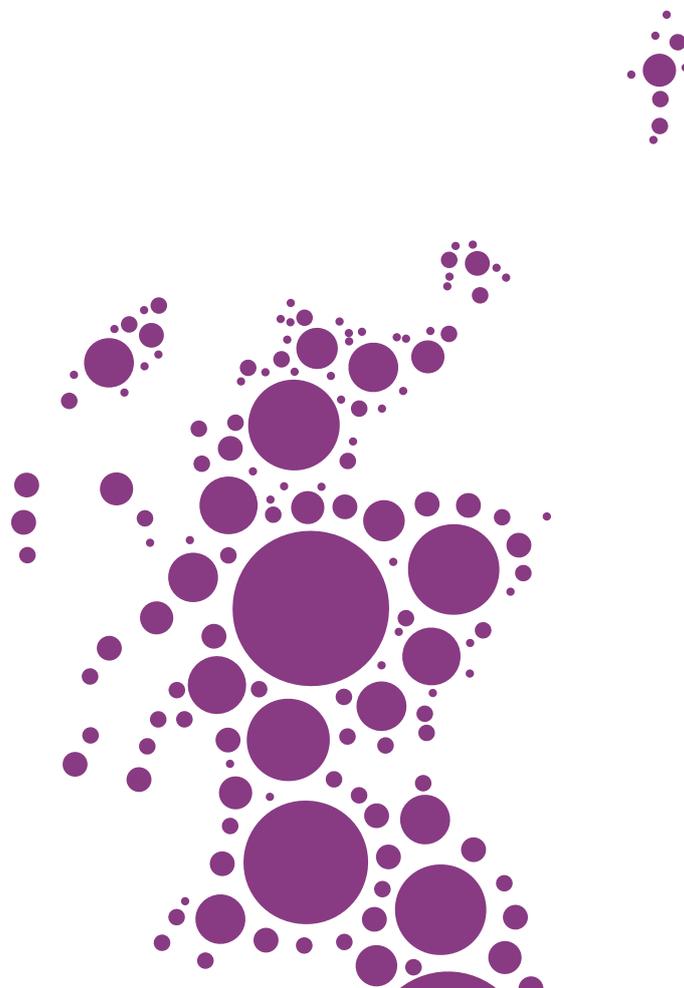


teen co:vidlife



TeenCovidLife Survey 1 General Report

Health and wellbeing of young people in lockdown

August 2020



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A note about this report

This is a general report of the first TeenCovidLife Survey run by the Generation Scotland¹ team at the University of Edinburgh, in collaboration with the Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network (SHINE)², at the University of Glasgow.

Generation Scotland developed the survey, collected the survey data, and host the data. SHINE advised on the survey content, promoted the study to the SHINE network and worked with the Generation Scotland team to compile the report for onward sharing.

Acknowledgements

The TeenCovidLife Survey is one of a series of studies run by the Generation Scotland team with support from the Wellcome Trust (reference: 216767/Z/19/Z). The SHINE project is funded by an MRC Mental Health Data Pathfinder award (MC_PC_17217) led by Professor Daniel Smith, University of Glasgow.

Some of the questions in the TeenCovidLife survey are used with the permission of HBSC Scotland³. HBSC Scotland is led by Dr Jo Inchley, University of Glasgow and funded by NHS Scotland (now Public Health Scotland).

1 Introduction

The SHINE network aims to support schools in addressing their health and wellbeing needs with a focus on mental health. SHINE uses a data-led, systems-level approach to support health improvement action within the school setting. As the SHINE network develops, a key function is the identification of school research needs and priorities. SHINE supports high-quality research, which has a clear benefit to the schools participating in the research project and/or the wider school communities through our affiliation process. The current membership of SHINE includes 206 schools (over 110,000 pupils), comprising primary, secondary and independent schools from all 32 Local Authorities (www.gla.ac.uk/shine).

Generation Scotland (www.generationscotland.org) is a long-standing family and population-based study of health determinants. Recruitment of adults (~24,000 in ~7,000 family groups) took place between 2006-2011. Volunteers completed a detailed questionnaire about their medical history, had a general health check in one of our research clinics, gave blood and urine samples for biochemical and genetic analysis, and agreed to us linking up all of this shared information with their NHS medical records. They also said we could contact them again to be part of follow-on studies, usually involving questionnaires about various aspects of health and wellbeing.

Generation Scotland has learned a lot about how health is affected by where we live, what we do, our habits and our family histories, and there are important differences between generations. For that reason, Generation Scotland were keen to enrol younger generations to our study, from age 12 and up. In November 2019, Generation Scotland was awarded a large grant by the Wellcome Trust to do just that. The team had completed the planning stage, prepared all of the approval documents and were ready to go when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. That put recruitment on hold.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of everyone, both young and old. All non-essential travel was stopped, schools and workplaces closed, and for several months we were instructed to stay home as much as possible. These changes to everyday life are unprecedented. Generation Scotland therefore switched to running online surveys to understand how people were coping and feeling about life under lockdown. These surveys have been approved by the East of Scotland Research Ethics Committee as an amendment to our Research Tissue Bank approval for Generation Scotland.

TeenCovidLife is an online survey of health and wellbeing that provides a voice for young people living in Scotland to say how lockdown, social distancing, home schooling, and exam cancellations has affected them. TeenCovidLife follows on from the success of the CovidLife survey, which looked at the health and wellbeing of adults aged 18+ during the COVID-19 lockdown, which had a rapid return from over 18,800 adults in the UK.

The first CovidLife Survey ran from 17th April to 7th May, 2020. The initial report⁴ of the findings can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

A follow-up survey with a mix of repeated and new questions will help us to understand how people are coping and adapting over time as lockdown measures ease and we move towards a new normal. CovidLife Survey 2 was launched on 21st July, 2020.

Given the plans for recruiting younger members to the Generation Scotland study in due course, the TeenCovidLife survey for 12-17's was designed and launched in association with SHINE. A second survey is planned for soon after schools return in August and a third at some later point as we adjust to life after COVID-19.

2 TeenCovidLife Survey 1

This survey was designed to understand how young people living in Scotland aged 12 to 17 are coping during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the questions are the same as those used in the 2017/18 Health Behaviour in School aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Survey^{3,5} as well as from the forthcoming SHINE pupil mental health and wellbeing survey, including assessments of wellbeing, perceived stress, happiness, and sleep quality. The corresponding results from TeenCovidLife may be compared to those reported in the HBSC Scotland Survey to better understand how the mental health and wellbeing reported during lockdown differs from that reported before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that there are differences in sample design between TeenCovidLife and HBSC Scotland. HBSC Scotland survey respondents were aged 11, 13 and 15 years old and the sample was designed to be nationally representative of Scotland, with school class being used as a sample unit. TeenCovidLife is open to any young person in Scotland between 12 and 17 years of age.

Many of the questions included in the first TeenCovidLife survey are also those that were asked to adults in the CovidLife survey. For example, TeenCovidLife and CovidLife participants were both asked questions about the extent to which COVID-19 has impacted their daily life, and questions assessing worry about different aspects of life during lockdown. This will allow for the comparison of how younger people are coping with the COVID-19 lockdown when compared with adults.

Additional questions asked about how young people have experienced and reacted to life under COVID-19 and the disruption to schooling during this period.

The TeenCovidLife survey was an online survey that participants could complete on any device with access to the internet. Data was submitted directly to the Generation Scotland team. There is no feedback or disclosure of personal level data.

This report

In this report, we summarise some of the findings from the TeenCovidLife survey that ran from 22nd May to 5th July, 2020, and was promoted within the SHINE network. In all, 5,548 Scottish young people aged 12-17 years old completed the first TeenCovidLife Survey. 5,439 (98.0%) of TeenCovidLife participants told us that they were high school pupils. High school pupils were from 283 schools in 32 local authorities.

Here, we describe the survey findings in graphs and tables, but we do not set out here to interpret the data. Interpretive reports will follow from the Generation Scotland team and their collaborators. These will be posted on the Generation Scotland website in due course (www.generationscotland.org).

3 Sample description

More female participants (3,593, 64.8%) took part than male participants (1,870, 33.7%). 64 (1.2%) selected 'prefer not to say' when asked their sex assigned at birth, and a further 21 (0.4%) did not answer this question.

Due to the small number of participants who answered 'prefer not the say', the remainder of this report will report the findings for male and female participants only.

Table 3.1 shows the number of participants who took part in TeenCovidLife by age and sex.

Table 3.1 Age and sex of TeenCovidLife participants

	12	13	14	15	16	17	NA	Total
Male	268	483	436	315	248	107	13	1870
Female	449	702	692	696	684	347	23	3593
NA	8	20	16	12	6	3	20	85
Total	725	1205	1144	1023	938	457	56	5548

'NA' responses in the table above indicate 'No Answer'; this includes participants who selected 'prefer not to say' as well as those who did not give any response to a particular question.

The age and sex of the TeenCovidLife participants as a percentage of those who gave their age and sex is reported in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Age and sex of TeenCovidLife participants as percentages

	12	13	14	15	16	17
Male	37.4	40.8	38.7	31.2	26.6	23.6
Female	62.6	59.2	61.3	68.8	73.4	76.4

4 Impact of COVID-19 on daily routine

Description

To measure the impact of COVID-19 on participants' daily lives, we asked 'How much has COVID-19 changed your daily routine?' Participants selected one option from 'a lot', 'some', 'a little', and 'not at all'.

