



## PRESS RELEASE

### 2019 HEALTH SURVEY: HEALTH OF CHILDREN 2-14 YEARS OLD

The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) announces data on the health of children aged 2-14 years old. The data derive from the Health Survey for the year 2019 and more specifically from the ad-hoc questionnaire on Children's Health, which was used on a pilot basis.

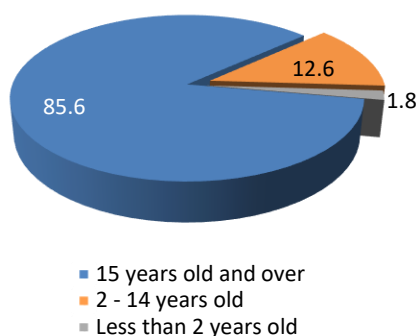
The survey was conducted on a sample of 8,125 private households and an equal number of members all over Greece, while the ad-hoc questionnaire on children's health was filled in for 1,334 children aged 2 to 14 years old.

#### I. GENERAL HEALTH STATUS OF CHILDREN

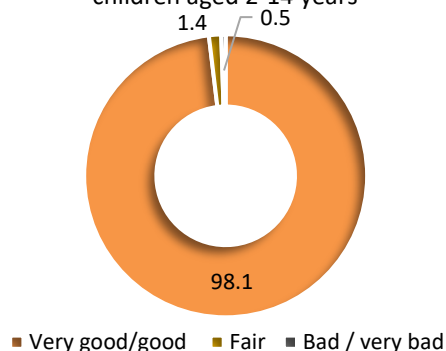
The general health status of children aged 2 to 14 years is reported by the parents/guardians. According to the survey results, the children aged 2 to 14 years account for 12.6 % of the estimated population of Greece (Graph 1).

- 98.1 % of children have very good or good health, 1.4 % fair health and 0.5 % bad or very bad health (Graph 2).

**Graph 1.** Population. Percentage distribution by age groups



**Graph 2.** General health status of children aged 2-14 years



**Information on methodological issues:**

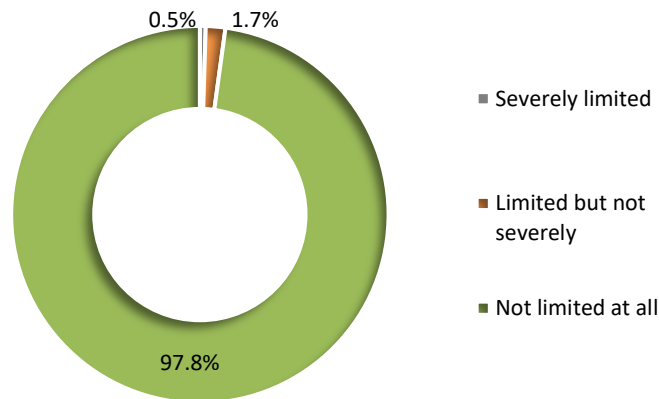
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- 6.7 % of children aged 2-14, as reported by their parents/guardians, suffer from a chronic illness or health problem. Chronic illness or health problem mean illnesses or health problems which have lasted, or are expected to last, for 6 months or more, with or without medication.
- 2.2 % of children aged 2-14, as reported by their parents/guardians, have limited, due to health reasons and for 6 months or more, some of the activities which are typical for children of their age (Graph 3).

**Graph 3.** Gali Index: Children aged 2-14 depending on the degree of activity limitation, due to health problems, 2019



## II. PREVALENCE<sup>1</sup> OF DISEASES

The survey records data on the prevalence of several chronic diseases/conditions during the last 12 months before the survey conduct. For the purposes of the survey, persons suffering from a chronic disease/condition are those who on the day of the survey conduct had that chronic disease/condition but also those who got ill within the past 12 months before the survey conduct and on the day of the survey conduct the symptoms of the disease/condition were not present either because during that specific season of the year they do not “flare up” or due to medication.

Among children aged 2 to 14, their parent/guardian reported:

- Asthma, 1.6 %
- Autism, 0.8 %
- Thalassemia, 0.4 %
- Diabetes mellitus, 0.4 %
- Neonatal disease, 0.3 %
- Multiple sclerosis, 0.3 %
- Epilepsy, 0.2 %
- Depression, 0.2 %
- Paraplegia or tetraplegia, 0.2 %
- Cystic fibrosis, 0.1 %

<sup>1</sup>Prevalence rate of a disease / condition is the share of population having the disease at a given period; included are people who already have the disease at the start of the time period, as well as those who acquire it during that period.

### III.PHYSIQUE

**The Body Mass Index (BMI)** is considered the most appropriate way to measure the obesity of the population. It is a widespread diagnostic tool of a person's potential health problems relative to weight and it is calculated by dividing the weight (in kilograms) by the square of height (in metres).

