

# Mental Health Status of Adolescents in South-East Asia: Evidence for Action

April, 2017



# Thailand (2015)

Total population:<sup>a</sup>  
**68.0 million**

Adolescent<sup>b</sup> (13-17 years) population: **6.4% of total population**  
Total: 4.3 million    Boys: 2.2 million    Girls: 2.1 million

**Suicidal behaviour** in past 12 months:

Estimated suicide rates per 100 000 (aged 15-29 years, 2012)<sup>c</sup>: **8.1**

Boys: **5.5**  
Girls: **10.8**

**Suicidal ideation**  
(considered attempting suicide)



**13%**

Boys: 13%    Girls: 12%

**Suicidal ideation with a plan**  
(made suicide plan)



**15%**

Boys: 15%    Girls: 14%

**Attempted suicide**  
(one or more times)



**13%**

Boys: 15%    Girls: 12%

## Warning signs of mental health problems in past 12 months

**Anxiety**  
(could not sleep because of being worried)



**9%**

Boys: 9%    Girls: 9%

**Loneliness**  
(felt lonely most of times or always)



**10%**

Boys: 11%    Girls: 9%

**Had no close friends**



**6%**

Boys: 8%    Girls: 5%

## Substance use

**Current tobacco users**  
(used any tobacco product – smoked and/or smokeless on one or more days in past 30 days)



**14%**

Boys: 22%    Girls: 7%

**Current cigarette smokers**  
(on one or more days in past 30 days)



**10%**

Boys: 17%    Girls: 5%

**Current alcohol users**  
(had at least one alcoholic drink on one or more days in past 30 days)



**23%**

Boys: 27%    Girls: 19%

**Drunkenness**  
(drank so much alcohol to be really drunk)



**25%**

Boys: 27%    Girls: 23%

**Problem from drinking**  
(got into trouble with family/friends, missed school, or got into fights as a result of drinking alcohol)



**11%**

Boys: 14%    Girls: 8%

**Current marijuana users**

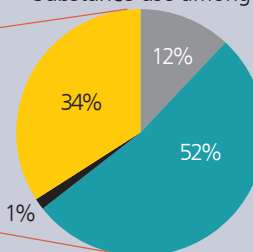
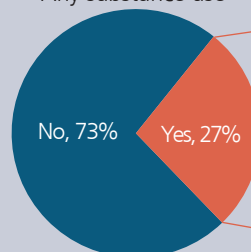


**5%**

Boys: 8%    Girls: 3%

### Multiple substance use

Any substance use    Substance use among users



■ Tobacco only  
■ Alcohol only  
■ Marijuana only  
■ Multiple substance use

# Protective and risk factors for mental health and substance use

## Perceived parental engagement

Parents understood their problems and worries

(most of times or always)



28%

Boys: 24% Girls: 32%

Parents really knew what they were doing with their free time

(most of times or always)



42%

Boys: 35% Girls: 49%

Parents checked if their homework was done

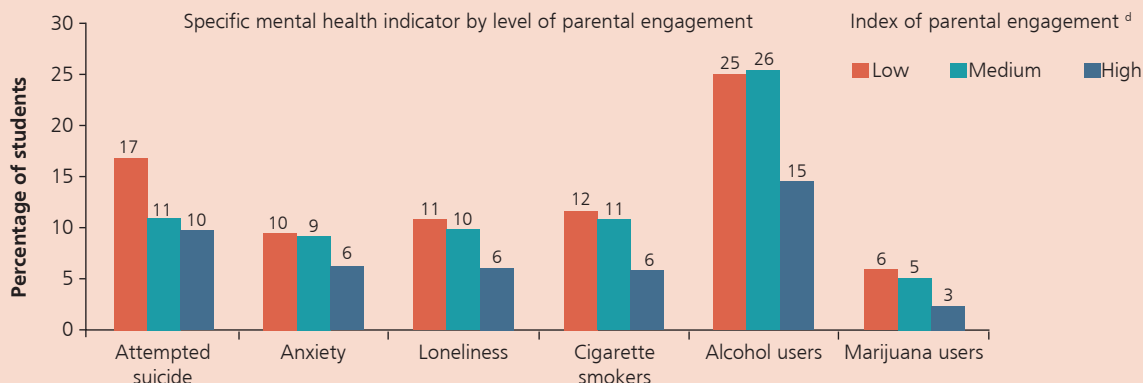
(most of times or always)



28%

Boys: 28% Girls: 27%

### Parental engagement as a predictor of mental health problems and substance use



## School experience

Perceived other students to be kind and helpful

(most of times or always)



