



**Growing Up**  
**in Ireland**  
National Longitudinal  
Study of Children

# Chronic illness in Irish children

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# Overview

- Foundations of health
- Growing Up in Ireland cohort
- General health
- Prevalence of chronic illness
- Impact on chronic illness on daily life activities
- Strengths and Difficulties
- Socioeconomic factors
- Conclusions
- Open questions

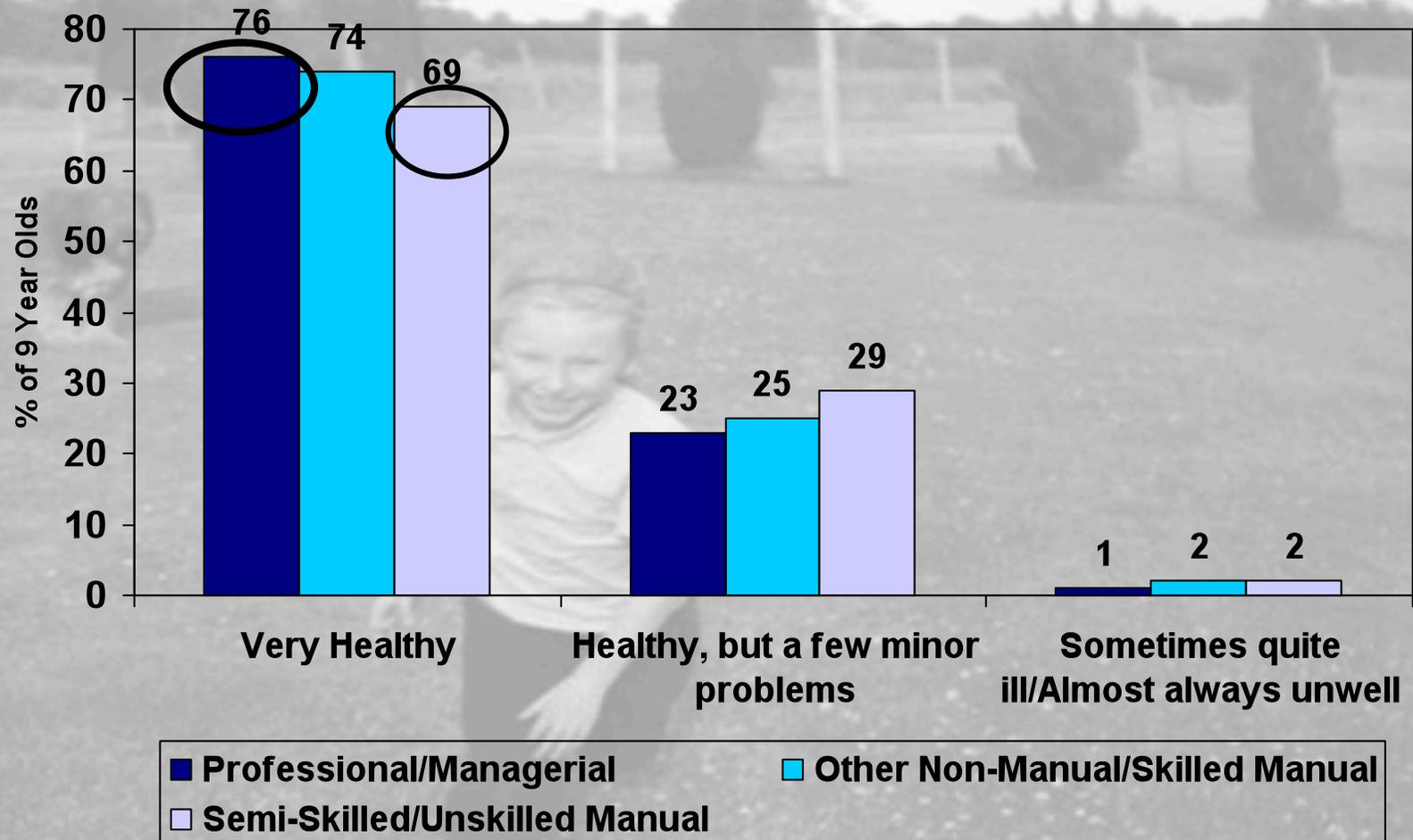
# Foundations of health

- Shaped by
  - Biological
  - Psychological
  - Environmental
  - Social
  - SpiritualFactors
- Health outcomes
  - Interaction of genetic & environmental influences
  - Begin in womb - perhaps earlier

