



Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey

Preview of the 2011 results

- **Dirk Schubotz (YLT Director)**
 - Introduction, background
- **Gillian Robinson and Paula Devine**
 - Community Relations
- **Mark Shevlin**
 - Loneliness and Mental Health
- **Dirk Schubotz**
 - Sexual Health
 - YLT - future plans
- **Questions**

Prof. Ed Cairns

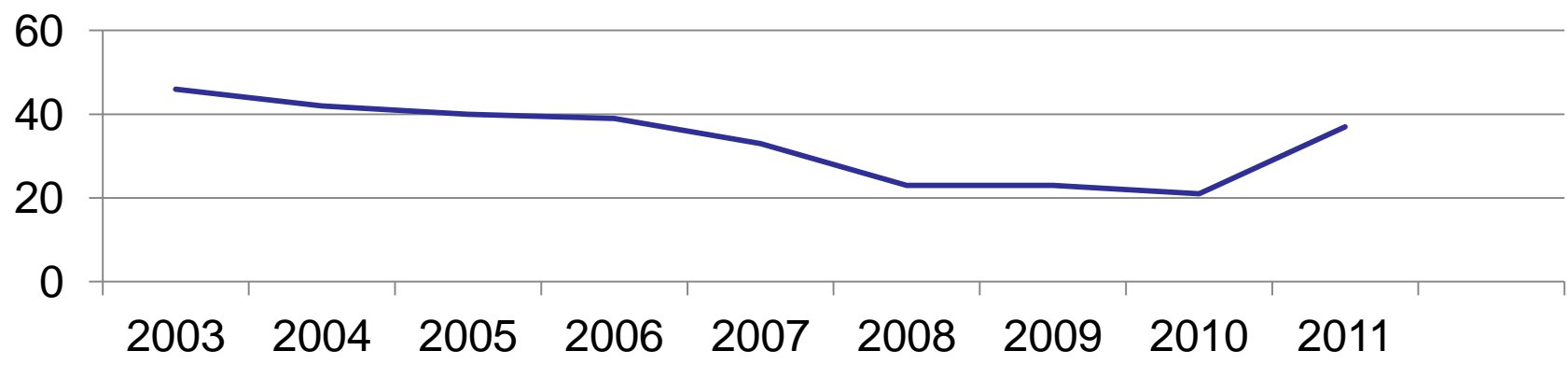


Sample

- Invited: all young people living in Northern Ireland who receive Child Benefit and celebrated their 16th birthday in February and March 2011
- Address files received from HMRC
- **Opt-out letter sent out in Oct 2011**
- Postal questionnaire sent out in November 2011
- Online version of questionnaire
- One follow-up ten days later

Response rate

- 1,434 responded (response rate 37%)
 - paper completions (93%)
 - online (7%)
- £500 prize draw (5x£100.00 cash)



Subject areas covered

- **Main areas:**
 - **Community Relations (including views towards minority ethnic groups)**
 - **Sexual experiences (both funded by OFMDFMNI)**
 - **Mental health and loneliness (funded by University of Ulster)**
- **Other areas:**
 - **Background questions**
 - **Superstition**



2011 Young Life and Times Survey

Background

Background

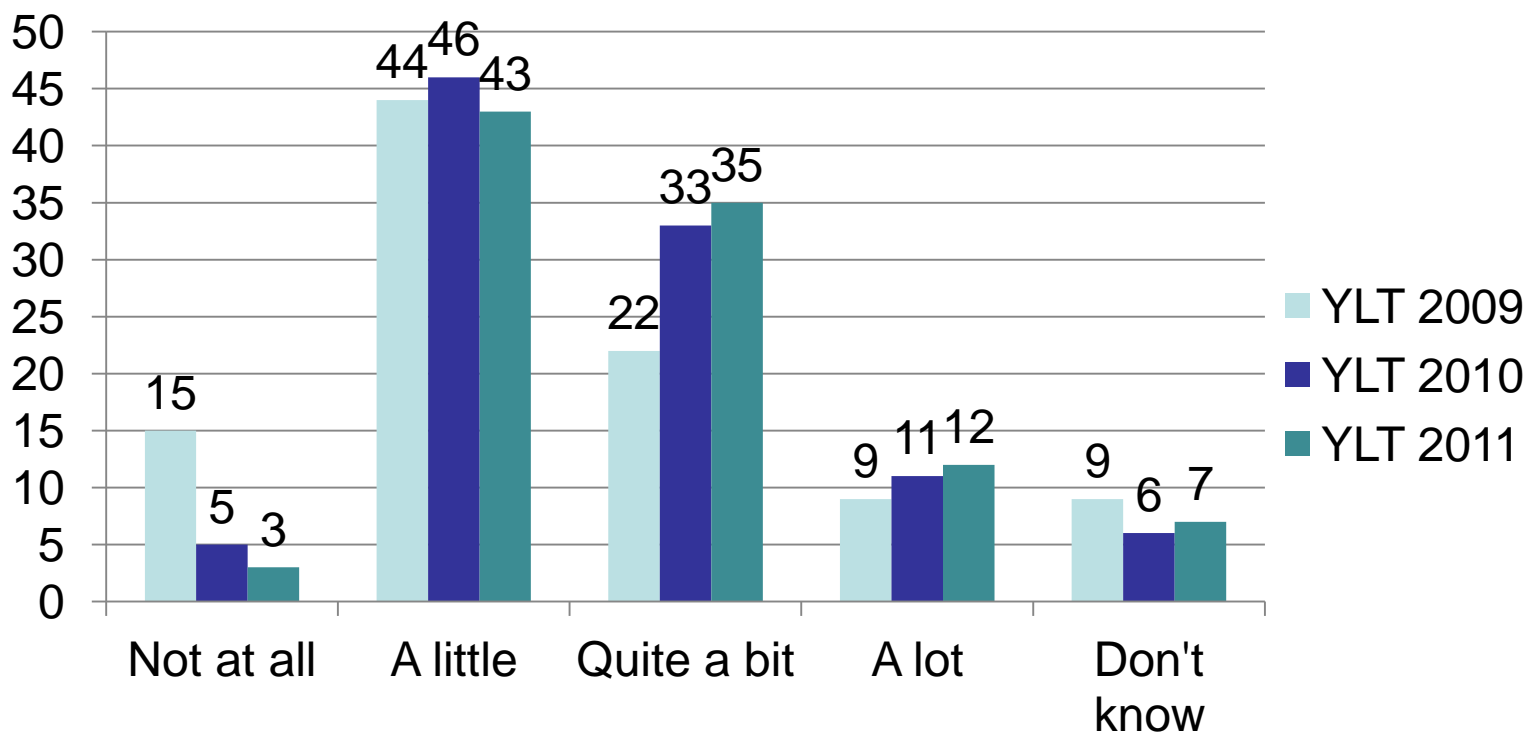
		%
Gender	Male	45
	Female	55
Religion	Catholic	42
	Protestant	36
	Other/no religion	22
Education	Planned integrated	7
	Grammar	48
	Secondary	38
	Other	7