Findings

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of participants who reported that COVID-19 has changed their daily routine 'a lot', 'some', 'a little', or 'not at all'.

More than half of all participants reported that their daily routine had changed 'a lot': 58% in males across age groups, 64% in females aged 12-14, and 68% in females aged 15-17.

Table 4.1 Percentage reporting change to daily routine during the COVID-19 lockdown

	12 to 14		15 to 17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not at all	3.2	0.9	2.6	0.8
A little	12.6	10.7	12.1	8.5
Some	25.8	24.0	27.0	22.6
A lot	58.3	64.4	58.3	68.1

5 Loneliness

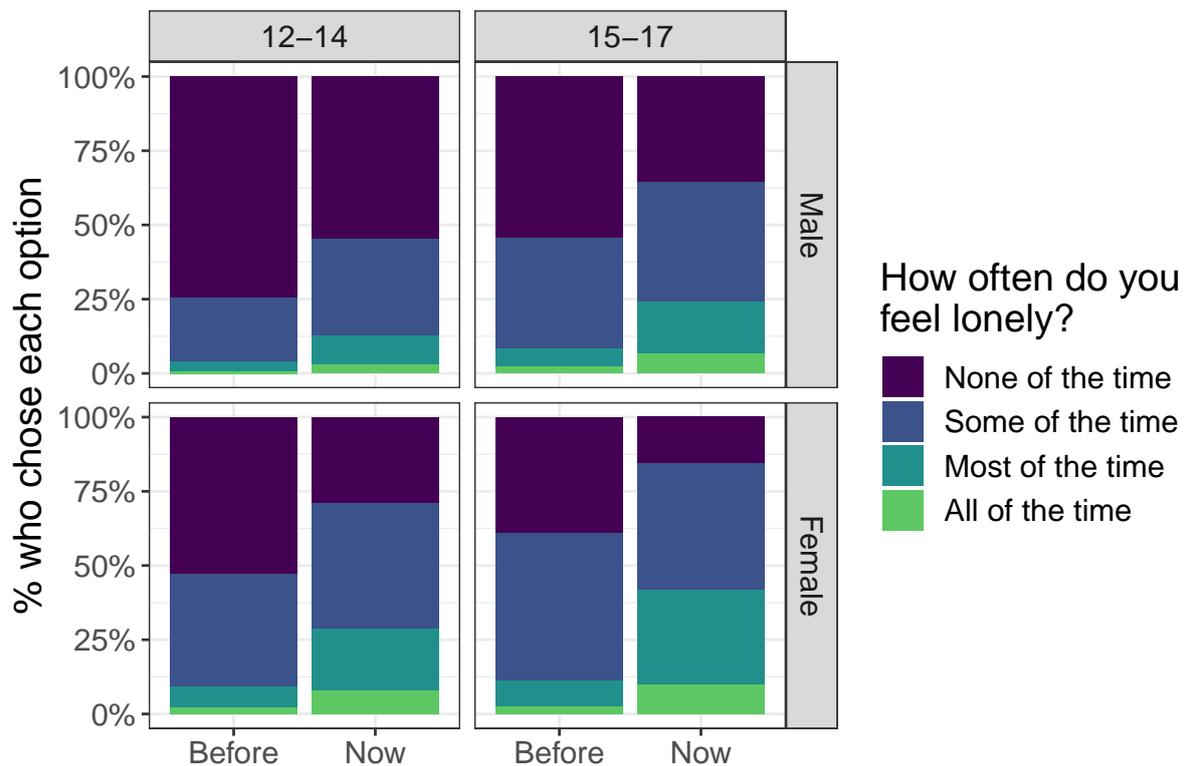
Description

Participants were asked two questions about feelings of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. Current loneliness was assessed by asking ‘How often have you felt lonely during the past week?’ To measure loneliness before lockdown we asked ‘Before the COVID-19 lockdown, how often did you feel lonely?’ For both questions, participants selected one option from ‘none of the time’, ‘some of the time’, ‘most of the time’, or ‘all of the time’. Participants could also select ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to say’.

Findings

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of participants who reported feeling lonely before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. ‘Don’t know’ and ‘prefer not to say’ responses were removed before creating Figure 5.1. The percentage of participants reporting feeling lonely was higher in lockdown than it was before lockdown.

Figure 5.1 Feelings of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 lockdown



6 Good Childhood Index: Happiness with various aspects of life

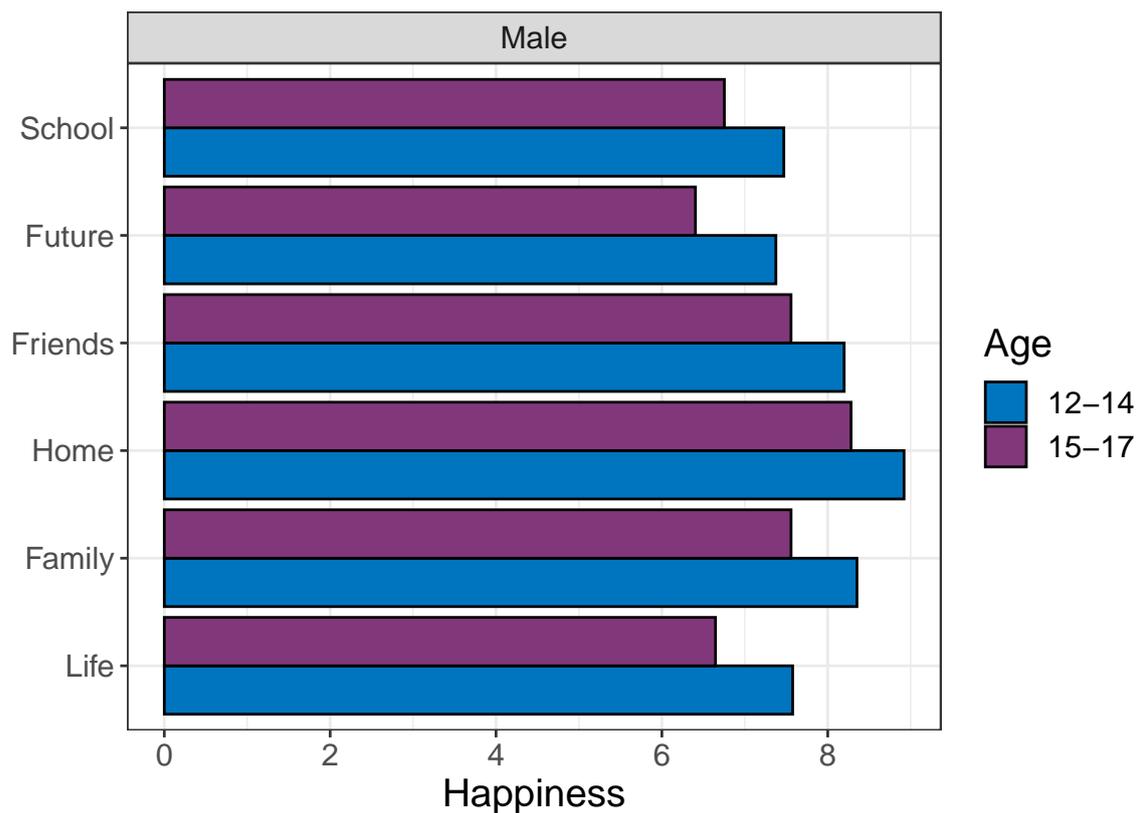
Description

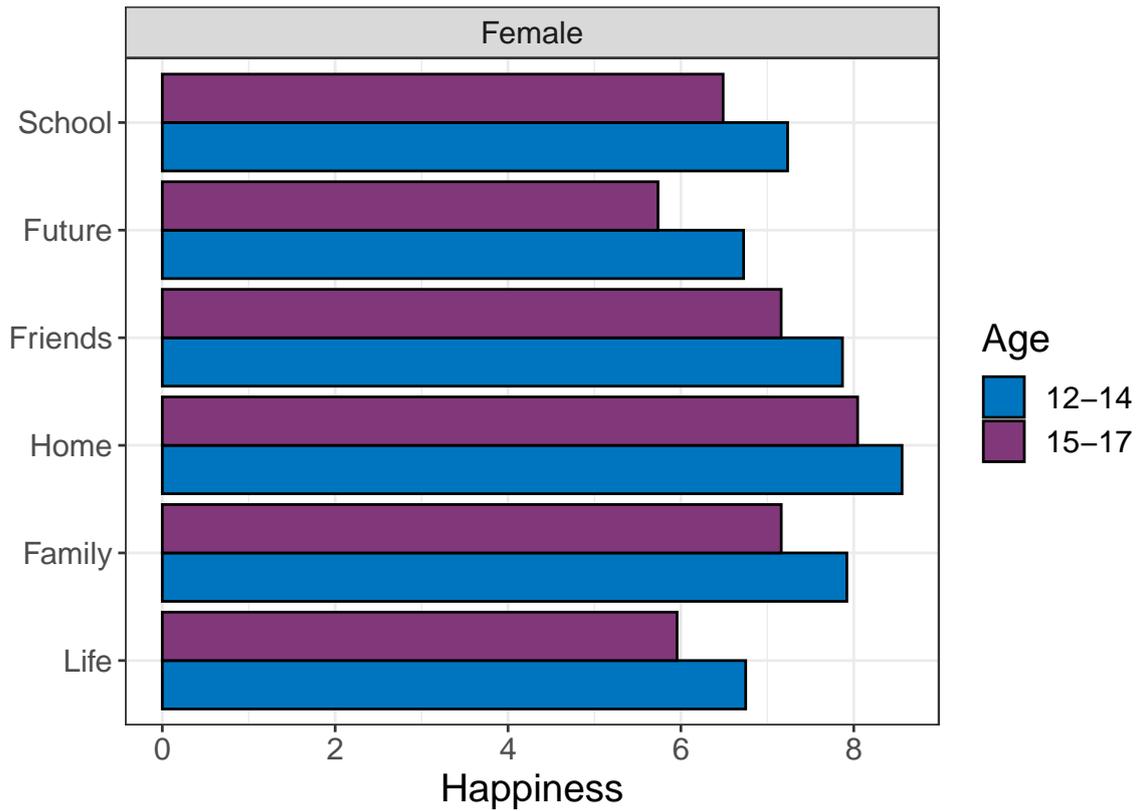
This scale⁶ asks young people to rate how happy they are with various aspects of life including family, friendships, school, their future, and life overall. Response options ranged from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'very unhappy', 5 means 'neither happy nor unhappy' and 10 means 'very happy'. For each question, participants could also select 'prefer not to say'.

