

Television watching, by DHB area

School-aged children in Northland / Lakes / Tairāwhiti / Hawke’s Bay / Whanganui DHB areas were significantly more likely to usually watch two or more hours of television a day compared to the national rate. Children living in Counties Manukau DHB area were significantly less likely to watch two or more hours of television a day (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: Usually watched 2 or more hours of television per day for children aged 5–14 years, by DHB area (unadjusted)

DHB area	Prevalence (95% CI)	Number of children
Northland / Lakes / Tairāwhiti / Hawke’s Bay / Whanganui	72.8 (68.1–77.5) +	55500
Waitemata	59.6 (52.7–66.5)	42200
Auckland	62.3 (53.0–71.5)	28800
Counties Manukau	57.6 (50.4–64.8) –	44000
Waikato	67.0 (60.1–73.8)	34200
Bay of Plenty / Taranaki / MidCentral	66.1 (59.6–72.6)	44300
Wairarapa / Hutt Valley / Capital and Coast	65.3 (57.7–73.0)	37300
Canterbury	58.0 (50.3–65.7)	36800
Nelson Marlborough / West Coast / South Canterbury / Otago / Southland	68.6 (61.6–75.6)	45700
New Zealand total	64.1 (62.1–66.2)	368600

Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Notes: Estimates indicated with a + are significantly higher than the national rate, and estimates indicated with a – are significantly lower than the national rate. Data are based on direct survey estimates and could be confounded by different population characteristics in each DHB. Due to small sample size, some DHB areas have been combined. Survey population is the estimated resident population living in permanent private dwellings at 31 June 2007.

Physical punishment

Introduction

Physical punishment is the ‘use of physical force with the intention of causing pain, but not injury, for the purposes of correction or control of behaviour’ (Straus and Stewart 1999). Parental use of physical punishment is associated with negative developmental outcomes such as antisocial behaviour, poor intellectual development, poor parent-child relationships and mental health problems (Smith et al 2004). In a small number of cases physical punishment can also lead to serious physical injury and death. Discipline that does not include physical punishment has been found to be better for the parent-child relationship, and is more effective when the methods used are consistent, supportive and authoritative (not authoritarian) (Smith et al 2004).

The Ministry of Health is part of a cross-government initiative working towards attaining violence-free homes in New Zealand, and is committed to monitoring changing parental attitudes and behaviour towards children (The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families 2006).

What were the survey questions?

In the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey the primary caregiver of child participants was asked: 'Thinking back over the past four weeks, when [your child] misbehaved, which of the following, if any, have you done? Just read out the number next to the words'. They were given the following responses on a show card to choose from:

- 1 Made him/her go without something or miss out on something
- 2 Yelled at him/her
- 3 Explained or discussed why he/she should not do it
- 4 Physical punishment, such as smacking
- 5 Told him/her off
- 6 Sent him/her to the bedroom or other place in the house
- 7 Ignored his/her behaviour
- 77 Something else [please specify]

The primary caregiver was also asked which of the above forms of discipline they think are most effective when trying to change their child's behaviour.

In 79% of child interviews, the primary caregiver who completed the questionnaire was the biological mother, in 14% it was the biological father, in 3% a grandparent, and the remaining 4% included a foster or adoptive parent, mother or father's partner or spouse, aunt or uncle, older sibling, or someone else with the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the child.

It is important to note that this method will undercount the use of physical punishment in the past four weeks because:

- only the actions of the primary caregiver are counted, excluding the other adults that look after the child
- the primary caregiver may have forgotten
- the primary caregiver may fail to define some acts as physical punishment
- there may be social desirability bias or feelings of guilt.