Background

Sexual attraction	Opposite sex attracted	93
	Same/both sex attracted	7
Respondents living with	Both their parents	73
	Mother only	20
	Father only	2
	Mother at some time and father at some time	3
Family financial background	Well off	19
	Average	56
	Not well off	22

'Credit Crunch'

To what extent has the recent economic crisis ('credit crunch') affected you and your family (%)?



‘No more ‘us and them’ for 16 year olds?’

Paula Devine and Gillian Robinson



Research Update

No more ‘us and them’ for 16 year olds

Paula Devine and Gillian Robinson



E · S · R · C
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Today in addition to the quantitative data collected in the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to make additional comments, and we have selected some of these to help illustrate the findings.

Before looking at young people's attitudes and opinions it is helpful to first note their self-reported community background. In 2011, around four out of ten respondents said that they felt part of the Protestant community, and a slightly higher proportion felt part of the Catholic community. One in five said that they felt part of neither community, and this has risen since 2003 – see Figure 1.

Feelings about other traditions

It is difficult to answer a question about what religion of people you prefer to be around or what race you prefer to be around because I feel that this does not reflect my view that I choose to be around, or not be around, someone as a result of their personality not what their race or religion is.

This comment is illustrative of many made by the young people. This may suggest a blurring of the traditional ‘us and them’ categories (Catholic-Protestant) to encompass a wider range of identities (including religion, race or ethnicity). Table 1 is based on the ‘traditional’ religious divide, and asks how favourable respondents feel about people from the

Apart from specific troubled areas I would like to think community relations in Northern Ireland are generally good and racism is falling thankfully.

Still huge problems with prejudice in society between Catholic and Protestant societies; often the prejudice is blind bigotry. Many in society are disdainful of ethnic minority groups and immigrants.

Community relations research within Northern Ireland has often focused on the two communities – Protestant and Catholic. In 2004, Devine and Schubatz demonstrated that 16 year olds in Northern Ireland, despite growing up since the 1998 cease fire, and the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, identified with a ‘us and them’ mentality. However, since then, many societal changes have taken place in Northern Ireland. Devolution has been in place since May 2007. At the same time, immigration from an expanded European Union and beyond has resulted in a much more diverse society than ever before. So how much mixing takes place by those who turned 16 in 2011?

This Research Update draws on the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey which has been recording the attitudes of 16 year olds living in Northern Ireland to a range of community relations topics since 2003. We will primarily use YLT data from 2003 and 2011 to explore if the ‘us and them’ mentality still exists and what it means for young people

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Community Relations 2003



Community Relations 2011



Community Relations

Apart from specific troubled areas I would like to think community relations in Northern Ireland are generally good and racism is falling thankfully.

