



Low mood among 13-year-olds in Ireland

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Presentation to *Growing Up in Ireland*
Annual Research Conference
26th November 2014



Structure of Presentation

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2. Research questions
3. The data
4. The measure of low mood
5. Descriptive statistics
6. Modelling trends
7. Low mood and self-esteem
8. Summary
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Issues in the Literature

- Mental health a major component of illness in adolescence
- WHO, 2003 notes that “...the lack of attention to the mental health of children and adolescents may lead to mental disorders with lifelong consequences...”
- HSE, 2012 estimates 1 in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental health disorders – impact on capacity to cope and also with learning
- Adolescent depression associated with range of problems:
- Substance abuse; Academic problems; Physical health problems; Increase risk of suicide (Horowitz and Garber, 2006)



Issue in the Literature

Adolescent depression related to:

- **gender** - females more likely to be depressed (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1990; Wade, Cairney and Prevaling, 2002)
- **social environments and relationships** – family and peer relationships; conflict; peer reflection (Ropee, 1997; Nolan, Flynn and Garber, 2003)
- **obesity and body-image** (Roberts and Duong, 2013). Body-image found to be more important than measured BMI
- **maternal depression** (Brook-Gunn et al., 2001; Hangaard, 2009; Rice et al., 2006; Uhi and Grow, 2004)
- Self-esteem and depression (Orth et al., 2008)



Research Questions

- RQ1 - What factors are associated with low mood and depression at 13 years of age?
- RQ2 - Specifically, are there gender differences in low mood and depression at 13 years of age?
- RQ3 - How is low mood related to self-esteem?



The Data

- ***Growing Up in Ireland*** 13-year-olds – probability sample of 7,300 young people
- Second wave of ***Growing Up in Ireland*** Child Cohort. First wave recruited and interviewed at 9 years of age 2007/2008. Re-interviewed at 13 years in August 2011 to March 2012
- All data reweighted to ensure representativeness
- Intensive interviews in the homes of the young people – data used are from young people themselves as well as their main caregiver (usually mother)



The Measure of Low Mood

- **Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (SMFQ)** - 13-item self-report measure of low mood in children and adolescents
- Examples of items: *I felt miserable or unhappy; I didn't enjoy anything at all; I felt lonely; I hated myself*
- Response categories: True; Sometimes; Not true ('2'; '1'; '0' – range 0-26)
- Internal reliability among 13-year-olds in ***Growing Up in Ireland*** of 0.84
- Not a clinical measure of depression – a screener. Referred to throughout presentation as “low mood”.
- No agreed cut-offs available – we take top decile in the distribution (10.2 per cent of 13-year-olds)