Findings

Figure 6.1 shows the average score out of 10 for six aspects of life. For each aspect of life looked at, participants aged 12 to 14 years had slightly higher happiness scores than participants aged 15-17 years.

Figure 6.1 Average scores for happiness in different aspects of life





Low happiness is defined as a score of less than 5. Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of participants who were characterised as having low happiness for each aspect of life.

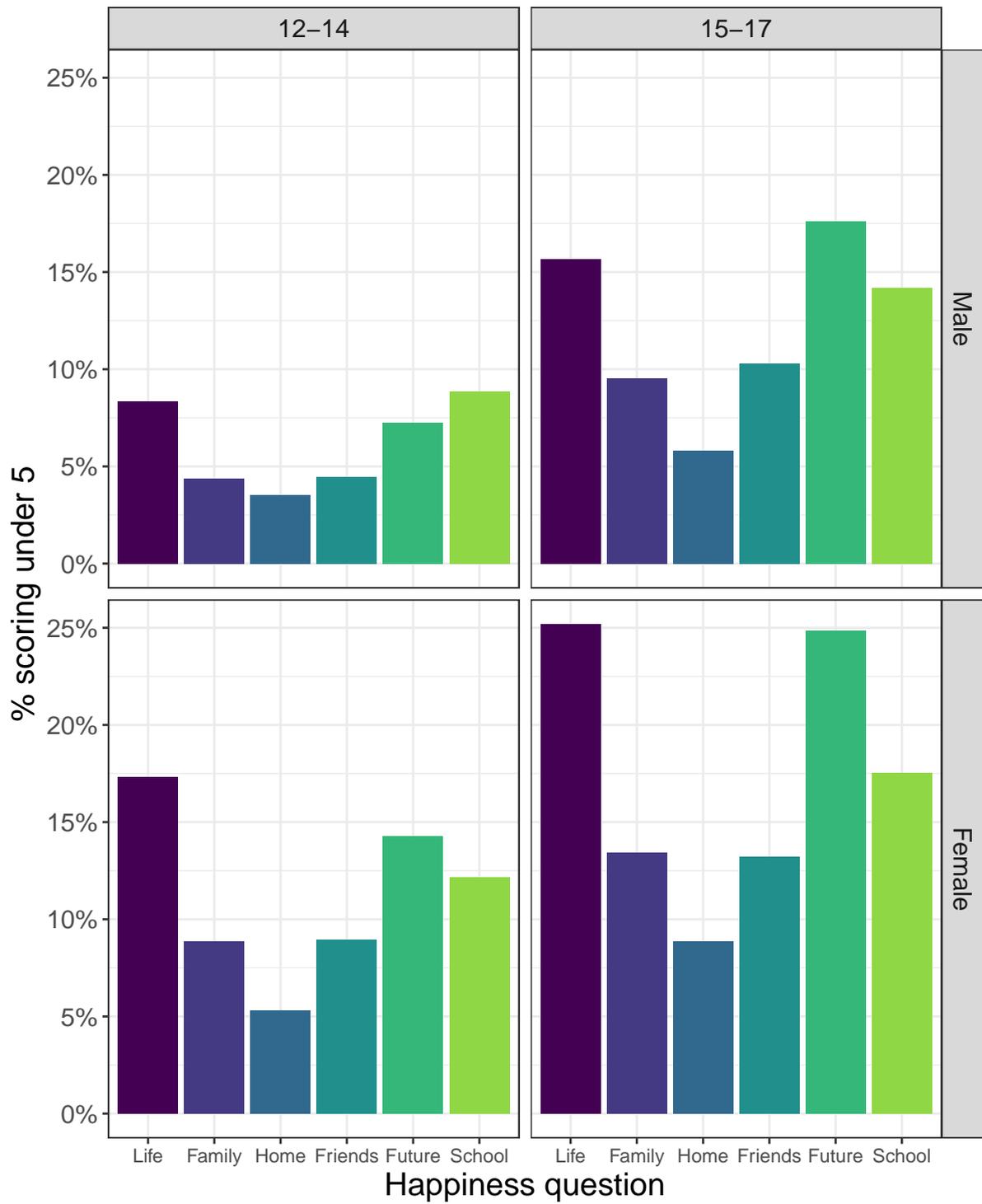
When looking at the sample as a whole, only 7% of participants reported low happiness with their home life, whereas 19% of participants reported low happiness regarding the future.

Older participants reported higher rates of low happiness for the 'future' and 'school' than younger participants.

For those aged 15-17 years, 25% of female and 18% of male participants reported having low happiness for the future, compared to 14% of female and 7% of male participants aged 12-14 years.

25% of female participants and 15% of male participants aged 15-17 years old reported low happiness with life overall, compared to 17% of females and 8% of male participants aged 12-14 years.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of participants who report low happiness in different aspects of life



7 World Health Organization Wellbeing Index (WHO-5)

Description

The WHO-5⁷ are five positively worded questions that, when combined, provide a measure of emotional functioning. These scores can then be classified to indicate young people with low mood. This **does not** indicate a clinical diagnosis.

For each question, participants select a response to indicate how often they have felt a certain way in the last 2 weeks, ranging from 'at no time' to 'all of the time'. Participants could also select 'prefer not to say' for each question.

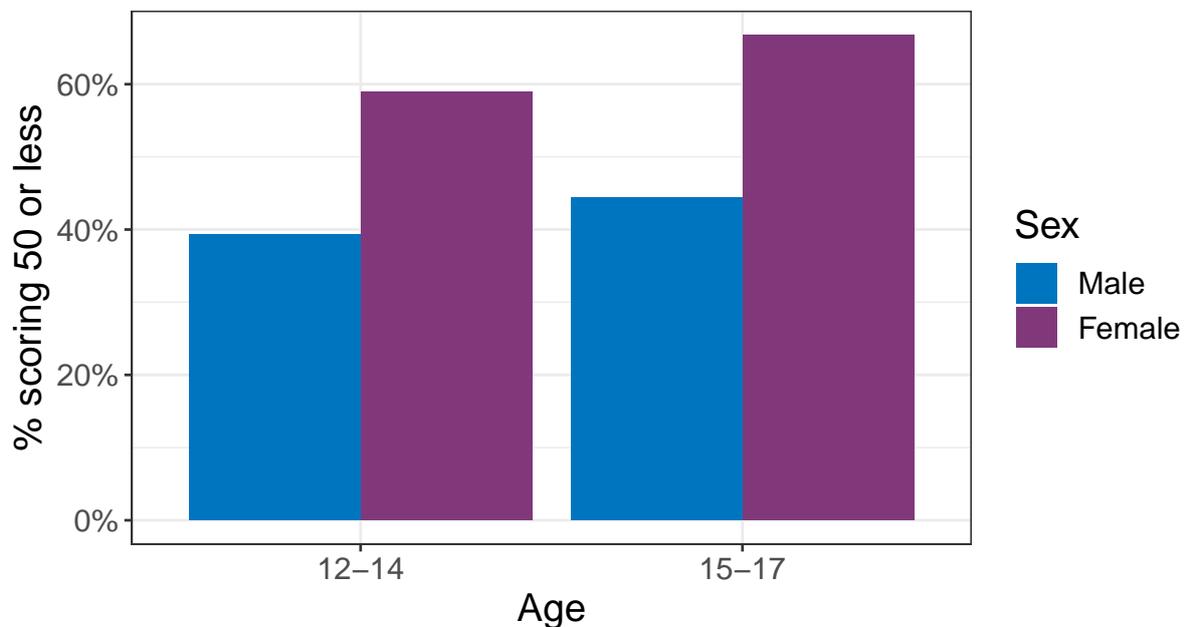
Scores on the five items are summed to create a scale ranging from 0 to 100. A score of 50 or less on the WHO-5 indicates low mood.