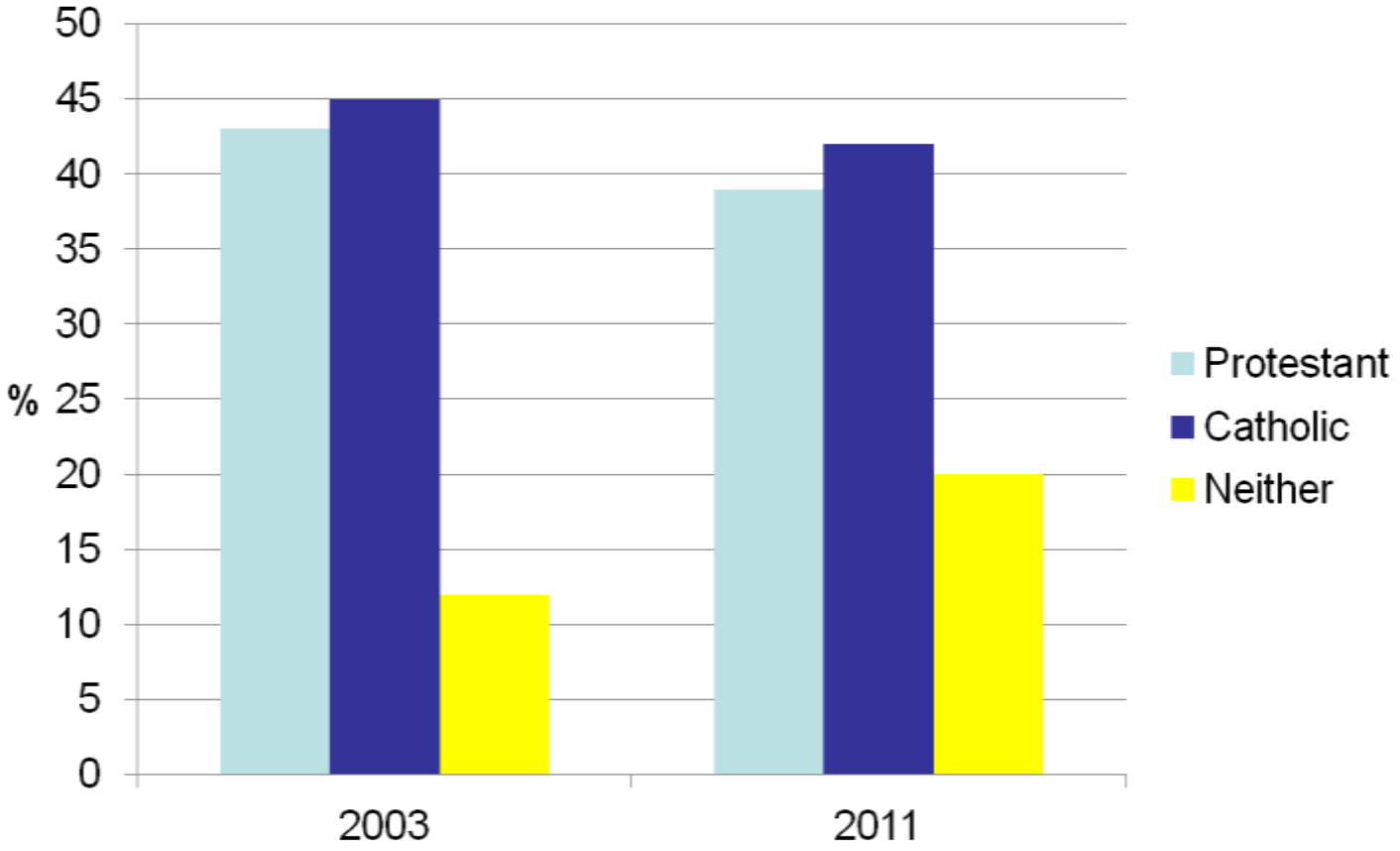
Still huge problems with prejudice in society between Catholic and Protestant societies; often this prejudice is blind bigotry. Many in society are disdainful of ethnic minority groups and immigrants.

Us and them?

- Research often focused on Us and Them: Catholic/Protestant
 - But Northern Ireland has changed since YLT started in 2003: devolution, immigration, recession etc.
- How much mixing takes place by those who turned 16 in 2011?