40%

Boys: 32% Girls: 47%

Bullied by other students

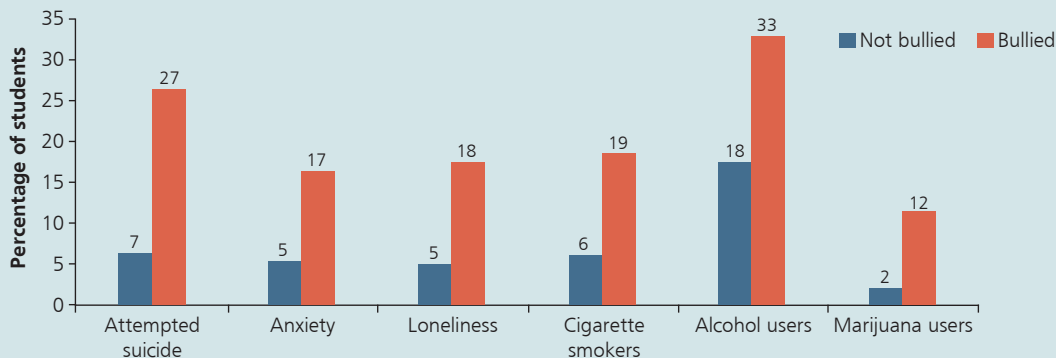
(one or more times in past 30 days)



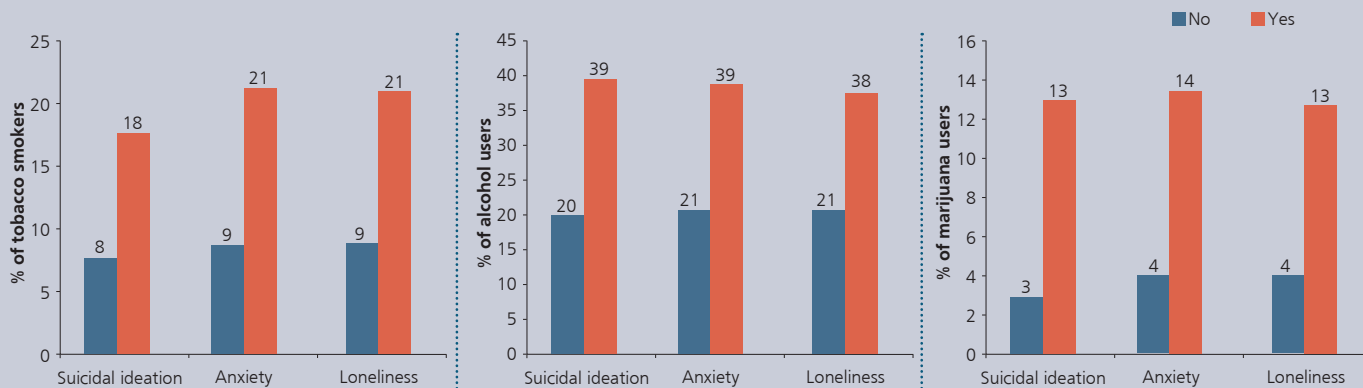
30%

Boys: 35% Girls: 24%

### Being bullied as a predictor of mental health problems and substance use



## Mental health problems as predictors of substance use



Among students aged 13–17 years	Overall % (95% CI)	Boys % (95% CI)	Girls % (95% CI)
<b>Suicidal behaviour</b> in past 12 months			
Attempted suicide one or more times	<b>13.3</b> (10.6–16.7)	<b>14.8</b> (10.8–19.9)	<b>12.0</b> (10.2–14.0)
Made a plan about how they would attempt suicide	<b>14.5</b> (12.2–17.2)	<b>15.1</b> (12.3–18.3)	<b>14.0</b> (11.7–16.7)
Seriously considered attempting suicide	<b>12.5</b> (10.7–14.4)	<b>13.0</b> (10.7–15.8)	<b>11.9</b> (10.4–13.7)
<b>Warning signs of mental health problems</b> in past 12 months			
Worried about something that they could not sleep at night most of times or always	<b>9.2</b> (7.5–11.3)	<b>9.0</b> (6.7–12.1)	<b>9.4</b> (7.4–12.0)
Did not have any close friends	<b>6.4</b> (5.5–7.5)	<b>7.5</b> (5.6–9.9)	<b>5.4</b> (4.1–7.2)
Felt lonely most of times or always	<b>9.8</b> (8.4–11.3)	<b>10.6</b> (8.8–12.7)	<b>8.9</b> (7.6–10.5)
<b>Substance use</b> on one or more days in past 30 days			
Current tobacco users (smoked and smokeless)	<b>14.1</b> (10.6–18.5)	<b>21.5*</b> (16.1–28.1)	<b>7.4</b> (5.2–10.4)
Current cigarette smokers	<b>10.4</b> (7.9–13.5)	<b>16.6*</b> (12.4–21.9)	<b>4.8</b> (3.6–6.5)
Current alcohol users	<b>23.0</b> (20.2–26.0)	<b>27.2*</b> (23.2–31.5)	<b>19.2</b> (16.4–22.5)
Current marijuana users	<b>5.4</b> (3.9–7.4)	<b>8.4*</b> (6.2–11.4)	<b>2.6</b> (1.5–4.6)
Ever drank so much alcohol that they were really drunk	<b>24.9</b> (22.2–27.8)	<b>26.6</b> (23.2–30.4)	<b>23.3</b> (20.5–26.4)
Ever got into trouble with family or friends, missed school, or got into fights as a result of drinking alcohol	<b>10.7</b> (9.0–12.8)	<b>13.5*</b> (10.9–16.7)	<b>8.2</b> (6.6–10.2)
<b>Perceived parental engagement</b> in past 30 days			
Parents or guardians understood their problems and worries most of times or always	<b>28.1</b> (25.4–30.9)	<b>23.8</b> (20.5–27.6)	<b>31.9</b> (29.0–34.9)
Parents or guardians really knew what they were doing with their free time most of times or always	<b>42.3</b> (39.5–45.1)	<b>35.0</b> (31.8–38.3)	<b>48.7</b> (45.2–52.2)
Parents or guardians checked to see if their homework was done most of times or always	<b>27.5</b> (24.8–30.5)	<b>28.1</b> (24.9–31.6)	<b>27.1</b> (24.1–30.4)
<b>Social relationships with peers</b> in past 30 days			
Students in their school were kind and helpful most of times or always	<b>40.0</b> (36.6–43.6)	<b>32.4*</b> (28.6–36.4)	<b>46.8</b> (42.5–51.2)
Bullied on one or more days	<b>29.5</b> (26.0–33.3)	<b>35.2*</b> (29.7–41.1)	<b>24.3</b> (21.6–27.2)