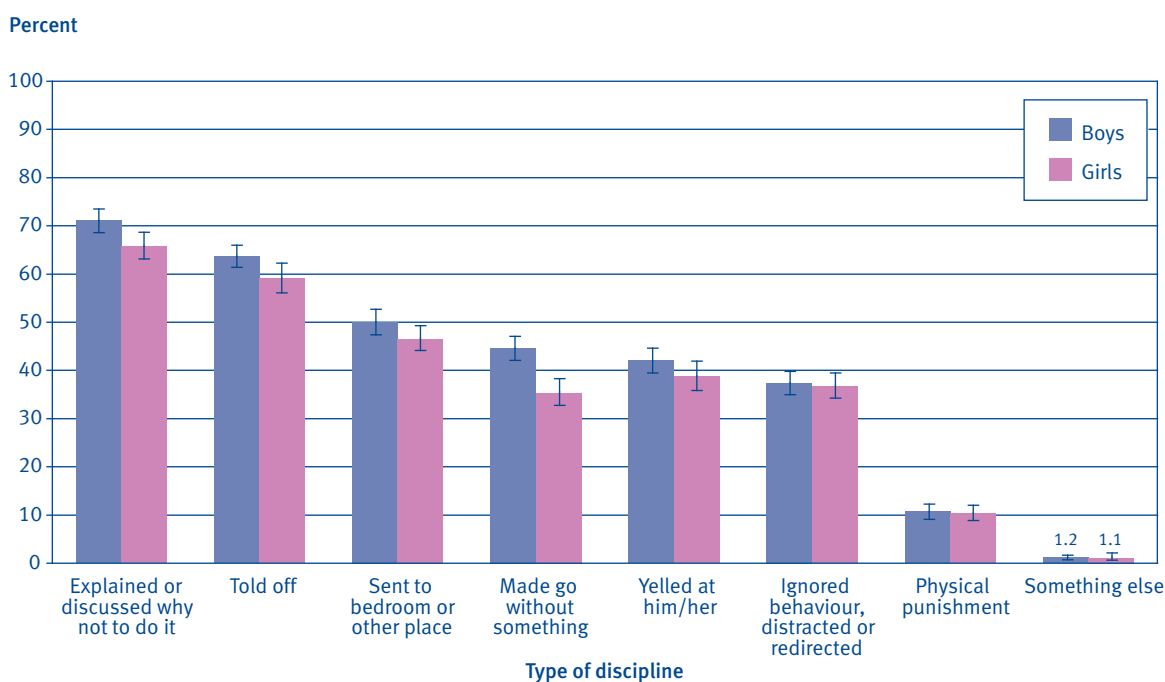
The repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 in May 2007 may further contribute to the undercount discussed above. The repeal removed the defence for adults to use 'reasonable force' when disciplining children in their care. This may have influenced the results by increasing the social desirability bias or fear of criminal punishment if admitting to physical punishment. This repeal and the public discussions surrounding it may have also changed some parents' behaviour or the reporting of behaviour. Readers should be aware that the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey data collection includes interviews from before and after this law change.

Physical punishment by the primary caregiver

Physical punishment was one of the least common forms of discipline to have been used in the previous four weeks with children aged from birth to 14 years (Figure 2.17). One in ten children aged from birth to 14 years (10.4%, 9.3–11.5), or 88,900 children, had experienced physical punishment by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks.

Overall, 7.9% (6.9–9.0) of parents reported they did not use any discipline in the previous 4 weeks as their child had not misbehaved or they considered the child was too young to be disciplined.

Figure 2.17: Type of discipline used in previous 4 weeks by primary caregiver for children, by gender (age standardised prevalence)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

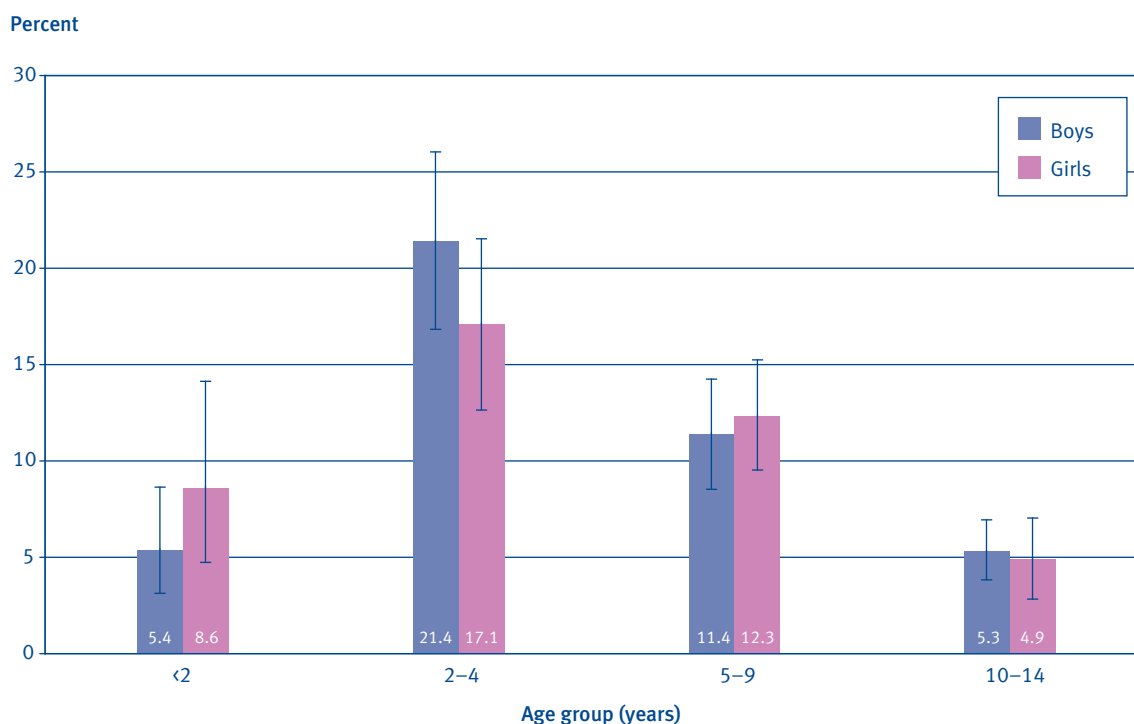
One in 22 parents (4.5%, 3.8–5.2) considered physical punishment to be an effective form of discipline. Less than one in three parents who had used physical punishment in the previous four weeks considered it to be effective (29.8%, 24.9–34.8).