Community Relations

Figure 1: Religious community background



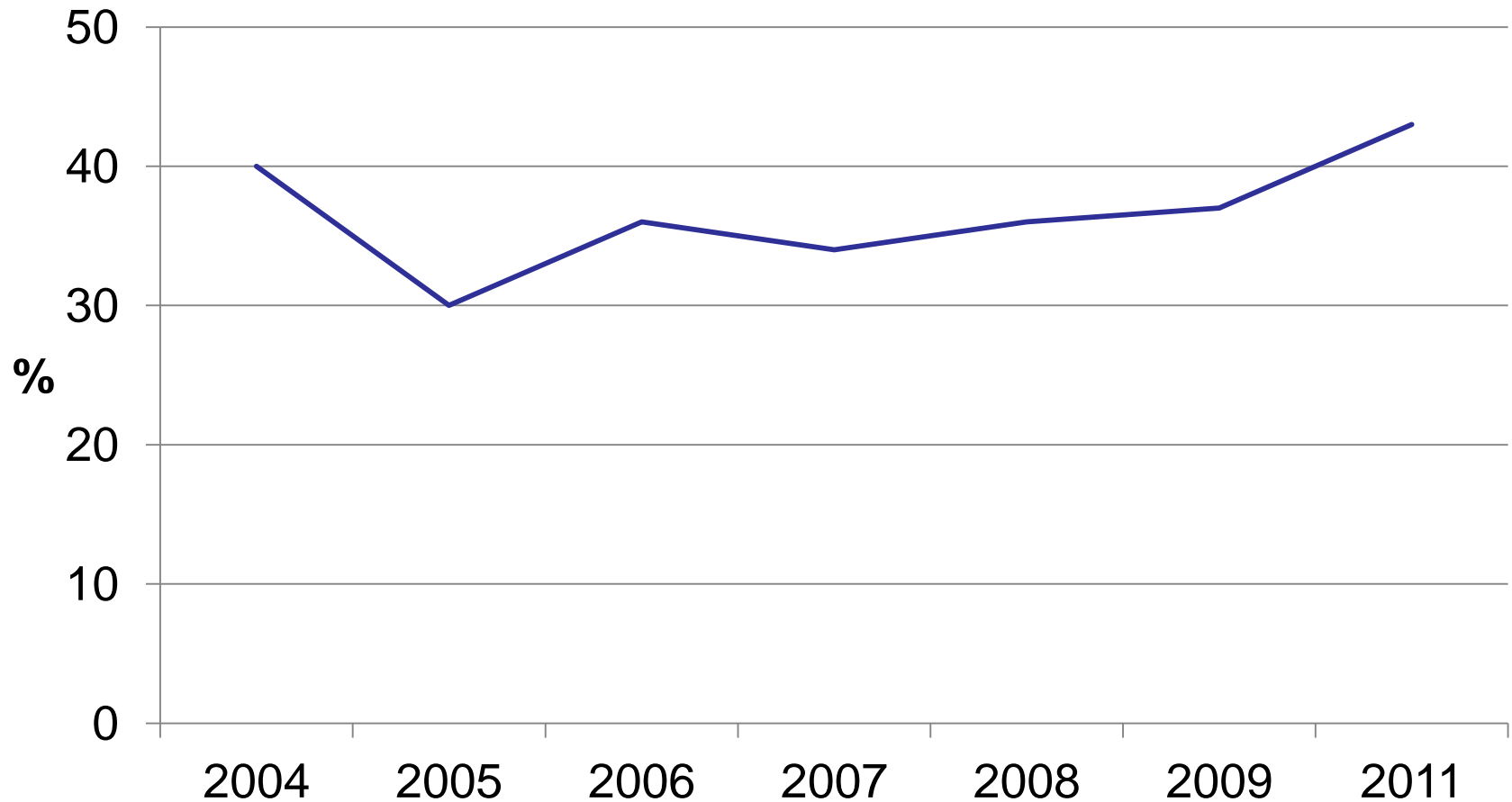
Other traditions

It is difficult to answer a question about what religion of people you prefer to be around or what race you prefer to be around ... I choose to be around, or not be around, someone as a result of their personality not what their race or religion is

Table 1: Feelings about other communities

	%					
	Feeling about Catholic community			Feeling about Protestant community		
	Protestant	Catholic	Neither	Protestant	Catholic	Neither
	2003					
Favourable	38	77	47	74	45	48
Neither	49	20	50	25	43	50
Unfavourable	11	1	2	1	9	2
	2011					
Favourable	43	69	36	68	41	32
Neither	48	29	55	30	50	58
Unfavourable	6	1	1	<1	6	1

Figure 2: Feelings about people from minority ethnic communities (% saying favourable)



Cross-community contact

Community relations have got better in some areas in Northern Ireland. But children get their opinions from their parents. ... I have no objection to other communities or making friends with them. I just haven't had the chance.

Because I attended an integrated primary school and now doing my A levels at an integrated secondary school I have always had a big mixture of friends from all backgrounds.

Cross-community contact

Table 2: How often do you socialise or play sport with people from a different background?

	%			
	Different religious community		Different ethnic background	
	2003	2011	2008	2011
Very often	27	36	13	19
Sometimes	25	30	31	36
Rarely	27	19	33	26
Never	19	12	21	16
Don't know	1	3	2	3

Cross-community contact

- Playing sport/socialising with other community more likely if attended integrated school or attended cross-community project
- Less sport/social contact with people from other ethnic backgrounds (55% v 66%)

People tend to feel more comfortable in their own religious groups or neighbourhoods.

People tend to stereotype about ethnic minorities and are afraid to come into contact with them.

It doesn't matter what your religion or colour is: I have loads of friends and religion and colour never comes into it.

Contact = friendship?

- More friendship across religious community:
 - 2003: 33% had no cross-community friends
 - 2011: 22%
- Higher levels of cross-community friendship if attended integrated school, or cross-community project
- Friendship is reciprocal, increased levels of phone/text contact – iPhone, Facebook?

Friendship

- 2006: 48% said all their friends were same race or ethnic background as themselves
- 2011: 26%

No more us and them?

- Hard to say!
- Increased sport, social and friendship contact across religious and ethnic communities
- But still a sizable minority who mix with people like themselves – opportunity?
- Evidence that friendship patterns are based on more than religion and ethnicity



2011
Young Life and Times Survey
Mental Health and Loneliness

Mark Shevlin

Loneliness

- Loneliness is an emotionally unpleasant experience resulting from inadequate levels or quality of social relationships.
- Loneliness is a common experience across the lifespan with as many as 80% of children and adolescents and 40% of people over the age of 65 reporting feelings of loneliness.
- The experience of loneliness is most common in adolescence and for many the experience of loneliness can be persistent, and for some emotionally painful.
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children reported that between April 2008 to March 2009 approximately 10,000 children contacted Childline regarding loneliness related problems.

Loneliness

- Loneliness has been linked to a range of social, psychological, and academic variables. Loneliness has been shown to significantly predict
 - poor quality peer interactions and peer relationship
 - negative self-concept and low self-esteem
 - psychological disorders (e.g. anxiety, depression, and phobias)
 - personality disorders and psychosis
 - dislike of school and poor academic achievement
 - poorer physical health and higher health care utilization

Loneliness

- Adolescent loneliness is an important issue but has received relatively little research attention in the UK. Indeed, the prevalence and correlates of adolescent loneliness are not well established.
- The YLT perfect survey to access a large sample of Northern Irish adolescents.
- Primarily interested in developing a profile of the typical lonely adolescent and examine the association with mental health.