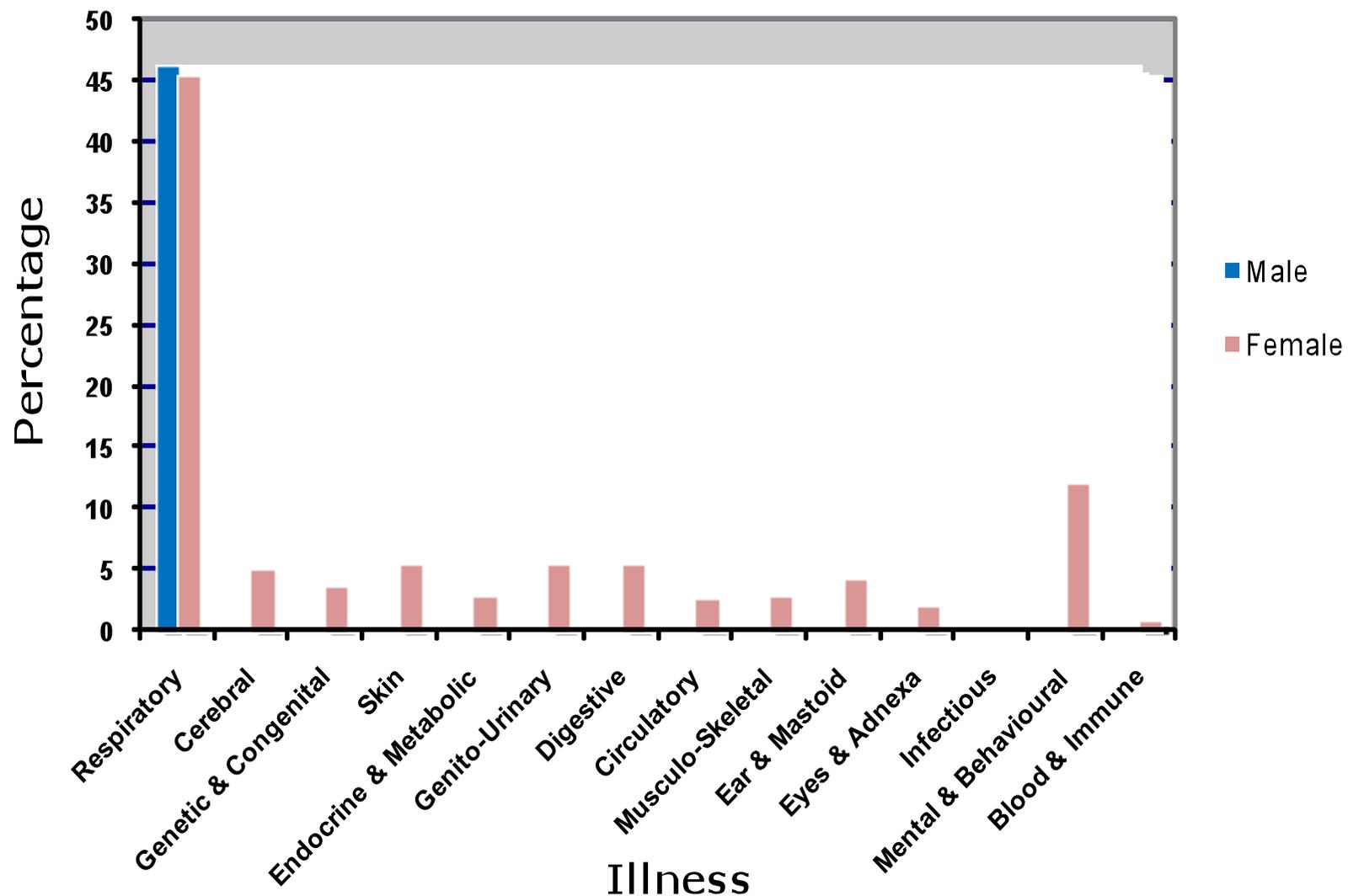
# Growing Up in Ireland

- National Longitudinal Study of Children
- Data of 8,570 nine-year old children, and their families
- Generated through the primary school system
- A representative sample of 910 schools participated; the sample of children and their families was randomly selected from within the schools