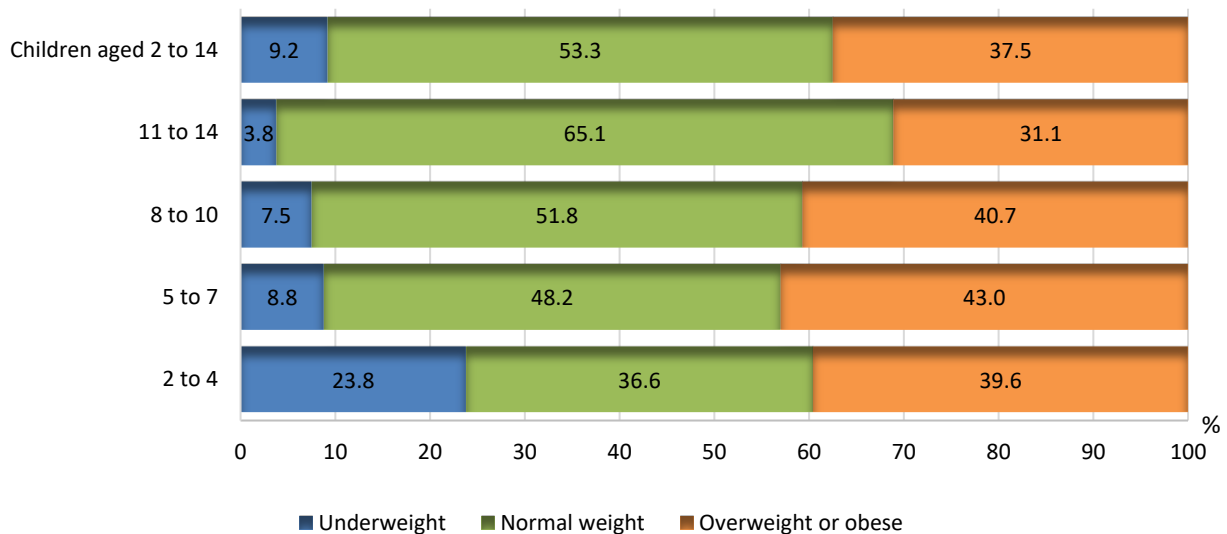
For children aged 2 to 14, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO Child Growth Standards), the limit values for a child to be considered as underweight, of normal weight, overweight or obese differ by age and sex (see tables in Annex).

Out of the total children aged 2 to 14 years old:

- 9.2 % are underweight,
- 53.3 % have normal weight,
- 37.5 % are overweight or obese

More specifically, for the age groups 2-4, 5-7, 8-10 and 11-14, the percentage distribution of children by category of BMI is depicted in Graph 4 below.

**Graph 4.** Percentage distribution of children aged 2-14 years, by BMI category, 2019



Most of the underweight children (23.8 %) are recorded for the age group 2-4, while most of the overweight or obese (43.0 %) for the age group of 5-7.

### IV. PHYSICAL AND SENSORY FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

The survey has recorded data on the physical and sensory functional limitations of the children aged 2-14 years, in particular as regards vision, hearing, mobility, memory and cognitive function.

- 6.2 % of the children aged 2-14 wear glasses or contact lenses.
- 0.6 % of the children aged 2-14 use hearing aids or other aids due to hearing problems.

- 0.4 % of the children aged 2-14 who do not use hearing aids or other assisting devices find it difficult to hear sounds such as someone’s voice or music.
- 1.1 % of the children aged 2-14 use some assisting device or help from somebody else to walk. Out of them, 74.6 % have great difficulty and 25.4 % some difficulty to walk without the use of the assisting device or help from another.
- 2.3 % of children aged 2-14, as reported by their parent/guardian and in relation to the children of their age, have some difficulty in learning.

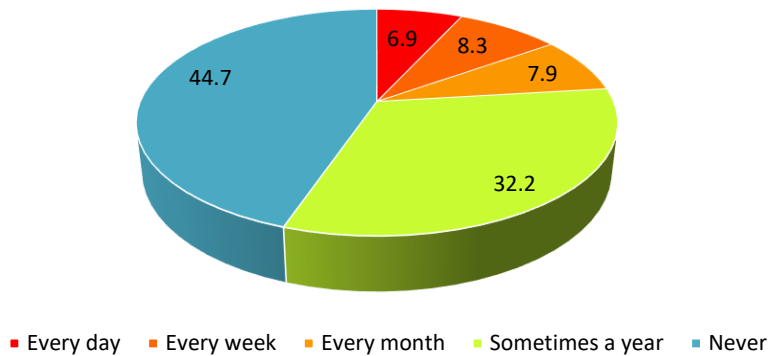
In particular, among the children aged 5-14 years, who account for 82.7 % of the total of the surveyed children aged 2-14, as reported by their parent/guardian and in relation to the children of their age:

- 4.4 % have difficulty (some difficulty, big difficulty or are unable) to participate in compulsory education (primary or secondary).
- 1.6 % have difficulty (some difficulty, big difficulty or are unable) to engage in leisure activities or games.