Measures

- In addition to all the other YLT questions-
- The UCLA Loneliness Scale (UCLA-LS: Russell, 1996) consists of 20 items and uses a 4-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating greater loneliness.
- The UCLA-LS is the standard measure of loneliness and has been used in many international studies on loneliness.
- Possible scores range from 20 to 80 with higher scores reflecting greater levels of loneliness.
- The reliability for the scale in this sample was high (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

Measures

- The General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12: Goldberg & Williams, 1998) is a 12-item self-report psychiatric screening measure designed to assess non-psychotic psychiatric illness.
- It was scored using the Likert method (0-1-2-3) resulting in possible total scores ranging from 1 to 36.
- The reliability for the scale in this sample was high (Cronbach's alpha = .90).

Results

- A total of 1,434 participants completed and returned the survey.
- The mean UCLA Loneliness score was 32.82 (SD = 9.43).
- What does this mean?

Results

Study	Sample	Gender	Mean UCLA score (SD)
Russell (1996)	US University students N= 489	Male 203 Female 286	Total = 40.80 (9.50)
	US Nurses N= 310	Male 109 Female 201	Total = 40.15 (9.52)
Lasgaard (2007)	Danish Adolescents N= 379		Total = 37.46 (10.38)
Chang, Sanna, Hirsch, & Jeglic (2010)	US College students, N= 160	Male 38 Female 122	Total = 43.60 (8.90)
Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona (1980)	US College students N= 230	Male 102 Female 128	Male = 37.06 (10.91) Female = 36.06 (10.11)
Cheng & Furham (2002)	UK student N= 90	Male = 49 Female = 41 16-18years	Male = 38.26 (10.06) Female = 35.62 (6.75)
Uruk & Demir (2003)	Turkish students N= 756	Male = 408 Female = 348	Male = 35.47 (9.52) Female = 33.48 (9.75)
Lasgarrd & Elkit (2009)	Danish adolescents N= 379	14yrs	Total = 37.63 (10.12)

Results

- A total of 1, 434 participants completed and returned the survey.
- The mean UCLA Loneliness score was 32.82 (SD = 9.43).
- What does this mean?
- Are there any demographic predictors of loneliness?

Results

UCLA Score	N	Mean (SD)	t (df) p
Gender			
Male	641	32.64 (9.25)	
Female	774	33.01 (9.58)	-.75 (1413) .453
Ethnic Minority			
Yes	154	34.79 (10.4)	
No	1170	32.74 (9.3)	2.53 (1332) .012
Home Status			
Both parents	1033	32.57 (9.28)	
Single Parent	352	33.57 (9.75)	-1.71 (1383) .087
Disability			
Yes	155	35.57 (10.54)	
No	1252	32.53 (9.21)	-3.42 (1846) .001

Results

UCLA Score	N	Mean (SD)	F (df) p
Area of Residence			
Big city	107	33.52 (9.86)	
Suburbs	196	33.87(10.12)	
Small city	564	32.15 (9.13))	
Village	226	32.72 (9.55)	
Farm/country	298	33.04(33.04)	
Total	1391	32.78 (9.44)	1.508(4) .197
Socio economic status			
Not well off	58	32.76 (10.15)	
Not very well off	210	35.71 (10.03)	
Average	789	32.61 (9.41)	
Well off	291	31.77 (8.52)	
Very well off	14	31.21 (8.77)	
Don't know	45	30.80 (9.51)	
Total	1407	32.83 (9.43)	-5.32(5) .001

Results

UCLA Score	N	Mean (SD)	F (df) p
Religious Area			
Mainly Catholic	421	32.07(9.51)	
Mainly Protestant	457	33.29 (9.67)	
Mixed	489	32.59 (8.75)	
Total	1367	32.82 (9.43)	1.91 (2) .149
Religion			
Catholic	586	31.88 (9.00)	
Protestant	511	32.26 (9.00)	
No Religion	314	35.39 (10.33)	
Total	1407	32.81 (9.40)	10.66 (3) <.001

Results

- Different methods for identifying ‘lonely’ people based on ULCA Loneliness scale scores.
- To get a conservative estimate of loneliness the upper quintile was used, in this case 42.
- The ‘prevalence’ of loneliness was 15.6%.