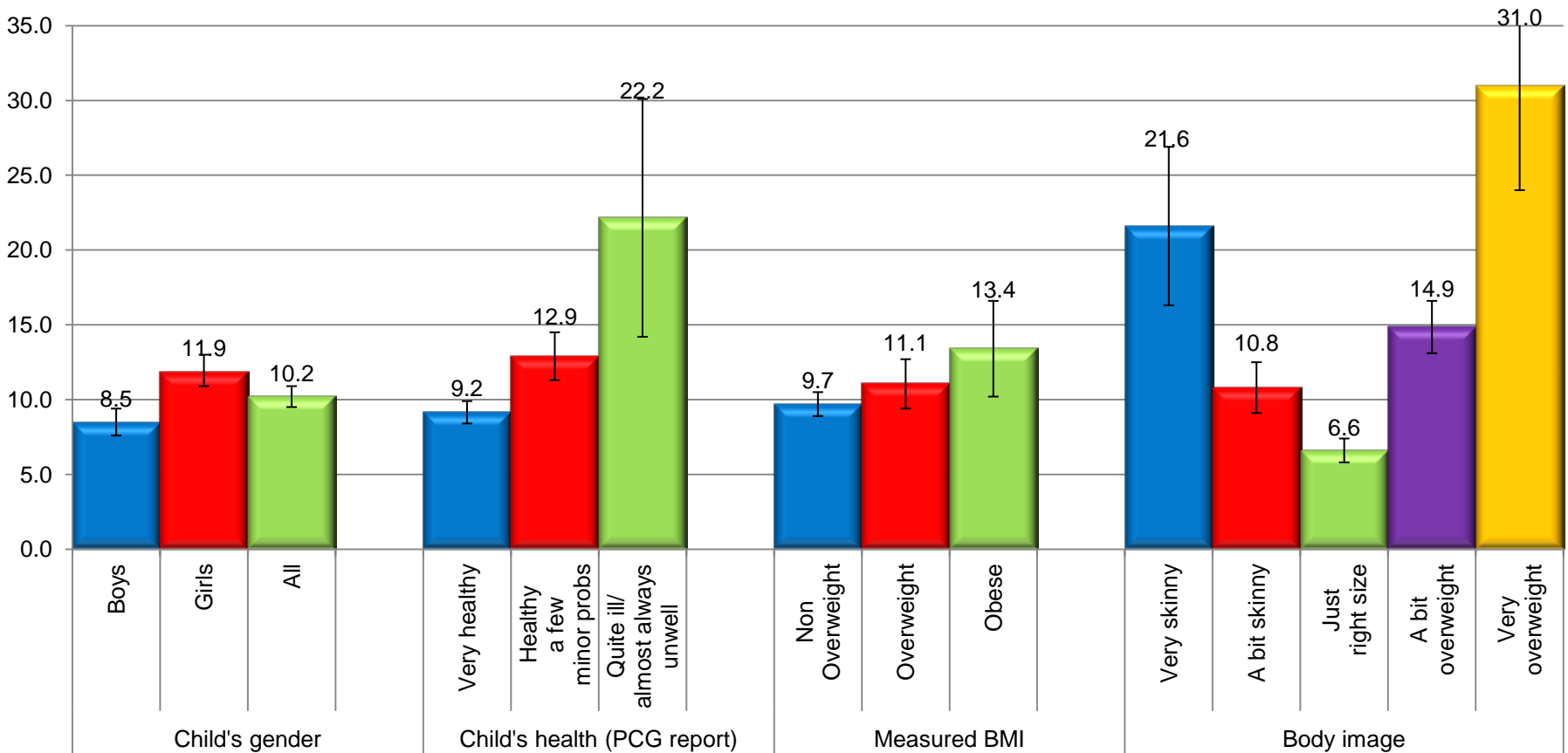


Results



Percentage of 13-year-olds in “low mood” group