With regard to the memory and behaviour of the children aged 5 to 14, as reported by their parent/guardian and in relation to the children of their age:

- 2.5 %, they find it difficult to remember things;
- 3.0 % have difficulty in controlling their behaviour;
- 15.2 % of children aged 5-14 years old show anxiety, nervousness or restlessness at least once a week. Graph 5 depicts the frequency of anxiety, nervousness or restlessness;

**Graph 5.** Frequency of anxiety/nervousness/ restlessness, percentage distribution of children aged 5-14



## ANNEX

<b>Table 1a. BMI limit values for girls aged 2-14 years</b>			
Age in years	Underweight (< x)	Overweight (> = y and < z)	Obese (> = z)
	x	y	z
2	14.96	18.09	19.81
3	14.60	17.64	19.38
4	14.30	17.35	19.16
5	14.04	17.23	19.20
6	13.85	17.33	19.61
7	13.83	17.69	20.39
8	14.00	18.28	21.44
9	14.26	18.99	22.66
10	14.58	19.78	23.97
11	15.03	20.66	25.25
12	15.59	21.59	26.47
13	16.23	22.49	27.57
14	16.86	23.27	28.42

<b>Table 1b. BMI limit values for boys aged 2 -14 years</b>			
Age in years	Underweight (< x)	Overweight (> = y and < z)	Obese (> = z)
	x	y	z
2	15.24	18.36	19.99
3	14.83	17.85	19.50
4	14.51	17.52	19.23
5	14.26	17.39	19.27
6	14.06	17.52	19.76
7	14.00	17.88	20.59
8	14.13	18.41	21.56
9	14.36	19.07	22.71
10	14.63	19.80	23.96
11	14.96	20.51	25.07
12	15.36	21.20	26.02
13	15.84	21.89	26.87
14	16.39	22.60	27.64

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO Child Growth Standards)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

<b>Health Survey Ad hoc module on children's health</b>	The Health Survey is part of the European Statistical Programme "European Health Interview Survey" to which all the EU Member States participate. The main objective of the survey is to study and provide, at European and national level, detailed information on the health status of the population, the factors influencing it and the use of health services. In particular, the ad-hoc module on the health of children aged 2 to 14 depicts the health status of children.
<b>Legal framework</b>	The Health Survey is conducted on the basis of Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which regulates matters relating to Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, while Implementing Regulation (EC) No255/2018 defines the basic concepts, as well as the variables, in detail, included in the survey questionnaire.
<b>Reference period</b>	The survey was conducted in the last quarter of 2019. The questions in the ad-hoc questionnaire show the current health status of children and, in particular for the question of the prevalence of chronic diseases/conditions the reference period is the last 12 months before the survey conduct.
<b>Coverage</b>	The ad-hoc survey covers households all over Greece irrespective of their size or any economic and social characteristics, with the only precondition that they have a child aged 2 to 14 years old.
<b>Methodology — Weights</b>	<p>The Health Survey is a sample survey. The multi-stage stratified sampling method was applied for the survey, with primary sampling unit the surface area (one or more city blocks or a small settlement), secondary unit the household and final unit the person aged 15 years and over (target-population).</p> <p>For the selection of primary units, in each Region (NUTS 2) the primary units were stratified into 4 strata on the basis of the degree of urbanization of the Municipal/Local Communes where they belong. The former Greater Athens Area and the former Greater Thessaloniki Area were divided into 47 and 11, respectively, strata of about the same socio-economic criteria. The number of strata, deriving from the application of the stratification criteria amount to 108, which are homogenous strata, in terms of the survey characteristics.</p> <p>In each homogenous stratum (final stratum), a sample of surface area units is selected with a probability which is proportionate to their size (number of households on the basis of the 2011 Population Census) from a sampling frame compiled on the data of the 2011 Population Census. The total number of the surface area units of the sample amounts to 1,320.</p> <p>Within the surface area units of the sample a sample of households is selected with equal probabilities of selection from an updated frame-list by applying the systematic sampling. Finally, within each household of the sample a person aged 15 and over is selected with equal probabilities of selection.</p> <p>The initial sample of households was 11,662 (sampling fraction 2.82‰), and the survey has been conducted in a final sample of 10,855 households.</p>
<b>Sample design</b>	The ad hoc module of the Health of Children aged 2 to 14 was carried out on a sample of 1,334 children in an equal number of households (one child belonging to the target age group in each household was surveyed). The ad hoc module was conducted on a pilot basis together with the Health Survey in the households that had at least one child aged 2 to 14 years, with a view to testing questions for future use in the next waves of the Health Survey.
<b>References</b>	More information on the Health Survey (tables, graphs, methodology) are available on the webpage of the Hellenic Statistical Authority <a href="http://www.statistics.gr">www.statistics.gr</a> "Statistics / Population and Social conditions / Health / Health Survey".