Findings

The percentage of participants who reported low mood (scoring 50 or less) is shown in Figure 7.1. A higher percentage of female participants (59% for those aged 12-14 and 67% for those aged 15-17) reported low mood than male participants (39% for male participants aged 12-14, and 44% for those aged 15-17).

Low mood (assessed using the WHO-5) was also examined in the HBSC Scotland survey in 2017/2018⁵. In that survey, 41% of female participants aged 13 and 58% of those aged 15 reported low mood, compared to 33% of male participants aged 13 and 43% of those aged 15.

Figure 7.1 Percentage of participants with low mood



8 Stress

Perceived Stress Scale 4 (PSS-4)

Description

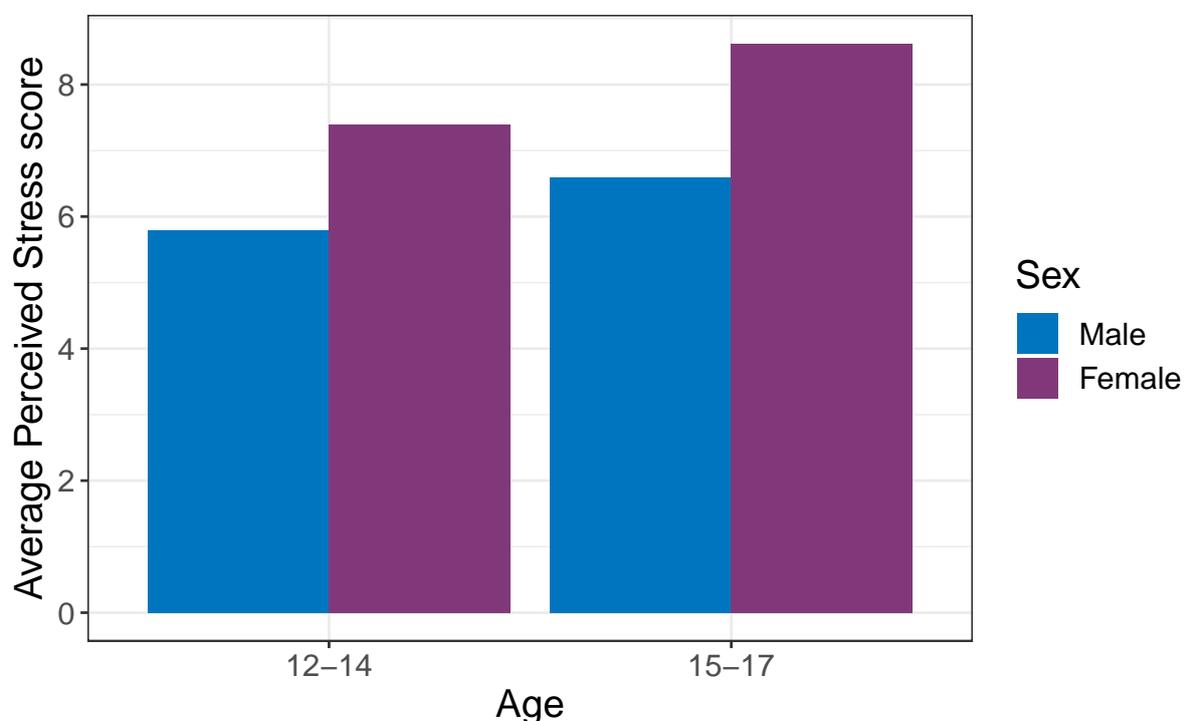
The PSS-4⁸ asks four questions to assess the degree to which participants judge their life to be stressful. For each question, participants indicated how often (ranging from 'never' to 'very often') they had felt a certain way in the past month. Scores on each of the 4 questions ranged from 0 to 4, with a maximum total score of 16. Higher scores on the PSS-4 indicate higher rates of perceived stress.

Findings

Figure 8.1 shows the average score on the PSS-4. Female participants had a higher average score on PSS-4 (7.4 for those aged 12-14; 8.6 for those aged 15-17) than male participants (5.8 for those aged 12-14; 6.6 for those aged 15-17).

These average scores were similar to those reported in 2017/2018 in the HBSC Scotland survey⁵. The HBSC Scotland survey found that the average PSS-4 score was 6.1 for male participants, and 6.9 for female participants aged 13. For participants aged 15 years, the average score for male participants was 6.7, whereas it was 7.8 for female participants.

Figure 8.1 Average score on the Perceived Stress Scale



COVID-19 stress

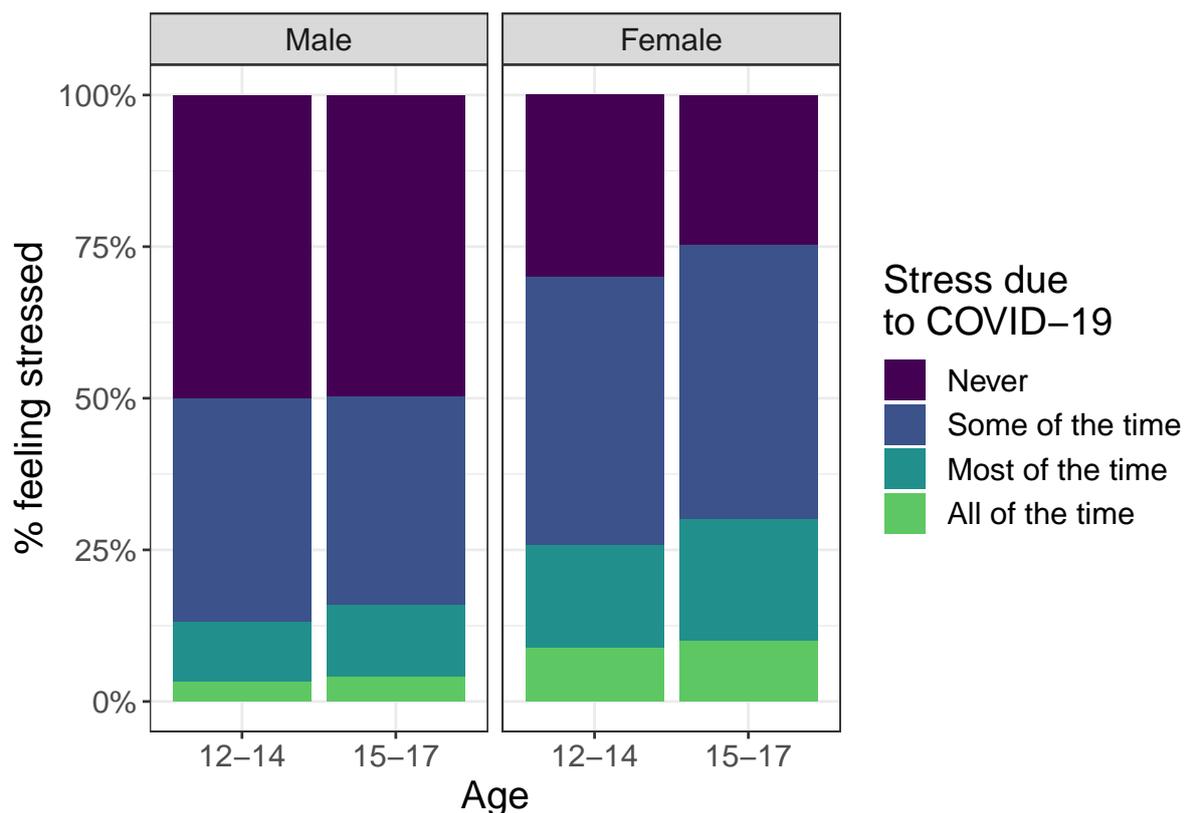
Description

To assess the degree to which participants have been feeling stressed because of COVID-19, participants were asked 'Over the past week, how often have you felt nervous or stressed because of COVID-19?' Participants selected one option from the following responses: 'never', 'some of the time', 'most of the time', 'all of the time', or 'prefer not to say'.

Findings

'Prefer not to say' responses are not included in the figure below. Figure 8.2 shows that a higher percentage of male participants (48%) reported 'never' feeling nervous or stressed because of COVID-19 than female participants (30% for those aged 12-14; 25% for those aged 15-17).

