodology, Data processing, Results & Discussion, Conclusions, References, Translation.

Submitted – July 2020

Revised – September 2020

Published – December 2020

The authors have read and approved the final manuscript.