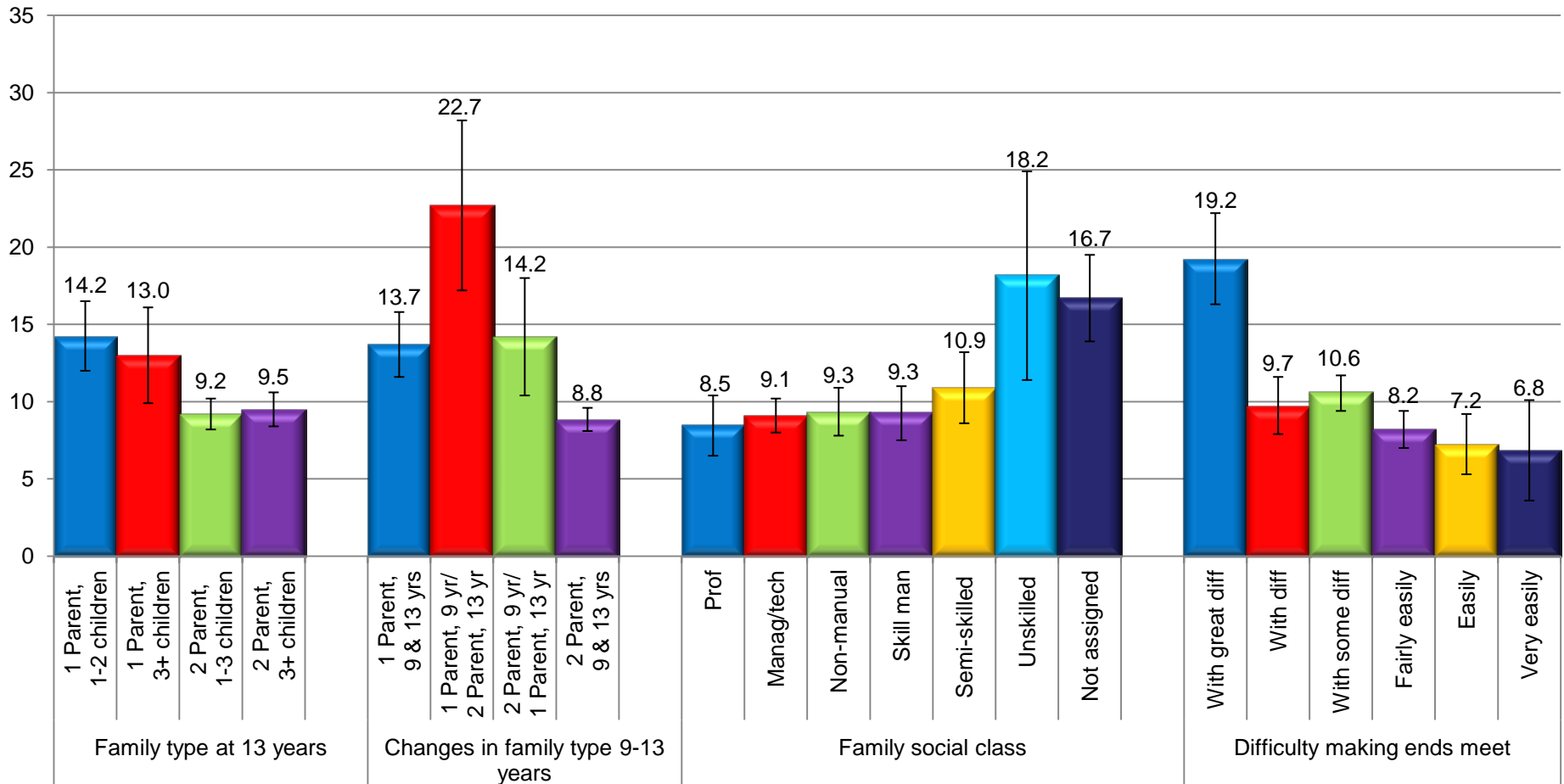
Child’s Characteristics





Percentage of 13-year-olds