Figure 8.2 Percentage of participants reporting feeling nervous or stressed because of COVID-19 in the past week



9 Resilience

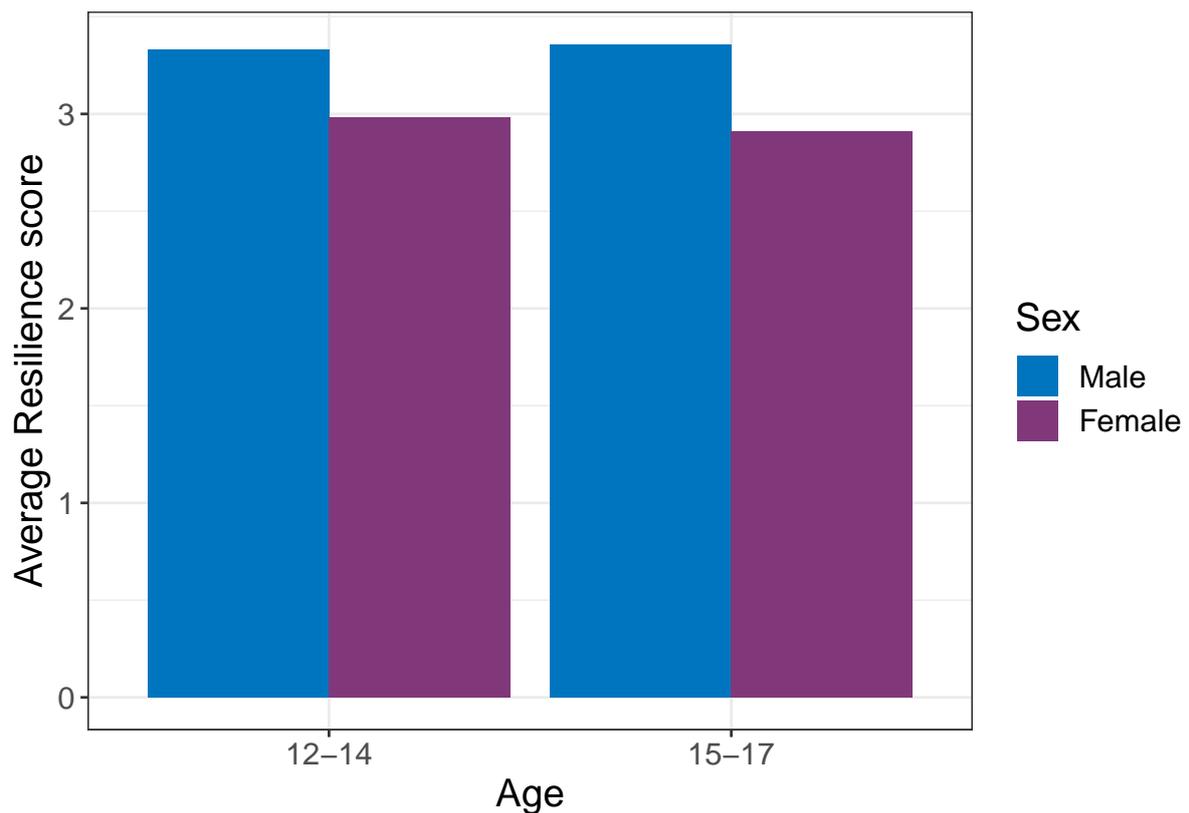
Description

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)⁹ was used to assess the degree to which participants report being able to recover from stress (resilience). Participants read 6 statements and selected how much they agreed or disagreed with each one. Options ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Each question is scored between 1 and 5, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The BRS total score is the average score across the 6 items.

Findings

The average resilience score is shown in Figure 9.1. Scores on the BRS were similar for different age groups. Male participants have slightly higher average scores on the BRS than female participants.

Figure 9.1 Average score on the Brief Resilience Scale



10 Worry during COVID-19 lockdown

Description

These questions were used to understand whether participants have been feeling worried about various aspects of their life during the COVID-19 lockdown, including their education, future plans, work and work experience, relationships with family and friends, and hobbies. For each question, participants were asked to select how worried they have been about this aspect of life, ranging from 'not at all worried' to 'extremely worried'. For each question, participants could also select 'doesn't apply to me'.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting worrying about various aspects of life are reported in Figures 10.1 and 10.2. 'Doesn't apply to me' responses are not included when making these figures.

Figure 10.1 Percentage of participants reporting worrying about various aspects of life during the COVID-19 lockdown

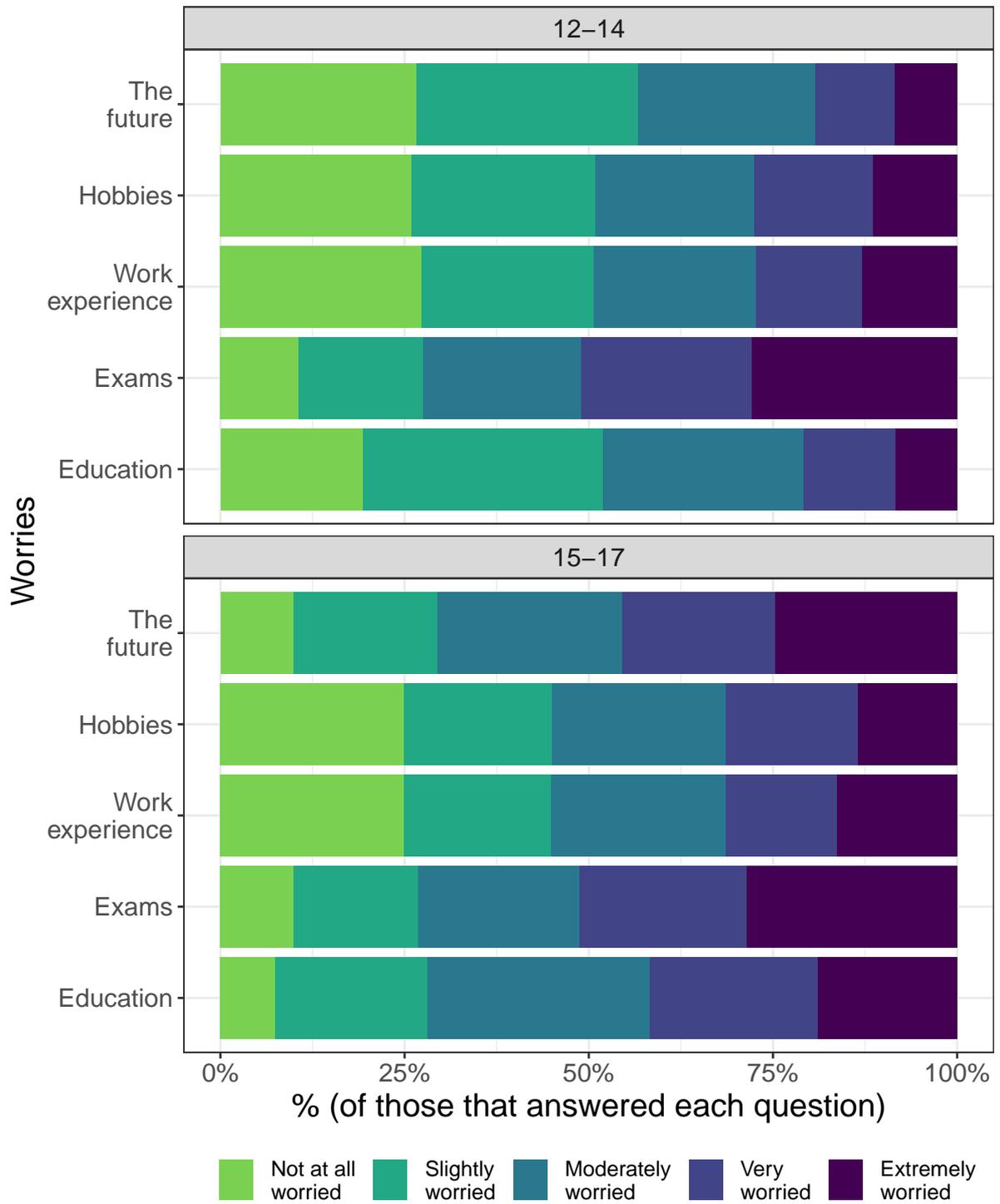
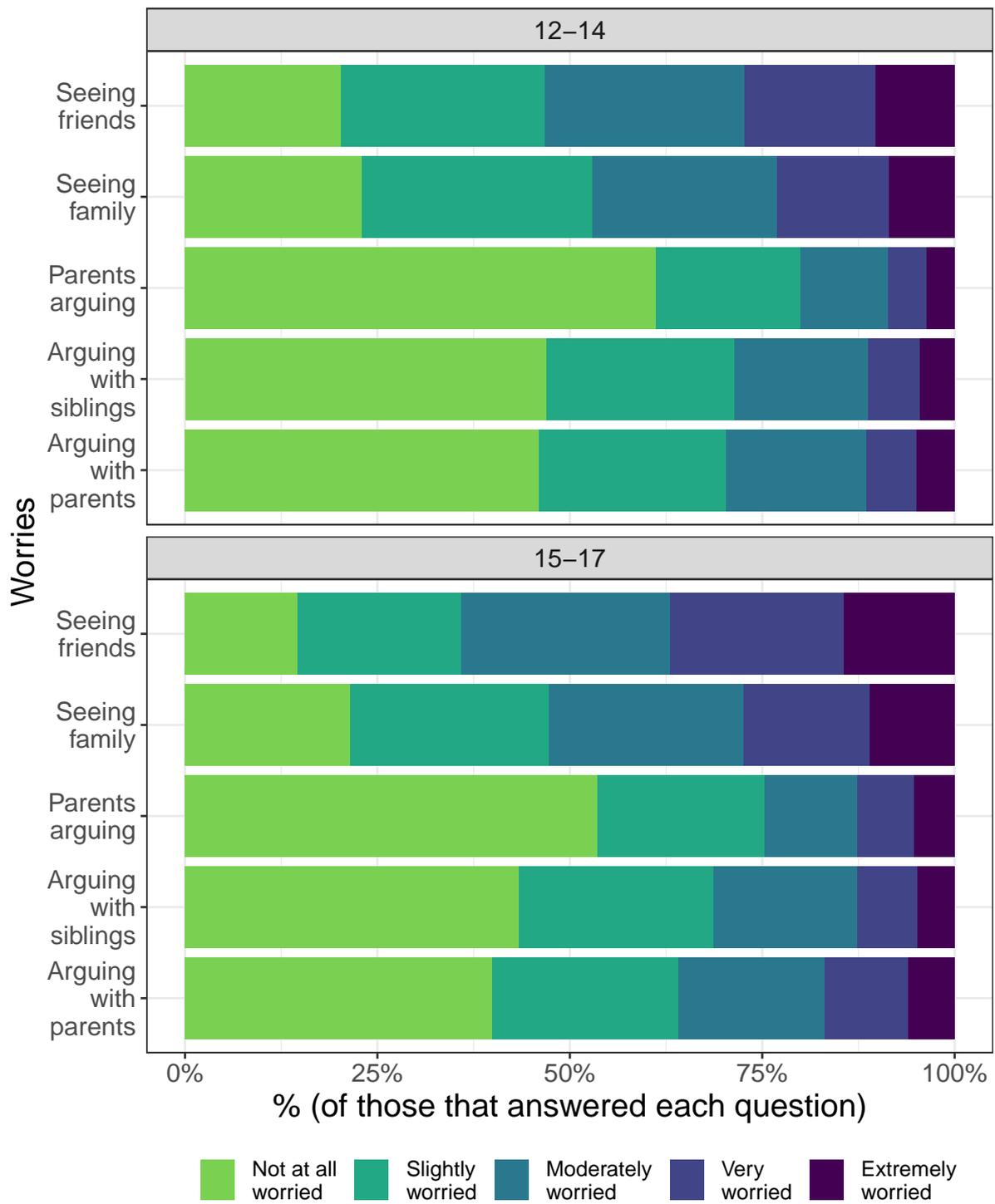


