

EMOTIONAL & SEXUAL LIFE

Almost all young people protected themselves from sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. On the other hand, some situations where there is a risk of HIV transmission remained underestimated.

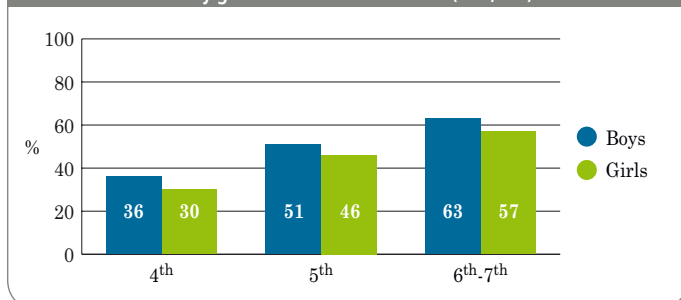
SEXUAL RELATIONS

Sexual and reproductive health is a major component of human wellbeing. During adolescence, most young people become aware of loving feelings, intimate relationships and sexual intercourse.

In 2014, among students in upper secondary education*, nearly one in two young people (47%) reported that they had already had sexual intercourse. The proportion of young people who reported that they had already had sexual intercourse increased with school level.

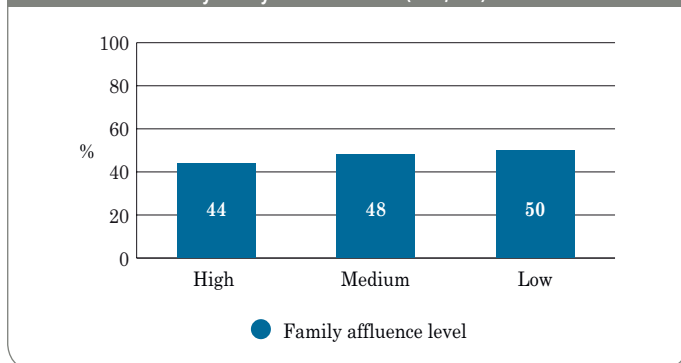
Boys reported more frequently that they had had sexual intercourse and this gender gap continued until the end of schooling. **1**

1 % of young people who reported that they had already had sexual intercourse by gender and academic level (n=4,703)



The proportion of young people who reported that they had already had sexual intercourse increased when the family affluence level decreased. **2**

2 % of young people reporting that they had already had sexual intercourse by family affluence level (n=4,605)



Finally, the proportion of young people who had already had sexual intercourse was higher among young people who had already been in love (51%) than among those who had never been in love (15%).

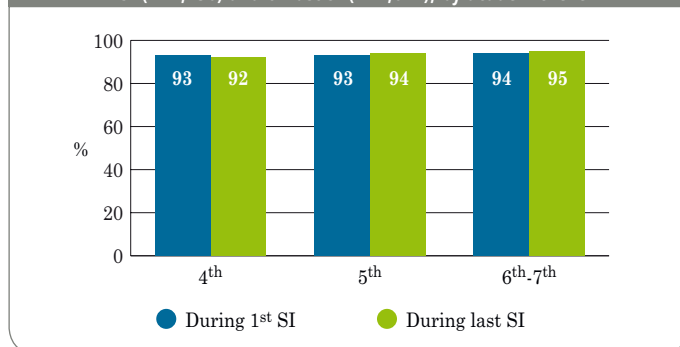
* The way indicators on sexual intercourse and the use of protection have changed over time cannot be shown, since the school level questioned for these indicators has changed over the surveys. Furthermore, the proportions observed in FWB among 15 year-olds (reference age for the international HBSC survey) are not representative of all young people aged 15. The majority of them, enrolled in lower secondary education, did not get these questions. Therefore, the FWB results cannot be compared with those of other countries taking part in HBSC.

CONTRACEPTION AND STIs PREVENTION

Adolescence is a critical time for adopting safe sex behaviours to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancies.

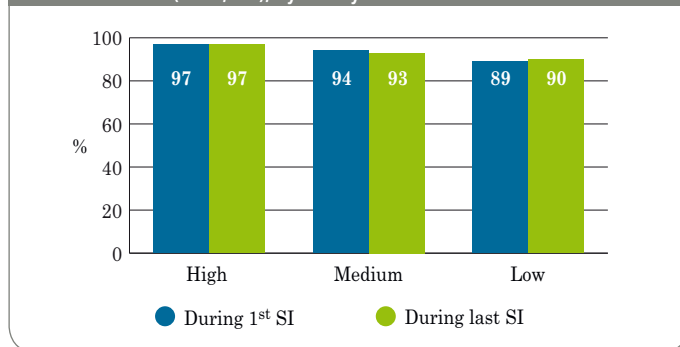
Among young people in upper secondary education who had already had sexual intercourse (SI), the use of a protection method against STIs and/or pregnancy was very common. More than 9 out of 10 young people (94%) reported that they used a protection method when they had sexual intercourse for the first time. Among those who had had sexual intercourse several times, the same proportion of young people (93%) reported that they used a protection method the last time they had sexual intercourse. Whether the first or the last time they had sexual intercourse, the proportions of young people who used a protection method did not differ between boys and girls. Neither did they vary depending on the academic level. **3**

3 % of young people who used a protection method during their 1st SI (n=2,130) and/or last SI (n=1,877), by academic level



On the other hand, the use of a protection method was less frequently reported when the level of family affluence decreased, whether the first or last time they had sexual intercourse. **4**

4 % of young people who used a protection method at 1st SI (n=2,090) or last SI (n=1,843), by family affluence level



The use of protection at the first sexual intercourse has an impact on the adoption of this behaviour during subsequent sexual intercourse. Among young people who used protection the first time they had sexual intercourse, almost all of them (96%) used protection the last time they had sexual intercourse. On the other hand, among young people who did not use any protection the first time they had sexual intercourse, only one in two young people (55%) used protection the last time they had sexual intercourse.

