

Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) Background, Purpose and Methodology

Background

The Global Student Health Survey (GSHS) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNAIDS.

Since 2003, the Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) assists countries in the Americas with the implementation of the GSHS. PAHO offices work in coordination with the WHO office in Geneva, the CDC in Atlanta and the Ministries of Health and Ministries of Education in the countries.

Purpose

The purpose of the GSHS is to provide accurate data on health behaviors and protective factors among students to:

- Help countries develop priorities, establish programmes, and advocate for resources for school health and youth health programmes and policies;
- Allow international agencies, countries, and others to make comparisons across countries regarding the prevalence of health behaviours and protective factors; and
- Establish trends in the prevalence of health behaviours and protective factors by country for use in evaluation of school health and youth health promotion.

Methodology

The GSHS is a school-based survey conducted primarily among students aged 13-15 years. The GSHS uses a standardized scientific sample selection process; common school-based methodology; and core questionnaire modules, core-expanded questions, and country-specific questions that are combined to

form a self-administered questionnaire which can be administered during one regular class period.

The 10 core questionnaire modules address the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among children and adults worldwide:

- Alcohol
- Dietary behaviors
- Drug use
- Hygiene
- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Protective factors
- Sexual behaviors that contribute to HIV infections, and unintended pregnancy
- Tobacco use
- Violence and unintentional injury

Capacity Building and Training

On-going capacity building and support are provided by PAHO/WHO and CDC to the countries implementing the GSHS in the Americas. Capacity building includes help with sample design and selection; training of survey coordinators; provision of survey implementation handbooks and other materials; provision and scanning of computer-scannable answer sheets; data editing and weighting; and provision or facilitation of funding and resources to assist countries.

Two workshops are offered annually to specially selected survey-coordinators from each participating country:

- The Survey Implementation workshop builds the capacity of the GSHS country coordinators to implement the survey in their country following common sampling and survey administration procedures that ensure the surveys are standardized and comparable across countries and data are of the highest quality.
- The Data Analysis and Reporting Workshop, conducted after the field work is complete, builds the capacity of survey coordinators to conduct data analysis and generate a country-specific report and a fact sheet using the Epi-Info software.

Related sites



World Health Organization (WHO)

www.who.int/chp/gshs/en/



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/gshs/