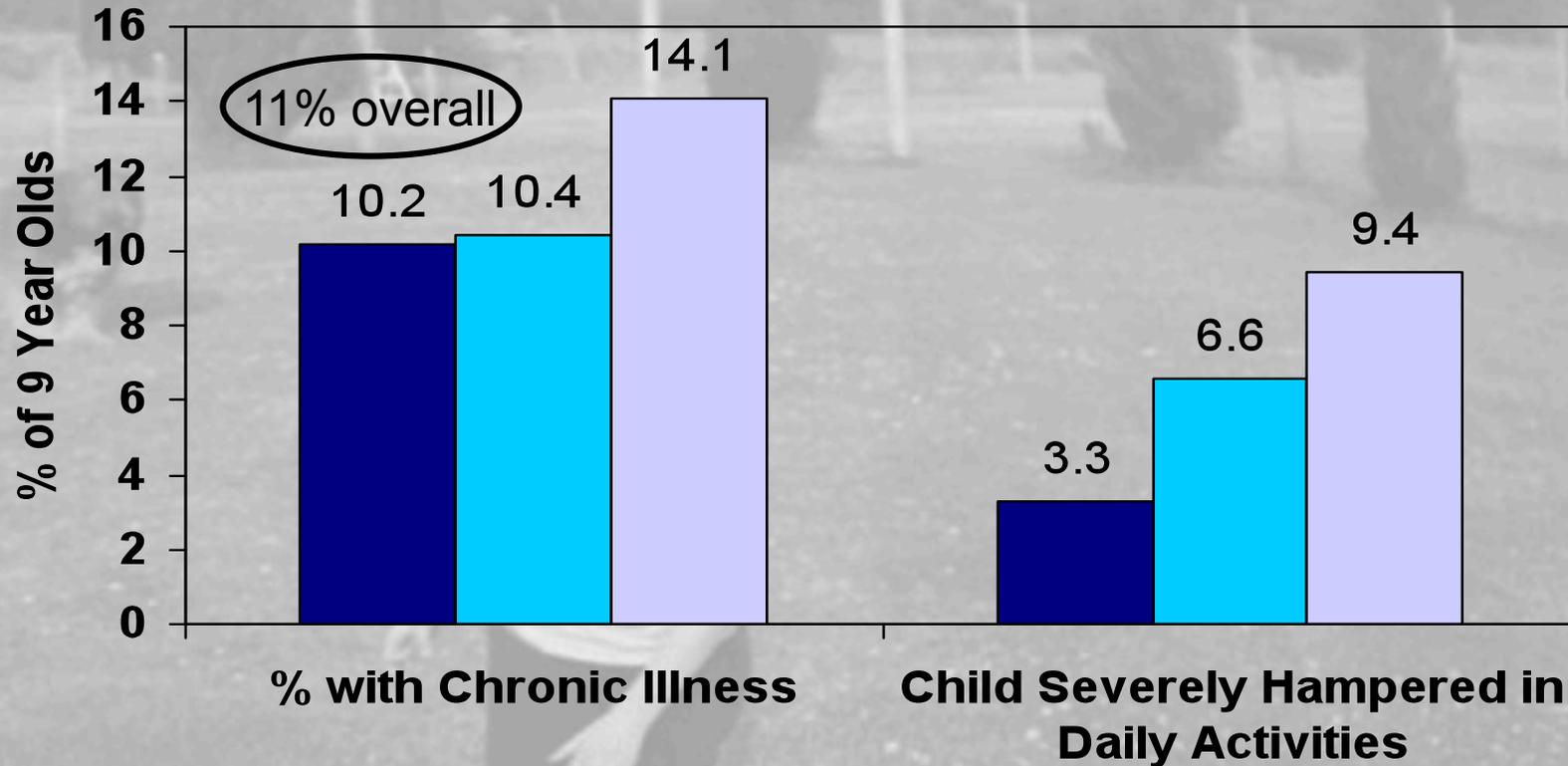
# What do mothers think of their children's health?



## Chronic illness and gender - 9 year old cohort



# Chronic Illness and daily activities



■ Professional/Managerial      ■ Other Non-Manual/Skilled Manual  
□ Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Manual