in “low mood” group

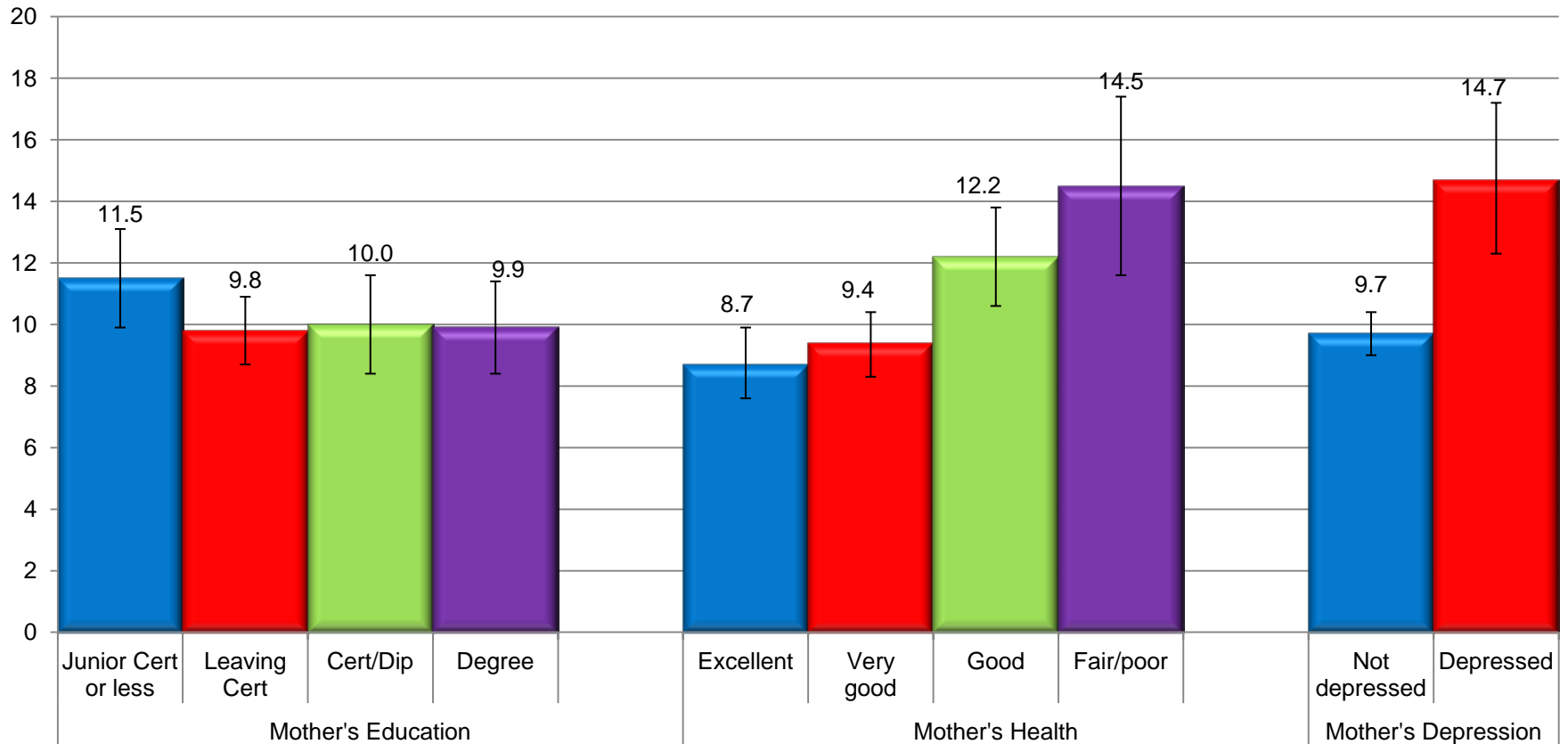
Family Characteristics