KNOWLEDGE ON HIV TRANSMISSION

Preventing STIs, including HIV infection, comes from a good knowledge of situations where there is a risk as well as situations without risk to fight against the stigmatisation of those infected.

In secondary education, eleven situations were suggested to young people. For each of them, the students were asked to indicate if it was a **situation at risk** of “AIDS transmission”** (where they had to answer “true”) or a **situation without risk** (where they had to answer “false”).

Situations at risk 5

Having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person and using a person with HIV’s syringe were the risks best identified by young people.

On the other hand, the risk associated with unprotected sexual intercourse with an asymptomatic person and the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV remained poorly identified.

5 A person can get AIDS...				
	%	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
making love without a condom with somebody who has AIDS (n=10,251)	90	3	7	
using a syringe or needle used by somebody who has AIDS (n=10,260)	80	7	13	
making love without a condom with somebody who looks healthy and says he is not ill (n=10,206)	66	20	14	
by transmission from his/her mother at birth (n=10,173)	56	17	27	

Situations without risk 6

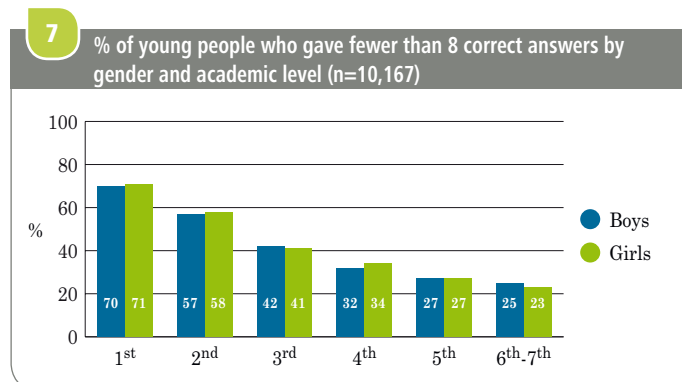
The absence of risk when using a condom during sexual intercourse or when shaking hands with an infected person seemed well identified. Nevertheless, there were still certain misperceptions regarding risk, particularly for blood transfusion or donation in Belgium, virus transmission by a mosquito, by kissing on the mouth a person with AIDS, or when eating from the same plate as an infected person.

** The expression “AIDS transmission” was used to help the young people understand.

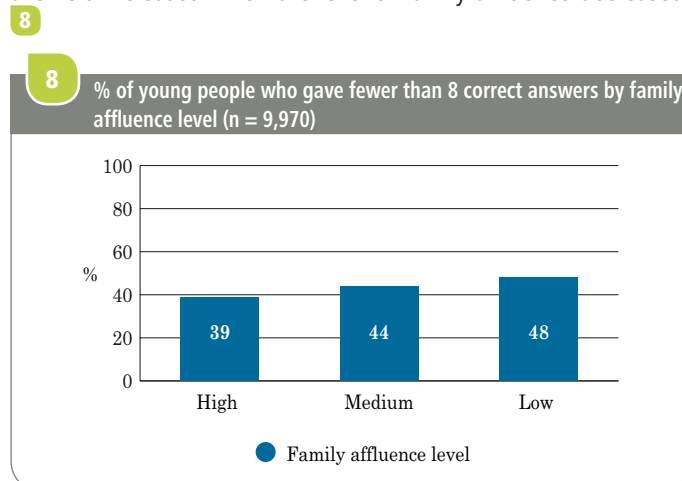
6 A person can get AIDS...				
	%	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
shaking hands with somebody who has AIDS (n=10,290)	4	84	12	
using a condom when people makes love (n=10,188)	6	80	14	
eating from the same plate as somebody who has AIDS (n=10,174)	6	71	23	
kissing on the mouth somebody who has AIDS (n=10,150)	15	63	22	
giving blood today in Belgium (n=10,167)	15	57	28	
from a mosquito (n=10,180)	20	51	29	
receiving a blood transfusion today in Belgium (n=10,169)	30	40	29	

A score of correct answers was created and a threshold of fewer than 8 correct answers out of the 11 proposals was chosen to designate an inadequate level of knowledge. Out of all young people in secondary school, 4 out of 10 had an inadequate level of knowledge in 2014.

Among all students in secondary education, the proportion of young people who had an inadequate level of knowledge (< 8 correct answers) did not vary between boys and girls, but this proportion decreased as their academic level increased. 7



The proportion of young people giving fewer than 8 correct answers increased when the level of family affluence decreased. 8



The full results of the HBSC Survey 2014 conducted in Federation Wallonia-Brussels will be the subject of a publication that will be available later. For further information, see the website sipes.ulb.ac.be

