

# LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AFTER FAMILY SPLIT-UP, WELLBEING AND HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

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## INTRODUCTION

After a parental separation, different types of living arrangements exist for children and adolescents:



**Joint physical custody**  
When children spend equal time with both parents



**Mostly with one parent**  
When children live most of the time with one parent and sometime with their other parent



**Sole custody**  
Children live all the time with only one parent

Current findings on the effects of living arrangements on adolescents' health and wellbeing are not consistent. For some authors, joint physical custody is the most favourable living arrangement [1,2]. For others, it is less favourable [3,4]. Finally, some authors argued there is no difference [5,6].

### Belgian context

- About one fifth of the children below the age of eighteen experienced a parental separation [6].
- In 2006, joint physical custody was introduced in the Belgian law as the default residential model.

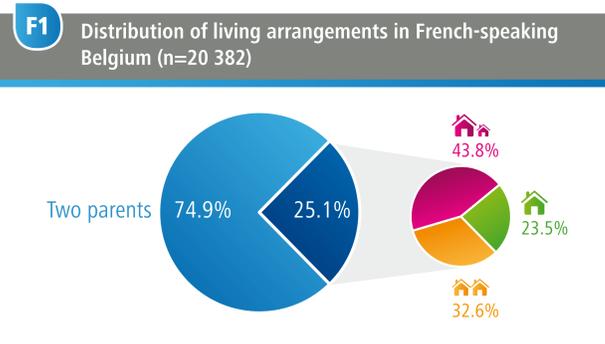
## OBJECTIVE

To identify the most favourable living arrangement for adolescent health and wellbeing in French-speaking Belgium.

## METHODS

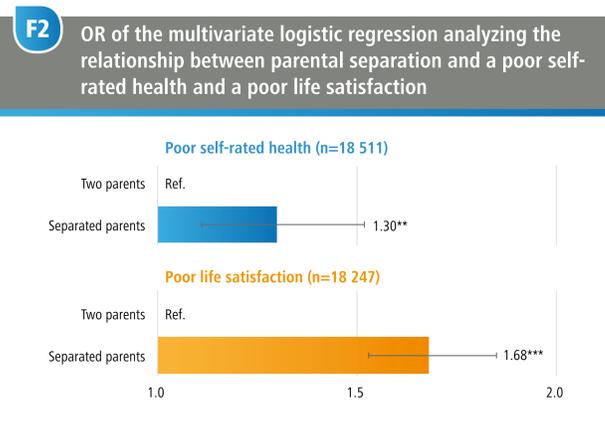
- *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)*: cross-sectional surveys repeated every four years.
- Data from two waves of HBSC survey in French-speaking Belgium (2010 and 2014).
- **Sample**: 18,683 10-18-year-old adolescents.
- **Main independent variable**: Living arrangements categorised into "joint physical custody", "mostly with one parent" and "sole custody".
- **Outcome variables**:
  - Self-rated health: Poor versus excellent, good and fair.
  - Life satisfaction: "A poor life satisfaction" corresponds to 0 to 5 on the Cantril's scale and "a good life satisfaction" corresponds to 6 or more.
- **Co-variables**: Age, gender, survey year and family wealth perception.
- Weighted analyses according to the sample size of each survey year.
- Multiple logistic regression adjusted for survey year (Model 1) and all covariates (Model 2).

## RESULTS



Between 2010 and 2014, proportion of adolescent living :

- in joint physical custody increased from 29.2% to 35.3%
- mostly with one parent decreased from 47.5% to 41.0%



Analyses were weighted according to the sample size of each survey year and adjusted for wealth perception, age, gender and HBSC survey year  
\*\*\*: p<0.001 - \*\*: p<0.01

Adolescents living with separated parents were more likely to report a poor self-rated health and a poor life satisfaction than those living with both parents.

**T1** OR of the multivariate logistic regression analyzing the relationship between living arrangements and a poor self-rated health and a poor life satisfaction in adolescents living with separated parents

	Model 1 <sup>a</sup>			Model 2 <sup>b</sup>		
	n	OR	CI95%	n	OR	CI95%
<b>Poor self-rated health</b>						
Joint physical custody	5016	1		4658	1	
Mostly with one parent		<b>1.52</b>	1.10-2.09		1.29	0.93-1.78
Sole custody		<b>2.10</b>	1.50-2.95		<b>1.56</b>	1.10-2.22
<b>Poor life satisfaction</b>						
Joint physical custody	4987	1		4582	1	
Mostly with one parent		<b>1.20</b>	1.02-1.42		1.11	0.93-1.34
Sole custody		<b>1.52</b>	1.26-1.84		<b>1.31</b>	1.06-1.62

a) Weighted according to the sample size of each survey year and adjusted for HBSC survey year  
b) Weighted according to the sample size of each survey year and adjusted for wealth perception, age, gender and HBSC survey year

### Compared to adolescents living in joint physical custody:

- Adolescents living mostly with one parent or in sole custody were more likely to report a poor self-rated health and a poor life satisfaction
  - Adolescents living in sole custody were more likely to report a poor self-rated health and a poor life satisfaction
  - No differences with adolescents living mostly with one parent
- Model 1: adjusted for survey year only
- Model 2: adjusted for wealth perception, age, gender and survey year

## REFERENCES

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## CONCLUSION

- **Health and wellbeing significantly differed between only sole custody and joint physical custody, in favour of adolescents living in joint physical custody.**
- **Health and wellbeing differences between joint physical custody and living mostly with one parent in the non-adjusted model were partially explained by socioeconomic disparities.**



SIPES • The results of HBSC survey in French-speaking Belgium are available on: <http://sipes.ulb.ac.be>

