Health Behaviour in School aged Children (HBSC) is a cross-national research study conducted every 4th year in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, with the participation of more than 40 countries. From the 2005-2006 survey all member countries of the Arctic council (Denmark (Greenland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, US, Canada, Russia) are participating in the study.

The study aims to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and well-being, health behaviours and their social context. It is important that young people's health is considered in its broadest sense, encompassing physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Health should be viewed as a resource for everyday living, and not just the absence of disease. Therefore, research into children's health needs to consider the positive aspects of health, as well as risk factors for future ill health and disease. Family, school and peer settings and relationships need to be explored, as does the socioeconomic environment in which young people grow up, if we are to understand fully the patterns of health and health behaviour found in the adolescent population.

The study represents a coherent set of monitors that provide a valid representation of the health and lifestyle of adolescent’s aged 11, 13, 15 years. Greenland joined the study in 1994 and the results and publications from HBSC Greenland have had broad implications on e.g. food policies in schools, and is regarded as an important source of data in the work with the National Public Health Programme.

As well as aiming to increase understanding of young people's health, the findings from the HBSC surveys are used to inform and influence health promotion and health education policy and practice at national and international levels.

HBSC Greenland is forming an initiative to make Arctic comparisons possible and more visible. The intention is to forward the voice of the children in the HBSC surveys, which is one of the most valuable initiatives that might be shared within Arctic countries.

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