

Disparities in mental health and its determinants among Quebec high school students by language of instruction

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The survey

The Quebec Secondary School Youth Health Survey (QSSYS) 2016-2017

- Survey conducted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ), at the request of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS)
- Objectives of the survey:
 - *To draw up a portrait of the lifestyle, physical and mental health, and social adjustment of secondary school students in Quebec in 2016-2017*
 - *To collect information on the socio-demographic, economic and educational characteristics of secondary school students in order to study the links between these characteristics and physical and mental health status or lifestyle habits*
- 2^e survey cycle (1^{er} cycle in 2010-2011)

The Quebec Secondary School Youth Health Survey (QSSYS) 2016-2017

- Population targeted by the survey:
 - All young people in secondary school in Quebec (secondary 1-5)
 - Public and private schools
 - French and English schools
- Sampling done by socio-health region
- Three-level sampling plan, :
 1. School - with a probability proportional to their size
 2. Classes - according to the 5 levels
 3. Students - 2 versions of the questionnaire

The Quebec Secondary School Youth Health Survey (QSSYS) 2016-2017

- More than 62,000 young Quebecers participated in 2,900 classes (465 schools)
- Self-administered questionnaire of about 30 minutes, on a tablet computer
- Questionnaire completed during a class period
 - 91% response rate

The background of the slide features a dense, overlapping pattern of silhouettes of people of various ethnicities and ages, rendered in a solid orange-brown color. The silhouettes are positioned in various orientations, some facing forward and others in profile, creating a sense of a diverse crowd.

Report on disparities in mental health and its determinants among young people in secondary school, by language of instruction

Objective

- Comparing selected indicators of mental health and its determinants according to the language of instruction of Quebec high school students and documenting the differences

Language variable

- No 'standard' language variable
- Language of instruction (FR or EN)
 - Absence of the variables mother tongue and language spoken most often at home
 - English-speaking pupils can attend a French-speaking school and vice versa

Tableau 1 Répartition des élèves du secondaire selon la langue d'enseignement selon l'EQSJS

	EQSJS 2016-2017	
	Nombre d'élèves de la population visée <i>n</i>	Proportion %
Langue d'enseignement		
Français	349 937	90,2
Anglais	38 169	9,8
Total	388 106	100,0

Topics covered

- Mental and physical health
- The determinants of mental health
 - Lifestyle habits (sleep, weight status, perception of body appearance)
 - Risk behaviours (tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use and sexual behaviour)
 - Social adaptation (social environment, self-esteem and social skills, risk of dropping out of school, violence)



Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis

- Estimation method
- The risk difference and relative risk measure the difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French
- Uses 95% confidence intervals



Results

Mental health

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **Less** likely to have been diagnosed with ADHD (16% vs. 24%)
 - **Less** likely to have taken medication to calm down or concentrate in the 2 weeks prior to the survey (38% vs. 59%)
 - **More** likely to have been diagnosed with depression (10% vs. 6%)
 - **More** likely to suffer from eating disorders (3% vs. 2%)

Mental health

- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicators:
 - Young people diagnosed with an anxiety disorder
 - Young people with a high level of psychological distress

Physical health

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **More** people do not perceive themselves to be in good health (6% vs. 4%)

Lifestyle habits

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **More** likely to not meet sleep recommendations (51% vs. 32%)
 - Recommendations:
 - 9-11 hours for young people aged 6 to 13
 - 8-10 hours for 14-17 year olds
 - 7-9 hours for 18-25 year olds

Lifestyle habits

- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicators:
 - Physical activity for recreation and transport
 - Weight status (obese, overweight)
 - Perception of body appearance (dissatisfaction with their body shape)

Risk behaviours

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **Less** likely to have used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days (23% vs. 30%)
 - **Less** likely to report heavy drinking (5 or more drinks on one occasion in the past 12 months) (35% vs. 27%)

Risk behaviours

- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicators:
 - Proportion who have ever drunk alcohol (in their lifetime or in the past 12 months)
 - Proportion who have ever used drugs (in their lifetime or in the last 12 months)
 - Proportion who have ever used cannabis (in their lifetime or in the past 12 months)
 - Proportion of young people who reported being poly-substance users

Sexual behaviour

- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicator:
 - Proportion of young people who did not use a condom at last consensual vaginal sex (proportion 40% in both groups)

Social support

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **More** likely to report low support in their family environment (3% vs. 2%)
 - **Less** likely to report low support in their community environment (13% vs. 17%)
- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicator:
 - Low support in the school environment

Self-esteem and social skills

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **More** likely to have a low level of overall self-efficacy (28% vs. 21%)
- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicator:
 - Proportion with low self-esteem

Risk of dropping out of school

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **Less** likely to be at high risk of dropping out of school (12% vs. 18%)
- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicator:
 - Academic delay (repeated at least one grade)

Violence

- Young people in secondary education whose language of instruction is **English**:
 - **More** likely to have been bullied at school or on the way to school (50% vs. 30%)
 - **More** likely to be assaulted by gang members at school or on the way to school (5% vs. 4%)
 - **More** likely to have been cyberbullied (9% vs. 6%).
 - **Fewer** in romantic relationships have inflicted psychological, physical or sexual violence on their partner (19% vs. 25%)

Violence

- No significant difference between young people whose language of instruction is English vs. French for the following indicator:
 - Proportion of young people who have engaged in at least one direct aggressive behaviour
 - Proportion of young people who have engaged in at least one indirect aggressive behaviour



Conclusion

Main findings

- Overall, it is not possible to say that the mental health of young people whose language of instruction is French or English is better.
- 8 indicators stand out unfavourably for young people whose language of instruction is **English**
- 7 indicators stand out unfavourably for young people whose language of instruction is **French**

Main findings

- Both groups (young people whose language of instruction is French and young people whose language of instruction is English) show vulnerabilities in the following areas:
 - Social support
 - Mental health disorders
 - Violence

Main findings

- For some themes, there is more vulnerability for one of the two language groups:
- Among young people whose language of instruction is **English**, more vulnerability for indicators related to
 - To sleep
 - To the perception of health
- Violence at school or on the way to school
 - Largest differences for this indicator
 - Young people studying in English are more likely to be victims
 - In line with the results of the 2010-2011 survey cycle

Main findings

- Among young people whose language of instruction is **French**, more vulnerability for indicators related to
 - To drop out of school
 - To risky behaviour

Conclusion

- No one-sided conclusion about the presence (or not) of a gap in mental health between the two groups
- The results highlight important mental health concerns for students in both language groups
- The main drivers of young people's mental health are the same regardless of language group:
 - Social support from family, friends and school
 - Encouragement of self-esteem and school perseverance
 - Healthy and safe living environment

Questions



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