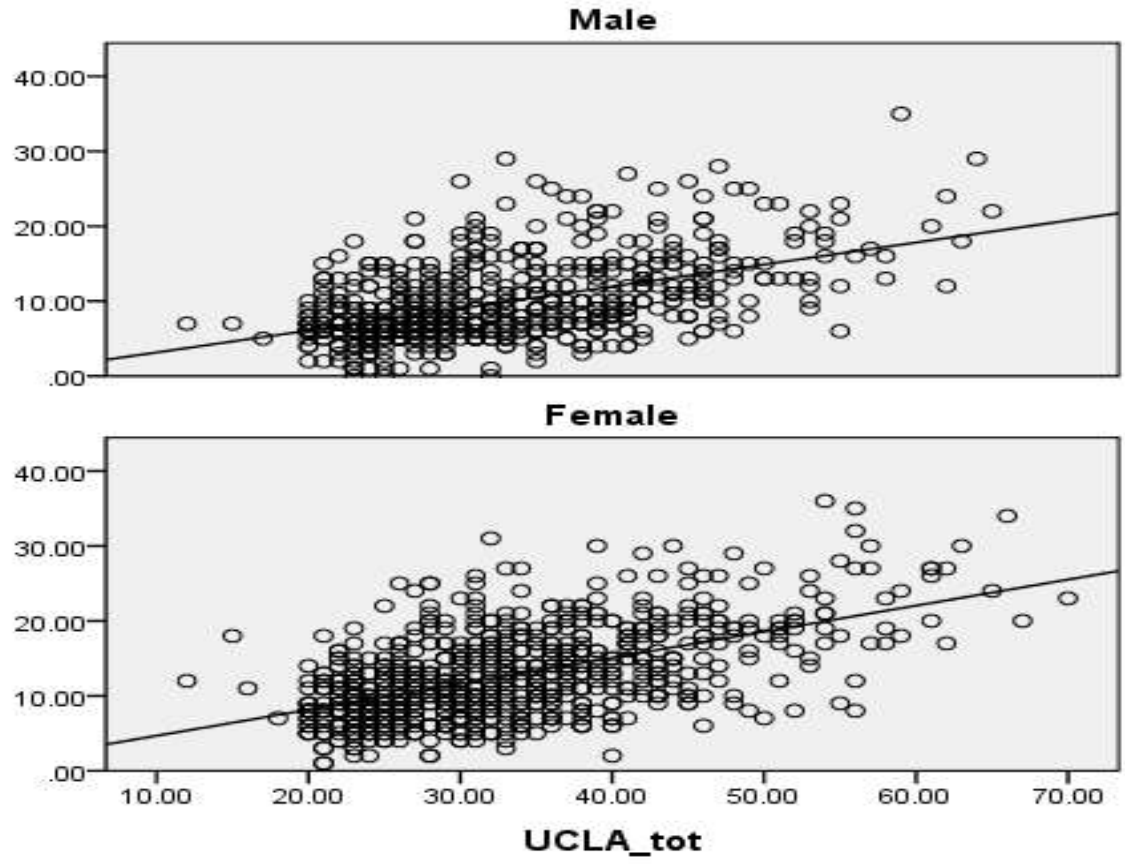
Results

UCLA	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Not Lonely	Male	8.73	4.53	508
	Female	11.29	4.98	614
	Total	10.13	4.94	1122
Lonely	Male	14.08	5.80	129
	Female	18.11	6.11	157
	Total	16.29	6.29	286
Total	Male	9.81	5.27	637
	Female	12.68	5.90	771
	Total	11.38	5.80	1408

Results



Results



Linear Regression

MaleR² Linear = 0.266
FemaleR² Linear = 0.318

Conclusions

- The prevalence of loneliness in Northern Irish adolescents is low.
- Ethnicity, disability, poverty, and lack of religious affiliation are predictors of loneliness.
- Loneliness significantly associated with poor mental health.



2011 Young Life and Times Survey

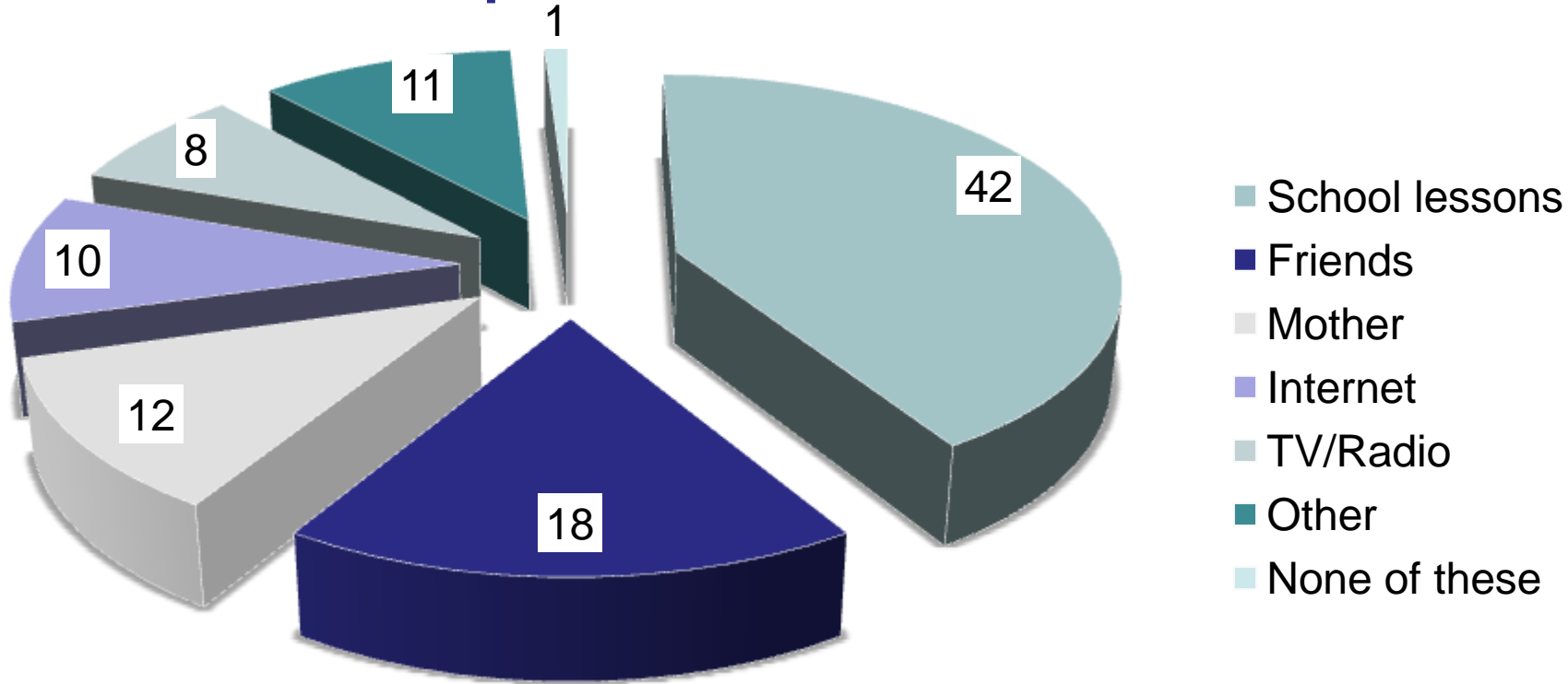
Sexual Health

Talking about sexual matters

	%			
	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Don't know
Boy- or girlfriend	66	20	6	8
Close friends	65	25	6	5
Mother	28	28	35	9
Sister	26	26	34	15
Brother	16	18	52	15
Father	12	19	57	12
Teacher	4	15	59	23