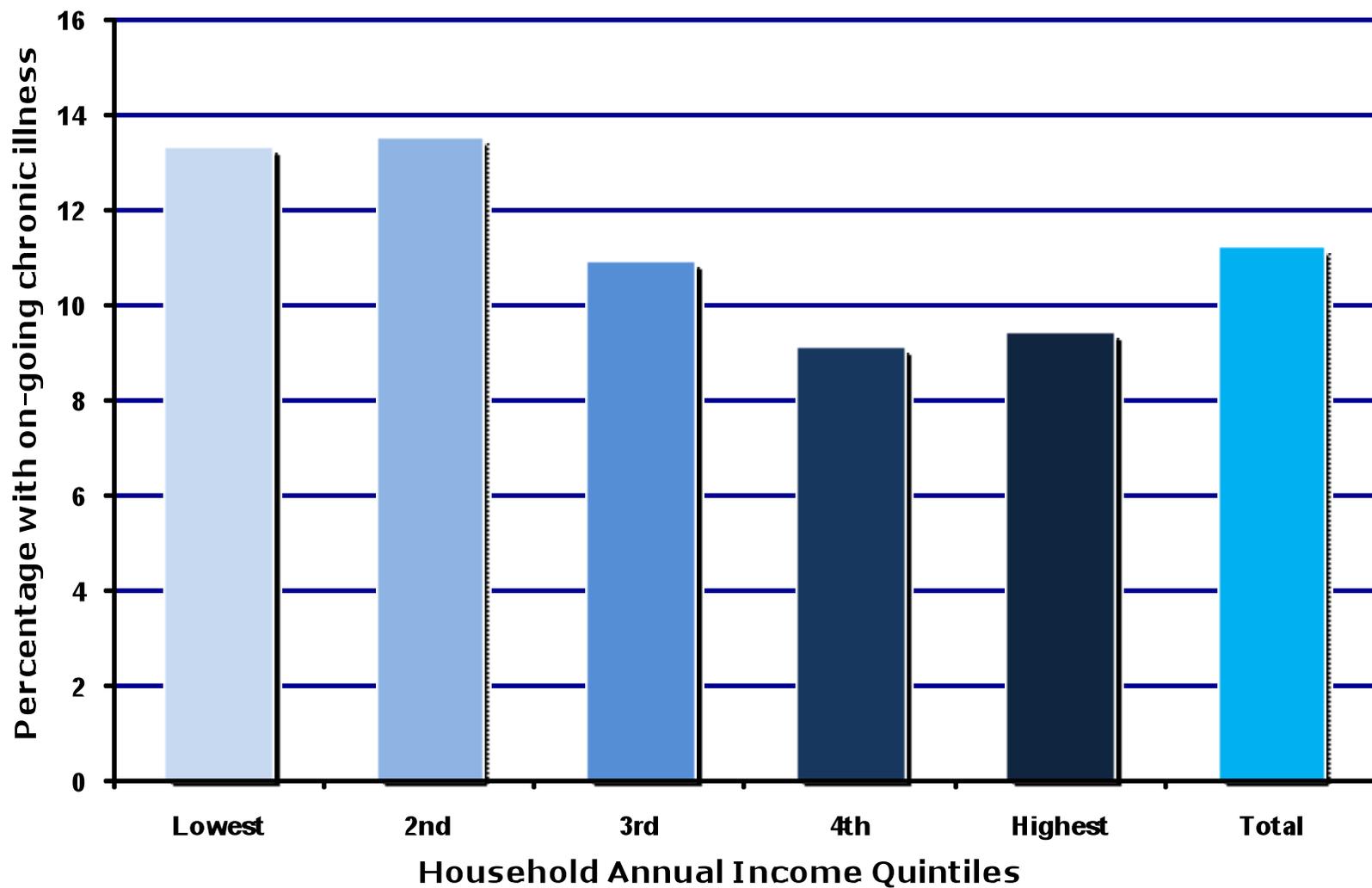
# Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

- Short behavioural screening questionnaire
- Used by clinicians & educationalists
  - 3 - 16 year olds
- 5 domains
  - Emotional
  - Conduct
  - Hyperactivity/inattention
  - Peer relationships
  - Prosocial behaviour

# Chronic illness & SDQ

Domain	Abnormal SDQ Scores (%)	
	No chronic disease	Chronic disease
Emotional	12.5	25.8
Conduct	8.7	17.2
Hyperactivity	9.9	25.6
Peer problems	6.9	20.4
Prosocial	1.1	3.1
Total	5.5	20.0

## Ongoing Chronic Illness - Household Annual Income



# First results (I)

- The overall prevalence of chronic illness reported by mothers among the nine-year old cohort was 11% (gender-specific prevalence for boys: 13%, and significantly lower for girls: 10%).
- Respiratory illnesses accounted for almost half (46%) of all chronic illnesses, followed by mental and behavioural conditions with 19% (high gender dysbalance: reported for boys in 24%, for girls in 12%).

# First results (II)

- Children with a reported chronic illness had significantly more emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, peer-based and prosocial difficulties when compared with children without a reported chronic illness.
- Abnormal scores, based on the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) were found in 20% in children with a chronic disease, and in 5.5 % in children without a chronic disease.