Percentage of 13-year-olds in “low mood” group

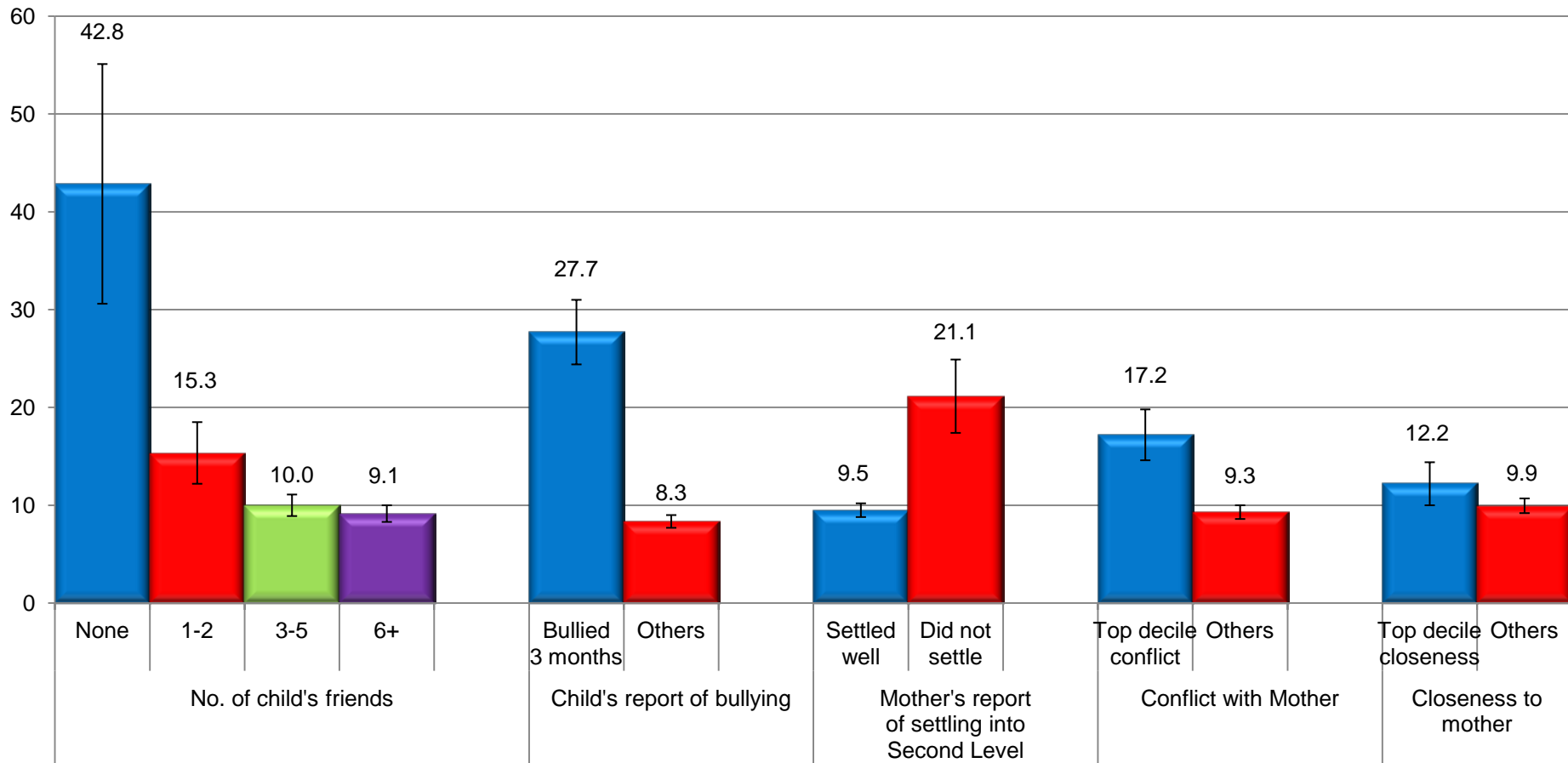
Mother’s Characteristics