Physical punishment, by age group

Children aged 2–4 years were the most likely to experience physical punishment, with one in five having experienced physical punishment by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks (19.4%, 16.0–22.7). One in 14 children aged under two years (7.0%, 4.6–9.5) experienced physical punishment by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks.

Children within all age groups have experienced physical punishment in the previous 4 weeks, with no significant difference by gender (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18: Physical punishment by the primary caregiver in the previous four weeks for children, by age group and gender (unadjusted prevalence)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Physical punishment, by ethnic group

Table 2.8 gives an indication of the proportion and number of children in New Zealand’s main ethnic groups who were physically punished by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks.

Table 2.8: Physical punishment by primary caregiver in the previous 4 weeks for children, by ethnic group (unadjusted)

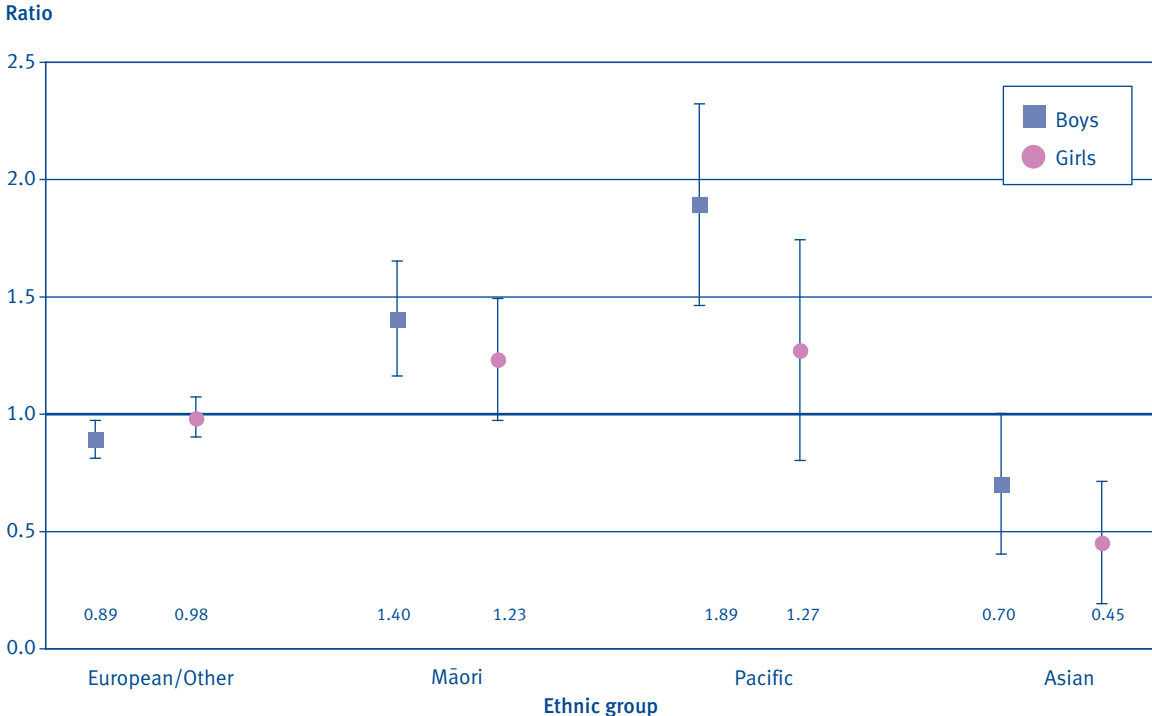
Ethnic group	Prevalence (95% CI)	Number of children
European/ Other	9.6 (8.3–10.9)	62300
Māori	14.0 (12.1–15.8)	27300
Pacific	16.9 (13.2–20.5)	16800
Asian	6.0 (3.9–8.0)	4500

Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Note: Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

After adjusting for age, Pacific boys were nearly twice as likely to have been physically punished by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks compared to boys in the total population (Figure 2.19). Māori boys were also significantly more likely to have been physically punished, and European/Other boys were significantly less likely than boys in the total population. Asian girls were much less likely to have experienced physical punishment by their primary caregiver in the previous four weeks compared to all girls (Figure 2.19).

Figure 2.19: Physical punishment by the primary caregiver in the previous 4 weeks for children, by ethnic group and gender of the child (age standardised rate ratio)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Notes: Age standardised to the WHO world population. Reference group, with a rate ratio of 1.0 (indicated by the bold line), is the total male or female population aged from birth to 14 years. Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

Physical punishment, by neighbourhood deprivation

Boys living in the most deprived neighbourhoods (NZDep2006 quintile 5) were more likely to have been physically punished in the previous four weeks than boys living in quintile 1 areas of low deprivation (p-value < 0.05). There were no other differences in the prevalence of physical punishment by NZDep2006 quintile.