Figure 10.2 Percentage of participants reporting worrying about relationships with friends and family during the COVID-19 lockdown



11 Sleep quality during COVID-19

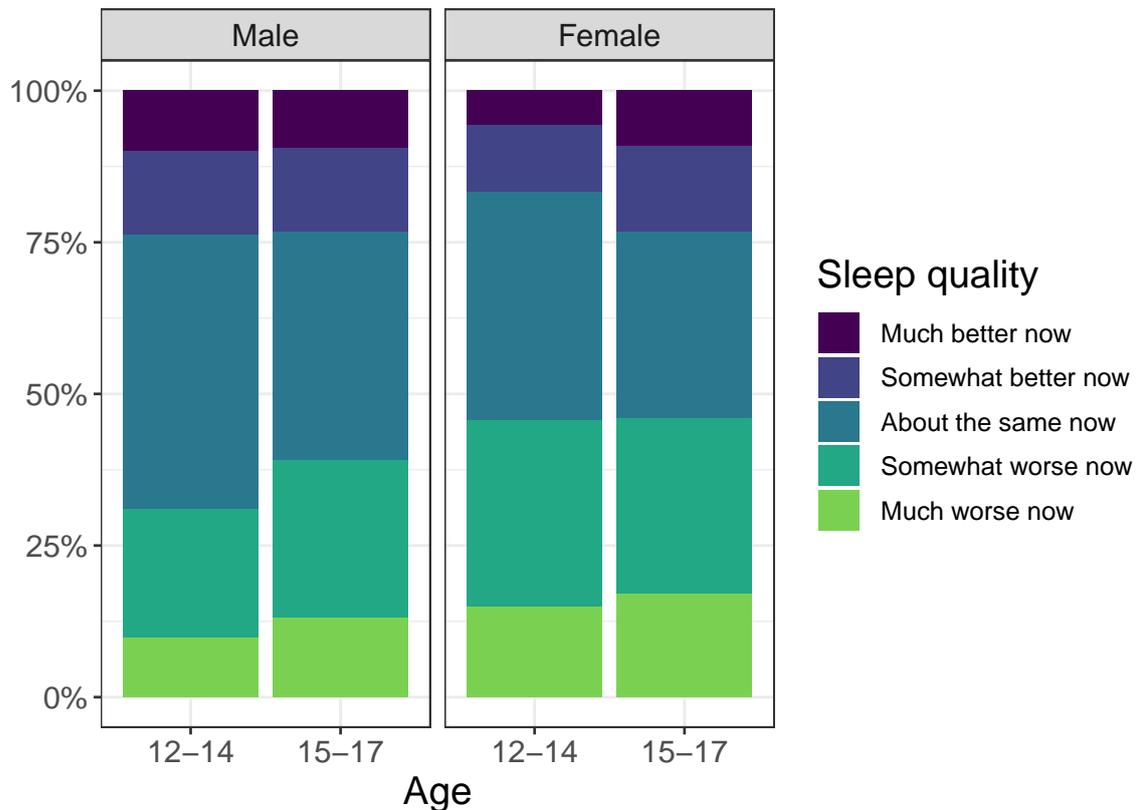
Description

To determine whether the quality of sleep has changed during lockdown, participants were asked ‘compared to before the COVID-19 lockdown, are you sleeping...?’ Participants selected the most relevant option from: ‘much better now’, ‘somewhat better now’, ‘about the same now’, ‘somewhat worse now’, or ‘much worse now’.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting changes to sleep quality during the lockdown is shown in Figure 11.1. For male participants, 29% of those aged 12-14 and 36% of those aged 15-17 reported their sleep quality has worsened under lockdown (i.e., answering either ‘somewhat worse now’ or ‘much worse now’). The percentage of female participants reporting poorer sleep quality was slightly higher, with 44% of those aged 12-14 and 43% of those aged 15-17 reporting poorer sleep quality during lockdown than before.

Figure 11.1 Percentage of participants reporting change in sleep quality during the COVID-19 lockdown



12 Social media use

Description

To determine whether use of social media has changed during lockdown, participants were asked 'compared to before the COVID-19 lockdown, do you spend...?' Participants selected the most relevant response from: 'more time using social media now', 'the same amount of time using social media now', 'less time using social media now', 'don't use social media', and 'don't know'.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting changes to their social media use during lockdown is reported in Table 12.1. Those who selected 'don't know', or 'don't use social media' are not included in the percentages calculated below. Female participants reported higher rates of using social media more during lockdown than male participants.

Table 12.1 Percentage reporting change in social media use during the COVID-19 lockdown

	12 to 14		15 to 17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
More time	49.4	66.5	57.6	70.0
Same amount of time	34.3	24.6	30.8	21.0
Less time	16.3	9.0	11.7	9.0

13 School

13.1 Liking school

Description

Participants who told us they were a school pupil (98%) were asked how much they like school at present. Participants selected from the following options: 'I like it a lot', 'I like it a bit', 'I don't like it very much', 'I don't like it at all', and 'prefer not to say'.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting liking school is shown in Table 13.1. 'Prefer not to say' responses are not included in the table below.

Table 13.1 Percentage of participants reporting how much they like school

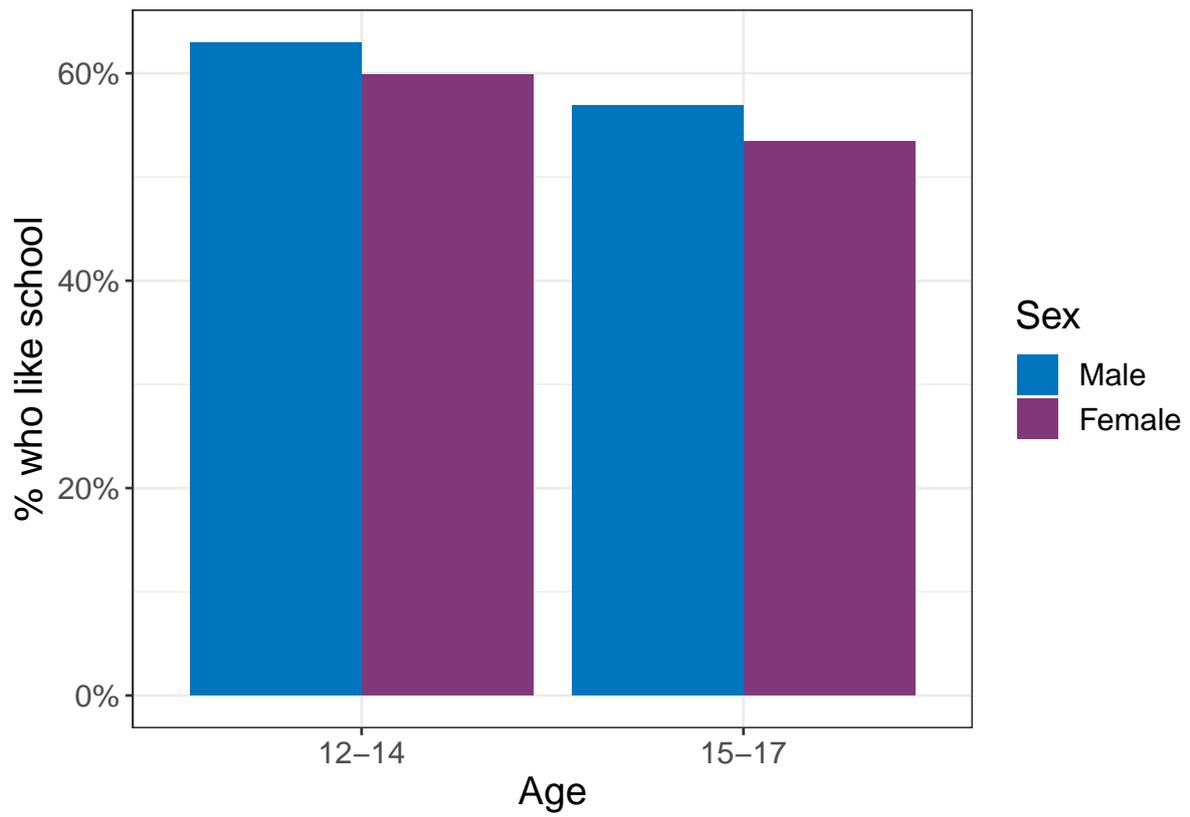
	12 to 14		15 to 17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
I like it a lot	14.4	16.5	12.1	11.5
I like it a bit	48.6	43.3	44.7	41.9
I don't like it very much	26.3	27.2	28.4	30.2
I don't like it at all	10.7	12.9	14.7	16.4

Among TeenCovidLife participants, 14% of male and 16% of female 12-14's reported that they liked school a lot. 12% of male and 11% of female 15-17's also reported this.