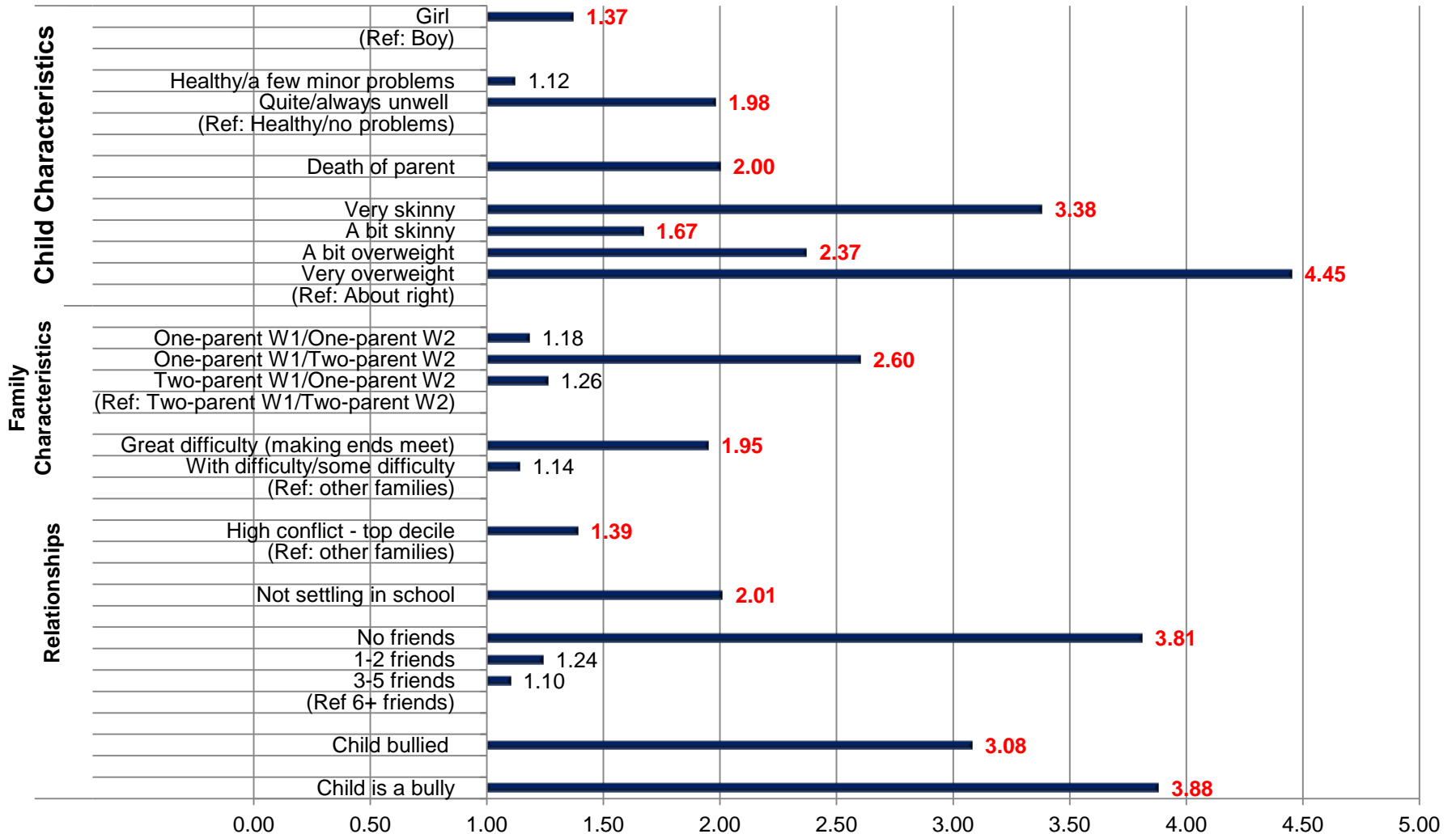
Percentage of 13-year-olds in "low mood" group

