

Higher Smoking and E-cigarette Use among Young Adults with Mental Health Problems: An Analysis of Wave 4 of *Growing Up in Ireland*, the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland

Joan Hanafin, Salome Sunday, Luke Clancy

TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland, TU Dublin, www.tri.ie

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<https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/dataforresearchers/rmfregister/>

Ethical approval for GUI Wave 4 was granted by the GUI Research Ethics Committee, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland.



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BACKGROUND

Mental health problems (MHP) are associated with inequalities.

Worsening youth mental health, particularly during Covid-19 pandemic.

Youth mental health is an increasing public health concern.

Associations between MHP and tobacco use are well-established, and known to exacerbate inequalities.

Whether similar patterns exist for e-cigarette use is less clear.



OBJECTIVES



To establish prevalence of doctor-diagnosed mental health problems in Irish 20-year-olds

To examine smoking and e-cigarette use in this population and

To compare their use with 20-year-olds in the population without MHP



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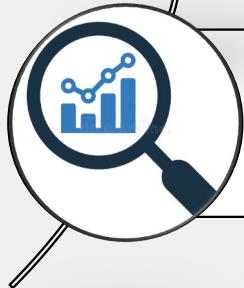
METHODS GUI LONGITUDINAL STUDY



Growing Up in Ireland: the national longitudinal study of children and young people in Ireland. Since 2006, the study has provided Government with an evidence base for informed policy decisions.



Growing Up in Ireland has 2 cohorts ('98 and '08). We use data from 5,190, 20 year-olds from Wave 4 of Cohort '98 (formerly Child Cohort) collected in 2018/19.



All our analyses were performed using STATA version 16.1.



METHODS VARIABLES

Questions about mental health in GUI Surveys

Have you ever been diagnosed with depression or anxiety by a doctor/ psychologist/ psychiatrist?
Yes/No

Apart from depression or anxiety, have you ever been diagnosed with another psychological or psychiatric illness/disorder by a doctor/ psychologist/ psychiatrist? Yes/No



METHODS VARIABLES

Questions about smoking and e-cigarettes in GUI Surveys

Smoking

Have you ever smoked a cigarette? Yes/No.

Which of the following best describes you? Only ever tried smoking once or twice/ Used to smoke but not now/ Smoke occasionally/ Smoke daily

E-cigarette use

Have you ever tried an e-cigarette or "vaping"? Yes/No

How often, if at all, do you currently use an electronic cigarette? Daily/ Less than daily, but at least once a week/ Less than weekly, but at least once a month/ Less than monthly/ Not at all



RESULTS

Prevalence of depression/ anxiety

	Ever been diagnosed with depression or anxiety by a doctor N (%)
Yes	949 (18.4)
No	4194 (81.6)
Total	5143 (100.0)

Table 1: Prevalence of doctor-diagnosed depression/anxiety in 20-year-olds

RESULTS

Prevalence of other MHP

	Have you ever been diagnosed with another psychological or psychiatric illness/disorder by a doctor/ psychologist/ psychiatrist? N (%)
Yes	253 (4.9)
No	4887 (95.1)
Total	5140 (100.0)

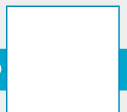
Table 2: Prevalence of other psychological or psychiatric illness/ disorder in 20-year-olds

RESULTS

Smoking and E-cigarette use

Doctor-diagnosed mental health/depression/anxiety/other psychiatric disorder				p. <.05
	No	Yes	Total	
	4182 (80.6)	1008 (19.4)	5190 (100.0%)	
Ever-Smoked				
No	1126 (27.2)	218 (21.7)	1344 (26.1)	
Yes	3018 (72.8)	789 (78.3)	3807 (73.9)	0.03
Current Smoking				
No	2710 (64.8)	534 (53.0)	3244 (62.5)	
Yes	1472 (35.2)	474 (47.0)	1946 (37.5)	0.00
Ever used e-cigarettes				
No	2256 (54.5)	435 (43.1)	2691 (52.2)	
Yes	1886 (45.5)	574 (56.9)	2460 (47.8)	0.00
Current e-cigarette use				
No	3659 (87.5)	841 (83.4)	4500 (86.7)	
Yes	522 (12.5)	168 (16.6)	690 (13.3)	0.03

Table 3: Smoking and e-cigarette use in 20-year-olds with and without MHP

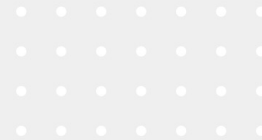


Conclusions

Mental health problems are common in 20-year-olds (1 in 5 professionally diagnosed).

Our data do not include other mental health problems which were not reported or not doctor-diagnosed.

Similar to general population with MHP, there is significantly higher smoking prevalence in 20-year-olds with MHP.

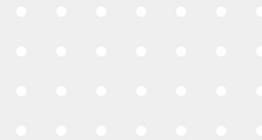


Conclusions

Similar associations with MHP exist for e-cigarette use as have been shown to exist for smoking.

No evidence that e-cigarettes were being used for smoking cessation.

There is a need for targeted education and cessation support to reduce the significantly higher rates of smoking and e-cigarette use in this vulnerable group.



Contact

Professor Joan Hanafin, Director of Social Research

E: jhanafin@tri.ie

Prof Luke Clancy, Director General

E: lclancy@tri.ie

TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland
TU Dublin, Dublin 2.

W: www.tri.ie