	Odds ratio <sup>e</sup>		
	Overall	Boys	Girls
<b>Predictors of suicide, mental health problems, and substance use</b>			
<b>Perceived parental engagement</b> (ref=high engagement)			
Attempt to suicide	1.40	1.32	1.45
Anxiety	1.24	0.99	1.49
Loneliness	1.32	1.16	1.45
Current cigarette smokers	1.39	1.29	1.37
Current alcohol user	1.34	1.18	1.47
Current marijuana users	1.49	1.33	1.54
<b>Bullying</b> (ref=not bullied)			
Attempt to suicide	5.20	6.17	4.39
Anxiety	3.45	3.22	3.91
Loneliness	3.89	4.08	3.60
Current cigarette smokers	3.48	2.67	4.77
Current alcohol users	2.30	1.78	2.80
Current marijuana users	6.77	5.09	9.23
<b>Mental health as predictor of substance use</b>			
<b>Suicidal ideation</b> (ref=no suicidal ideation)			
Current cigarette smokers	2.58	2.27	3.35
Current alcohol users	2.66	2.04	3.42
Current marijuana users	4.83	3.91	8.22
<b>Anxiety</b> (ref=no anxiety)			
Current cigarette smokers	2.82	2.36	4.69
Current alcohol users	2.40	1.37	3.99
Current marijuana users	3.69	3.18	6.09
<b>Loneliness</b> (ref=no loneliness)			
Current cigarette smokers	2.76	2.26	4.06
Current alcohol users	2.26	1.44	3.56
Current marijuana users	3.36	2.76	4.19

#### Technical notes:

**Data source:** The data reported in this profile comes from latest round of Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS). For more information on survey, please visit [www.who.int/chp/gshs](http://www.who.int/chp/gshs)

- The data for both the total and 13-17 year old population are from World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition published by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).
- An adolescent is typically defined as a person in the age group 10 to 19 years of age. However, in this publication we report data for adolescent population 13 to 17 years of age only, as this was the age group included in GSHS surveys.
- These are best estimates developed by WHO using standard categories, definitions and methods to ensure cross-country comparability, and may not be the same as official national estimates. The estimates are rounded to the appropriate number of significant figures. For further information on these estimates, please refer to WHO publication: "Preventing suicide: A global imperative, 2014 World Health Organization, Geneva" accessible at [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/suicideprevention/world\\_report\\_2014/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/suicideprevention/world_report_2014/en/)
- Index of parental engagement: A set of 3 to 12 questions with 5 response options (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the times always) were asked in GSHS survey to elicit respondents' perception of the connectedness and engagement of their parents with them in the past 30 days. A set of 3 questions which were common across the countries were used in this report. A binary variable for each of these 3 is created with a value of 1 if respondent reported 'most of the times' and 'always' for a particular question, and value of 0, otherwise. A summative parental engagement index was created using those 3 question, which was categorized as 'low' if score of 0, 'medium' if score of 1, and 'high' if score of 2-3.
- An odds ratio (OR) is a measure of association between an exposure and an outcome. The OR represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure. All the odds ratios represented here are unadjusted or based on univariate logistic regression, not checking for any potential confounders.

\* Differences between male and female students are statistically significant at 95% level.

# Missing standard errors because of stratum with single sampling unit.

NS – Not significant at 95% level.