Child's relationships



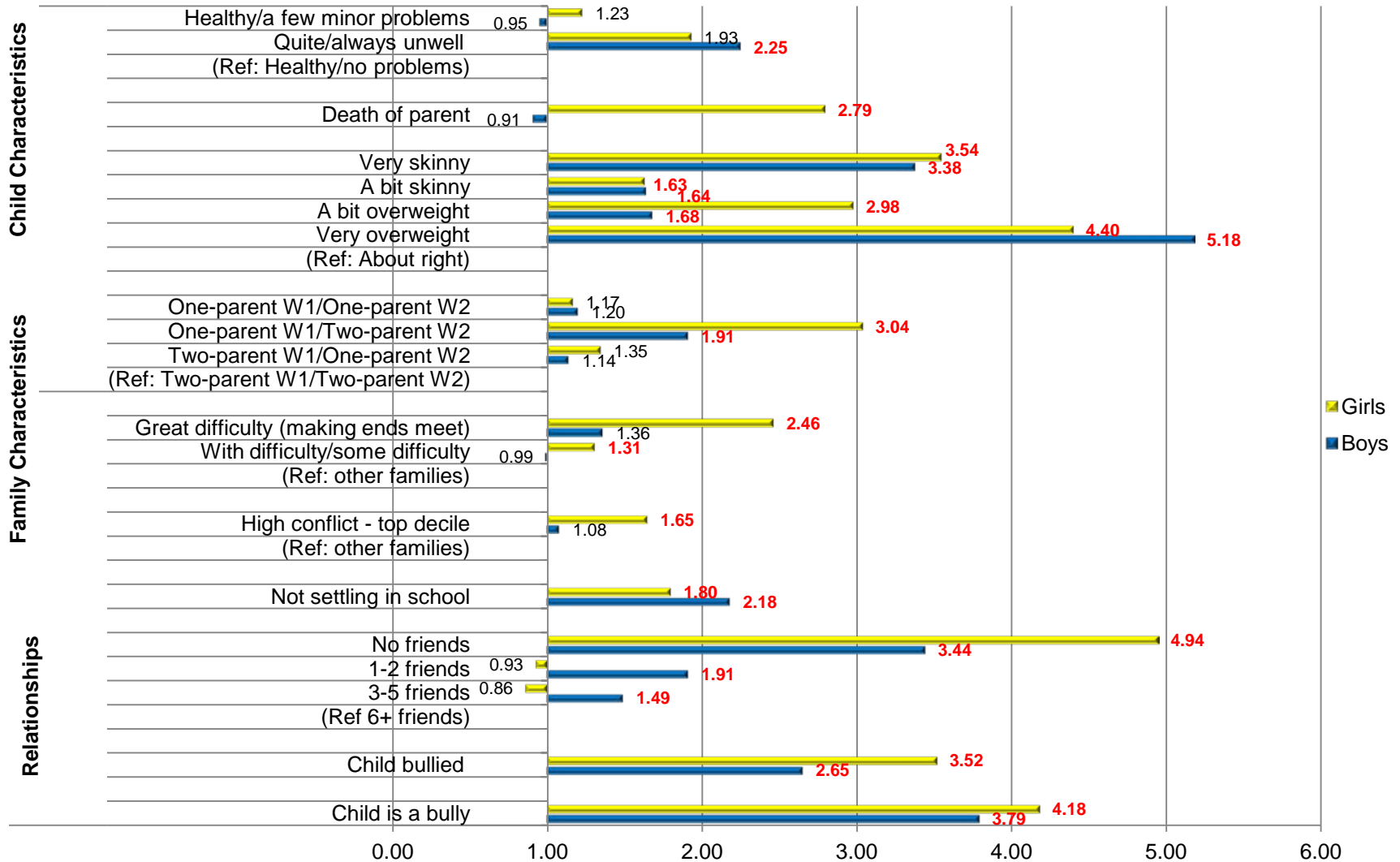


Adjusted odds ratios of being in top decile of low-mood All Children





Adjusted odds ratios of being in top decile of low-mood Boys/Girls





Low Mood and Self Esteem

- Strong relationship between low mood and self-esteem
- Self-esteem measured using Piers-Harris scale
- 60 item self-complete scale completed by 13-year-old
- Six sub-scales:
 - » Behavioural adjustment;
 - » Intellectual and school status;
 - » Physical appearance and attitudes;
 - » Freedom from anxiety;
 - » Popularity;
 - » Happiness and satisfaction
- Total scale based on the 60 items
- Higher the score the more positive is self-evaluation