This question was also asked in the HBSC Scotland survey in 2017/2018⁵. In 13 year olds, 22% of male participants and 24% of female participants reported liking school 'a lot' compared to 16% of male participants and 15% of female participants for 15 year olds.

Figure 13.1 illustrates the percentage of TeenCovidLife participants who told us they liked school a lot or a bit.

Figure 13.1 Percentage of participants reporting liking school (a lot or a bit)



13.2 Pressure from schoolwork

Description

Participants who told us they were a school pupil (98%) were asked how pressured they felt about the schoolwork they were set. Participants selected from the following responses: 'not at all', 'a little', 'some', 'a lot', and 'prefer not to say'.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting feeling pressure from schoolwork is shown in Figure 13.2 and Table 13.2. 'Prefer not to say' responses are not included when calculating percentages in Table 13.2. A higher percentage of female participants reported feeling pressure from schoolwork. The percentage of people reporting feeling pressure from schoolwork was similar for those aged 12-14 and those aged 15-17.

This question was also asked in the HBSC Scotland 2017/2018 survey⁵. In 13 year olds, 32% of male participants and 38% of female participants reported feeling pressured by schoolwork 'some' or 'a lot' of the time. Rates of feeling pressure by schoolwork were higher in 15 year olds: 53% in male participants and 75% in female participants.

Figure 13.2 Percentage of participants reporting feeling a lot of or some pressure from schoolwork

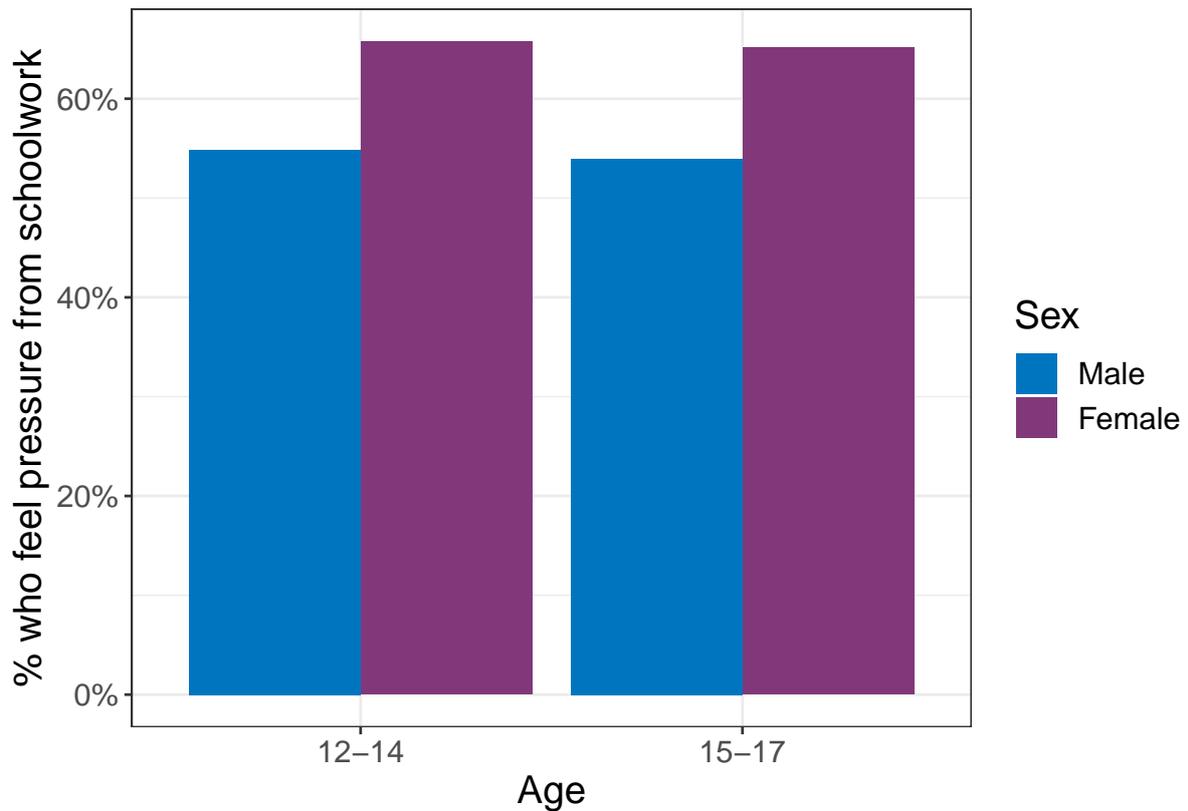


Table 13.2 Percentage reporting feeling pressured by schoolwork

	12 to 14		15 to 17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not at all	10.9	6.7	12.3	6.8
A little	34.2	27.5	33.8	28.1
Some	28.3	28.9	24.9	24.4
A lot	26.5	36.8	29.0	40.8

13.3 Adapting to schoolwork at home

Description

We asked participants who told us they were currently doing their schoolwork at home (90%) whether they found this transition to home working easy or difficult. Response options ranged from 'very easy' to 'very difficult'. Participants could also select 'don't know' or 'prefer not to answer'.

Findings

The percentage of participants reporting finding it difficult to adapt to doing schoolwork at home are shown in Figure 13.3 and Table 13.3. 'Don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses were not included in the results shown below.

44% of male and 50% of female 12-14 year old participants reported that adapting to doing schoolwork at home was either 'quite difficult' or 'very difficult'. 55% of male and 60% of female 15-17 year olds reported either 'quite difficult' or 'very difficult' to the same question.

Figure 13.3 Percentage of participants reporting finding it difficult to adapt to doing schoolwork at home during the COVID-19 lockdown

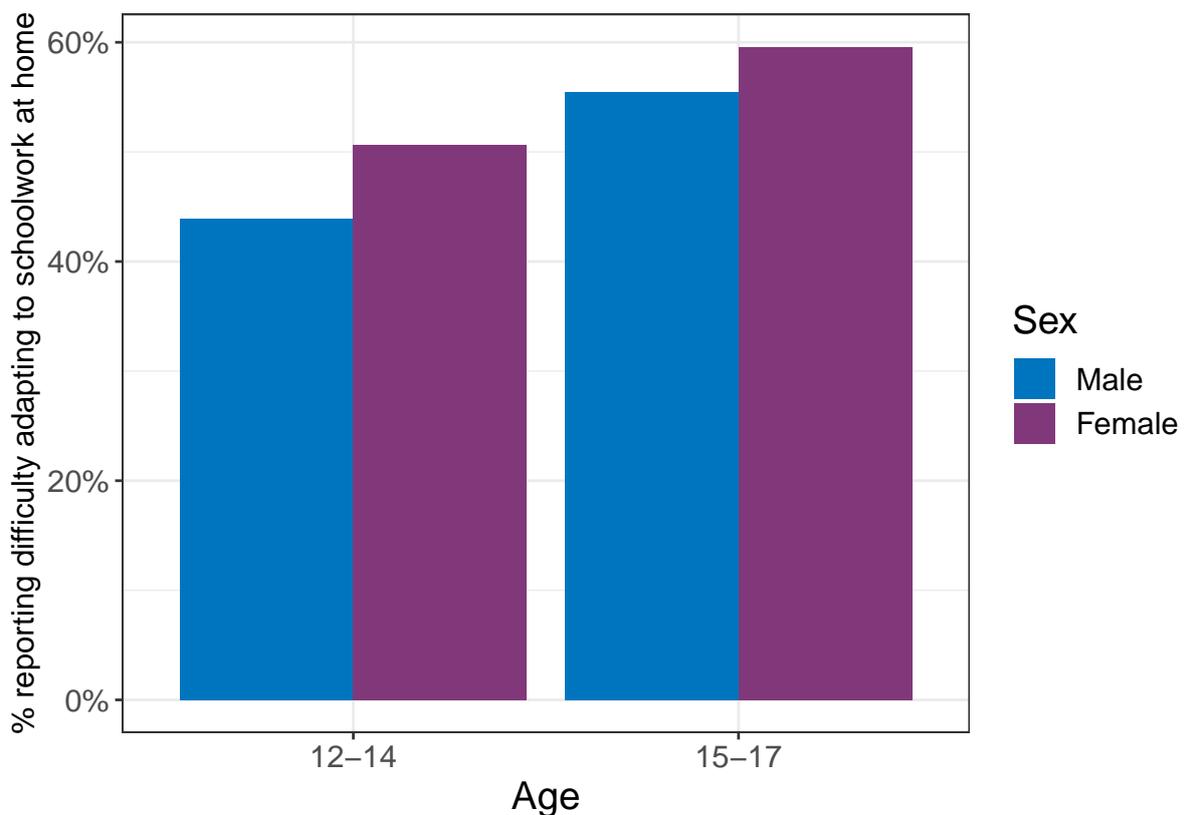


Table 13.3 Percentage of participants reporting finding it difficult to adapt to doing schoolwork at home during lockdown