Talking about sexual matters

Most helpful sources of sex education



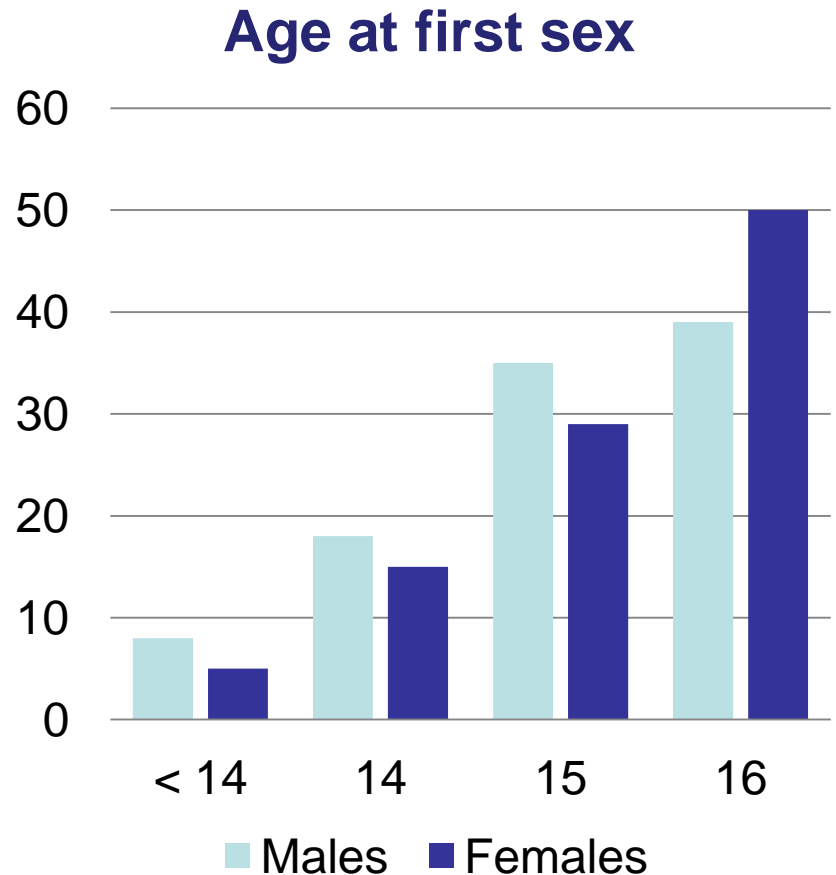
Talking about sexual matters

'It's good to get sexual information from school because with your friends and the internet and radio there can be rumours and what they are saying isn't factual, whereas the majority of the time school is very factual and it's an important part of life.'

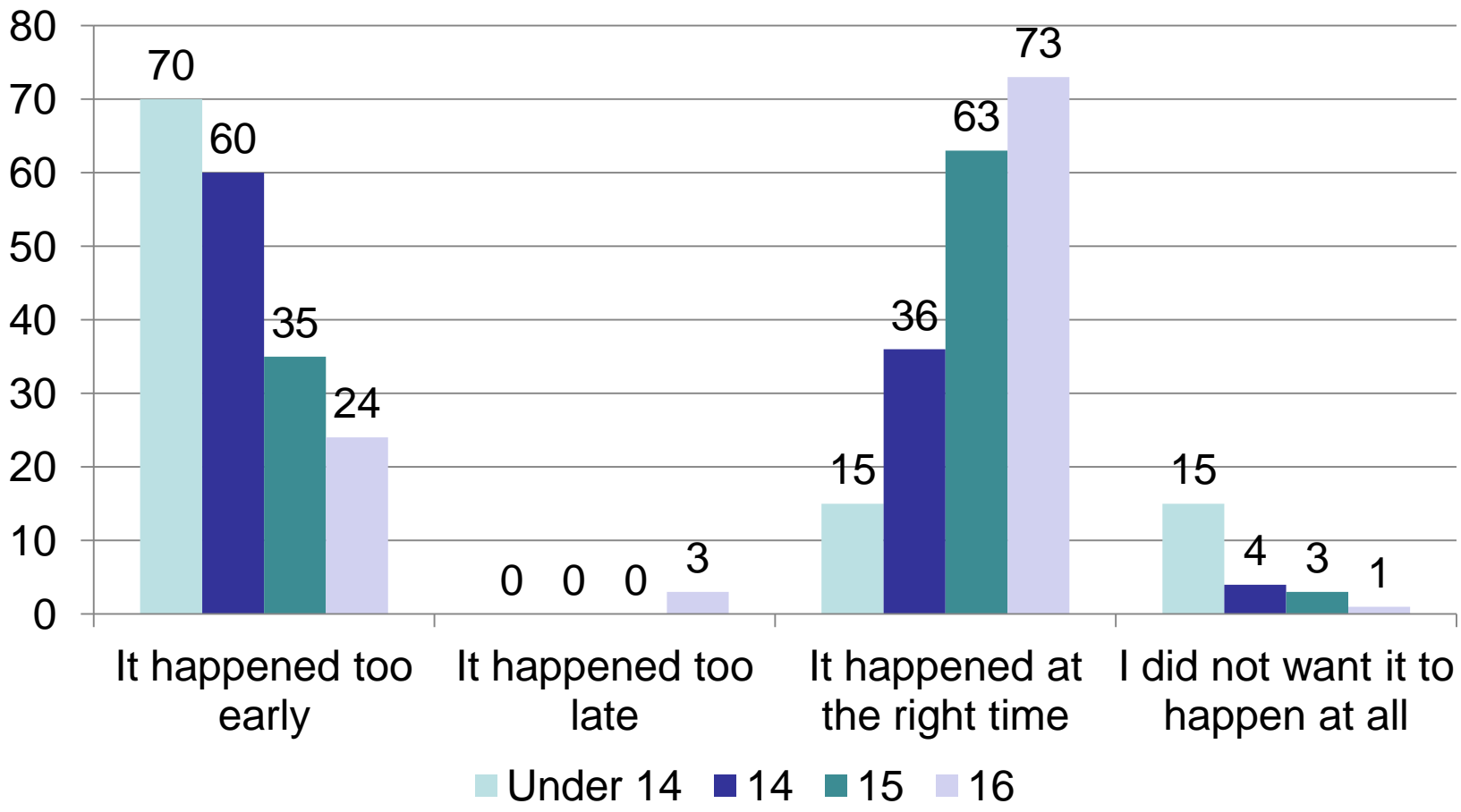
'Less stuff on the dangers of sex (pregnancies STI's) but more on the time when you should have it (in a loving relationship) and explain what happens physically. Don't lecture it and show it in a negative way, it should be positive.'