Low Mood and Self Esteem

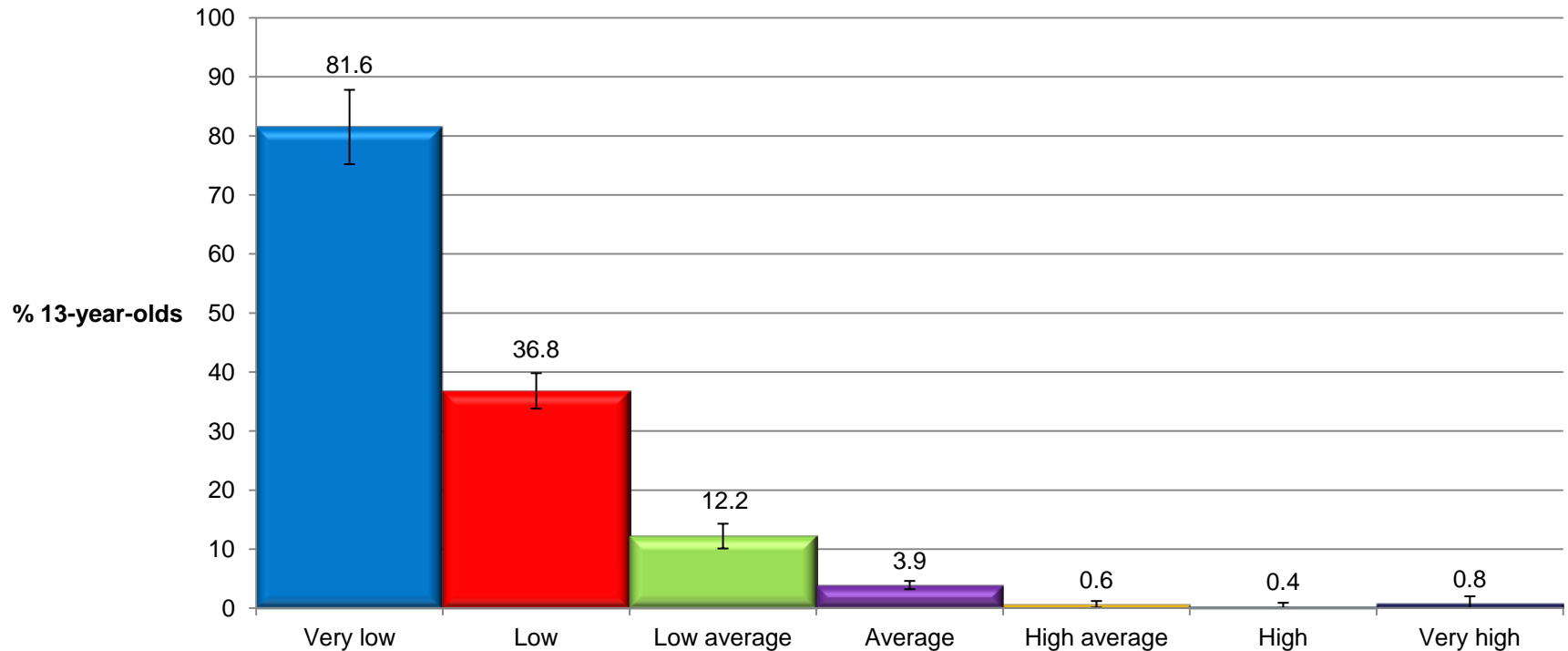
Using test developer's norms

- Piers Harris scores classified into:
 - Very low
 - Low
 - Low average
 - Average
 - High
 - Very high
- Pearsons correlation with low mood score
 - Total PH -0.639
 - Behavioural -0.507
 - Intellectual -0.446
 - Physical attitudes -0.359
 - Freedom from anxiety -0.582
 - Popularity -0.470
 - Happiness -0.514



Relationship between PH Total Score (self-esteem) and low mood

- Percentage of 13-year-olds who are 'low mood' in each self-concept category in Piers Harris Total Score



- Same relationship – not as strong – in respect of other Piers Harris subscales



Summary Findings

Low-mood among 13-year-olds associated with:

- Gender – higher for girls
- Child's ill health – sig for boys, not for girls
- Body-image significant – not measured BMI
- *Change* in family structure, not family structure – move from one- to two- parent family
- Recent death of a parent, sig for girls, not for boys
- Living in households experiencing “great difficulties” in making ends meet – sig for girls, not for boys



Summary Findings

- Relationships
 - Family – high parental conflict – not sig. for boys
 - Settling into secondary school – sig. for girls and boys
 - Having no friends – sig. for girls and boys
 - Being bullied or bully perpetrator – sig. for girls and boys
- Not related to:
 - Family structure
 - Level of Primary caregiver education
 - Primary caregiver health or depression
- Strongly related to all aspects of self-esteem – total scale; physical; intellectual; behavioural; happiness; etc.



Implications

- In general, the patterning of low mood is not structural – not socio-demographic
- Substantially associated with relationships
 - Family
 - School
 - Peer
- If structural, long- to medium-term to adjust (if at all)
- Family and social relationships are more malleable
 - Family
 - Settling in to school
 - Peer-bullying
 - Body image