	12 to 14		15 to 17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very easy	9.7	6.1	8.9	5.6
Quite easy	22.7	20.9	17.7	17.8
Neither easy nor difficult	23.7	22.4	17.9	17.1
Quite difficult	25.4	30.1	29.0	33.2
Very difficult	18.5	20.5	26.4	26.4

14 Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS)

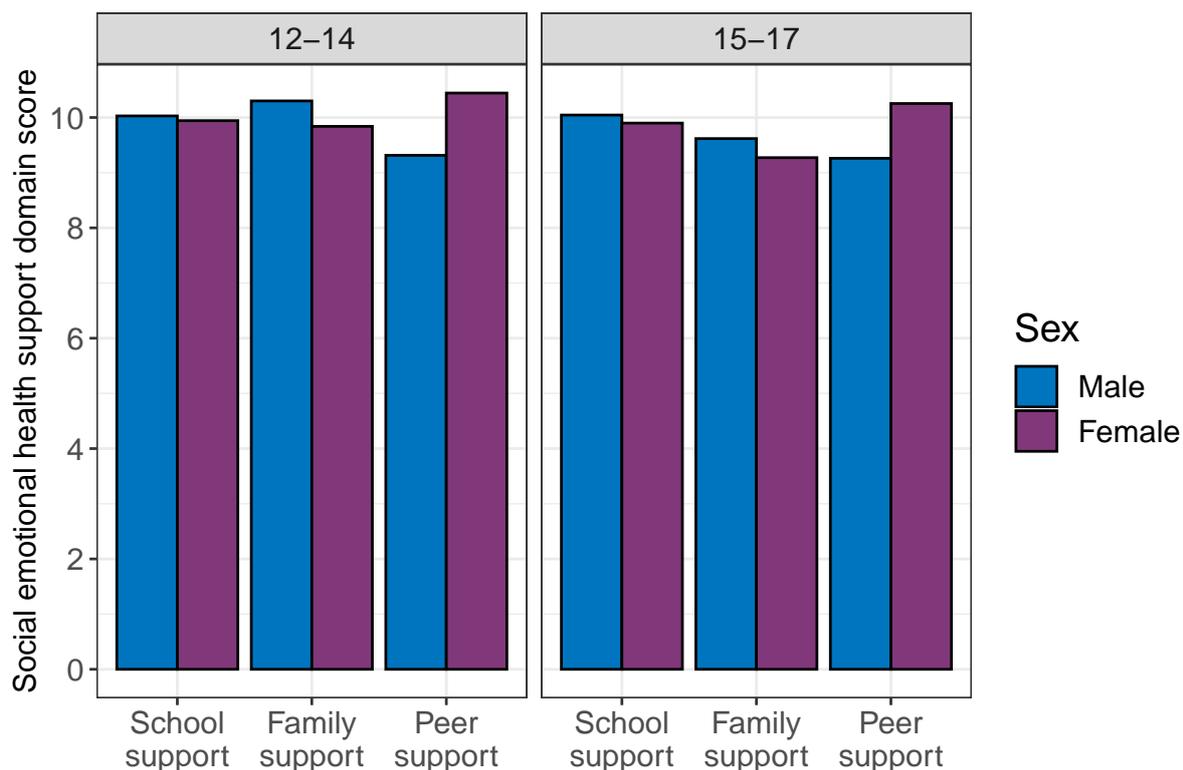
Description

The SEHS¹⁰ measures different aspects of a child’s social and emotional wellbeing. In the current survey, we included three questions each on school support, family support, and peer support. Three questions were also used to assess optimism. Participants selected how true each statement was for them, ranging from ‘not at all true of me’ to ‘very much true of me’. Alternatively, participants could select ‘prefer not to say’. Each question was scored 1 to 4. The scores for each set of questions were then summed together to make a total score ranging between 1 and 12, with higher scores reflecting greater support and greater optimism.

Findings

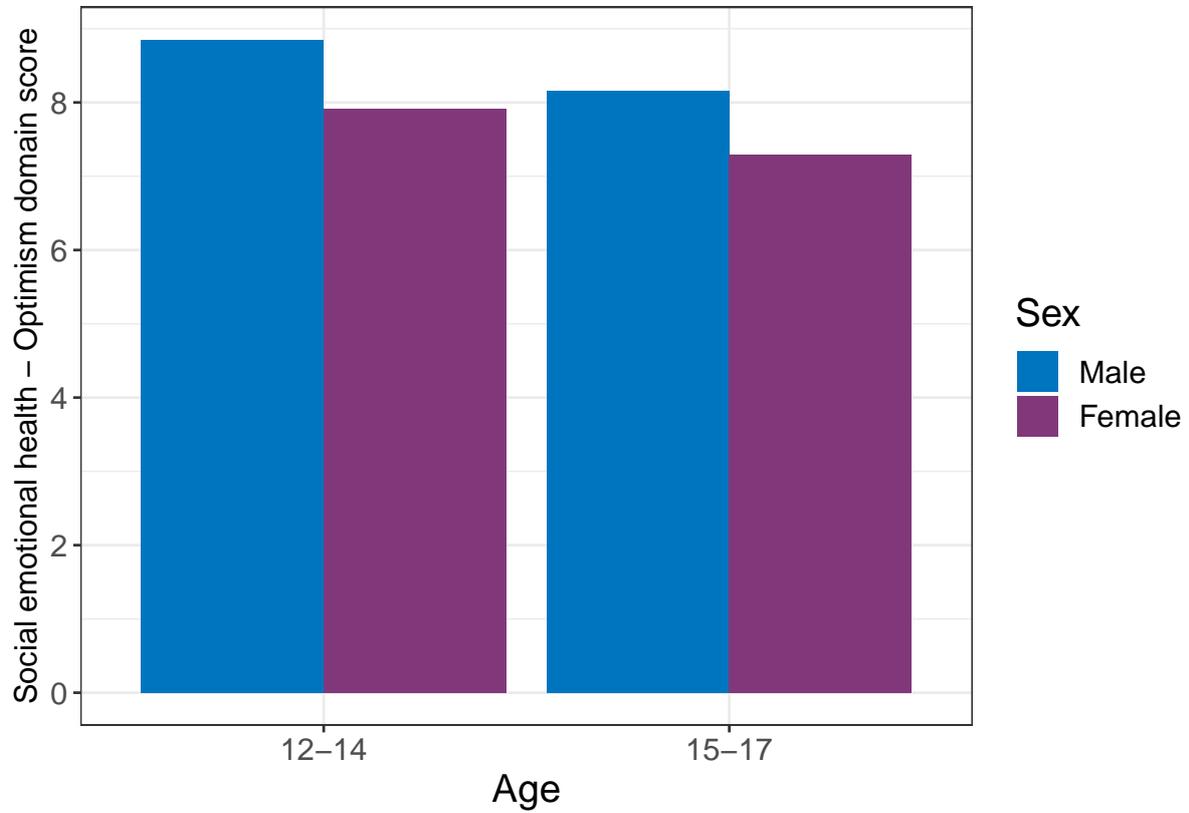
Figure 14.1 shows the average score on each of the SEHS support domains. Average scores on each support domain were high. Male participants recorded a slightly lower score on peer support than female participants.

Figure 14.1 Average score in SEHS support domains



The average score on the SEHS Optimism domain is shown in Figure 14.2. Older participants had slightly lower scores on optimism than younger participants. Female participants had slightly lower scores than male participants.

Figure 14.2 Average score on the SEHS Optimism



15 TeenCovidLife Survey 2

TeenCovidLife was set up to find out how young people living in Scotland are coping during the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey 1 sought to understand how those aged 12 to 17 were coping during the lockdown, adjusting to the new rules and restrictions placed on us all, and adapting to doing schoolwork at home. Although the COVID-19 restrictions are beginning to ease, life is still very different for young people. We are launching TeenCovidLife Survey 2 to find out how young people are doing now, how they are adapting to the ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions, and how they are feeling about returning to school, getting their SQA results, and planning for their future in times of uncertainty.

TeenCovidLife Survey 2 will be launching in mid-August. Those who took part in Survey 1 and who provided us with an email address will be emailed an invitation to take part in TeenCovidLife Survey 2.

New volunteers can also take part in our second survey. More information about Survey 2 can be found on the Generation Scotland website:

www.ed.ac.uk/generation-scotland/covidlife-volunteers/teencovidlife.

16 References

¹<http://www.generationscotland.org>

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