Sexual experiences

- 26% said they had had sex (28% females and 23% males)
- 12% of active males and 2% of females had sex at least once with someone of the same sex
- 54% had had 1 sexual partner only, 4 in 5 had no more than 3 partners



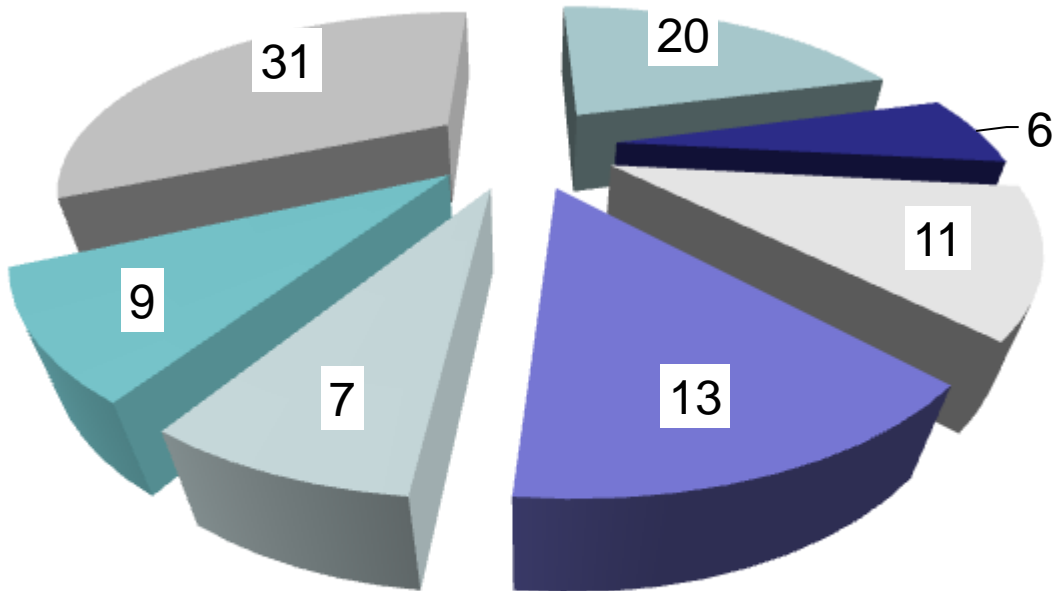
Looking back...



Why did you have sex?

	%		
	Males	Females	All
I was curious about what it would be like	58	51	54
I got carried away by my feelings	19	17	18
Most people in my age group seemed to be doing it	29	28	28
It seemed like a natural follow-on in the relationship	43	48	46
I was a bit drunk at the time	23	19	21
I had taken some drugs at the time	3	1	2
I wanted to lose my virginity	32	16	22
I was in love	29	43	37
I didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted	7	12	10
It happened against my wishes	0	2	1
Something else	1	3	2

How long did relationship last?



- Did not continue at all
- Less than 1 month
- 1-3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months
- Over 1 year
- Still continuing

Contraception

- 81% used condom at 1st sex – some in combination with other contraception
- 9% had used no contraception at all or said they could not remember
- 26% had used after-sex contraception (or EC) – 16% once, 8% 2-3 times, 2% more than three times

What next for YLT?

- Research Update on Loneliness at the end of May 2012 (Mental Health Week)
- Research Update and Factsheet on sexual health in June 2012 (Men's Health Week)
- 2012 survey (OFMDFM, NICCY)
- Greater involvement of young people
- Child Benefit Register?
- Better presentation of findings online

www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2011