

# Drivers, teenagers, danger and tolerance: views from Ireland

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# 1. Driver attitudes to cyclists in an Irish city: a positive outlook for the future?

Elaine Mullan, MA, PhD and  
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- 1. Sharing road with cyclists
- 2. Cycling skills & knowledge
- 3. Cycling safety
- 4. Cycling infrastructure
- 5. Social norms & acceptance





# Kilkenny Mobility Management Plan 2009-14

- Increase cycling by 90%
- Reduce use of car transport by 20%
  - Wider footpaths
  - Cycle lanes
  - 30kph streets
  - One-way streets



- **Opposition from traders & small businesses**
- **Increased congestion**



# Transport cyclists?

- Dangerous
  - Hazardous
  - Inconsiderate
  - Lacking in knowledge of and/or frequently breaking the rules of the road
  - 'Different' to drivers
  - Lower status
- = Less acceptable than recreational cycling

(Stone & Gosling, 2008; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Basford et al., 2002)

## What do Irish drivers think?



# Domestic & professional drivers' attitudes to cyclists in Kilkenny

## Survey

- n=180, R, non-cyclist drivers
  - professional & domestic
- City centre car parks & streets
- Jan & Feb 2014
- 38% 18-40 yrs; 43% female
- Based on Basford (2002) & Rissel (2002)

|  |   |          |                 |
|--|---|----------|-----------------|
| Type of motorist:  | Professional Driver   |          | Domestic Driver |
| Gender:  | M   | F        |                 |
| Age:   | Under 40 years.   |          | Over 40 years   |
| Telephone Number:  | ..... (Include only if you wish to take part in a focus group discussion) |          |                 |
| QUESTIONNAIRE (Adapted from Basford et al. 2002)   |   |          |                 |
| <i>Please take some time to consider the following statements. Remember: there is no right or wrong answer. It is based on your personal opinion and experience.</i> |   |          |                 |
| <i>There are 4 Section (25 questions) – please ensure you have answered all questions</i>  |   |          |                 |
| <b>A. Sharing the road</b>   |   |          |                 |
| <i>1. I am willing to share the road with cyclists</i>   |   |          |                 |
| Strongly   |   |          | Strongly        |
| Agree  | Agree   | Disagree | Disagree        |
| <i>2. Cyclists are a nuisance to share the road with</i>   |   |          |                 |
| Strongly   |   |          | Strongly        |
| Agree  | Agree   | Disagree | Disagree        |
| <i>3. Cyclists and motorists have equal rights when it comes to sharing the road</i>   |   |          |                 |
| Strongly   |   |          | Strongly        |
| Agree  | Agree   | Disagree | Disagree        |
| <i>4. Motorists are considerate to cyclists</i>  |   |          |                 |
| Strongly   |   |          | Strongly        |
| Agree  | Agree   | Disagree | Disagree        |
| <i>5. Cyclists are considerate to other road users</i>   |   |          |                 |
| Strongly   |   |          | Strongly        |
| Agree  | Agree   | Disagree | Disagree        |

## B. Cycling skills/knowledge

6. Cyclists do not have the proper skills to allow them to use the road safely
7. Cyclists have a good knowledge of the of Rules of the Road
8. Cyclists make risky choices when in traffic because of poor cycling skill
9. Cyclists often make risky choices when in traffic because of poor knowledge of the Rules of the Road
10. Cyclists in Kilkenny get away with breaking the law more than drivers

## C. Training/Safety

11. Cycle training would make cyclists safer on the roads of Kilkenny
12. Wearing a helmet and hi visibility jacket should be mandatory for cyclists
13. Cyclists that I have seen in Kilkenny are always lit up at night
14. Sports cyclists (road racing and triathlon) cycle more safely than commuting / leisure cyclists

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree



#### **D. Cycling infrastructure in Kilkenny**

- 15. *Cyclists in Kilkenny make good use of the cycle lanes*
- 16. *Because of its cycling friendly facilities, Kilkenny is a good place for cyclists*
- 17. *Traffic flow in Kilkenny is improved by cyclists using cycle lanes*
- 18. *There should be better facilities in Kilkenny for cyclists*

#### **E. Social Norms and Behaviours and Intentions**

- 19. *Cyclists in Kilkenny think they are better than other road users*
- 20. *People in Kilkenny who cycle are 'different'*
- 21. *I would not like anybody in my family (including my children) to cycle*
- 22. *In Kilkenny it is normal for people to want to cycle for transport instead of driving*
- 23. *People who cycle to work or school are poorer than me*
- 24. *People whose opinion I value are not cyclists*
- 25. *I do not intend to cycle in Kilkenny in the near future*

# Domestic & professional drivers' attitudes to cyclists in Kilkenny

## Semi-structured focus group

- 3 females, 2 males, 45-50yrs
- Volunteers

How do you feel about sharing the road with cyclists?



What do you think about the skills and knowledge of cyclists?

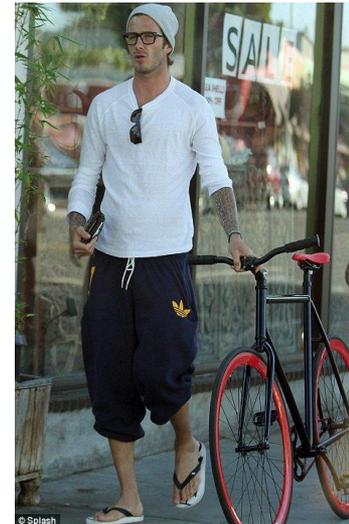


Helmets, safety, visibility, road position



Opinions on cycling infrastructure?

Opinions of cyclists? Like you?



# Key findings

- Very positive attitudes to cycling and cyclists.
  - Not a nuisance; equal rights
- Cyclists are the same sort of people as themselves
- Most intended to cycle sometime in the future.
  
- Cyclists and motorists are equally inconsiderate, but cyclists are much more vulnerable.
- Need more on-road cycle lanes
- Not 'normal' to cycle for transport
  
- Cyclists should undergo training and wear protective gear (hi-vis & helmets)  
Sports cyclists are far more knowledgeable and safer

# ***Cyclists should undergo training and wear protective gear (hi-vis & helmets) – ???***

- Low numbers = infrequent encounters
- Behaviour ‘unpredictable’; appear from nowhere
  - Lack of enforcement
- Onus placed on the more vulnerable to prevent accidents
  - ‘Victim blaming’
  - *‘Be safe: be seen!’*



If they took more care we wouldn't have to watch out and we're the majority anyway, so they have to change.....

# ***Sports cyclists are more knowledgeable and safer – ???***

- HUGE growth in Ireland
  - Clubs, sportifs, charity cycles, triathlons etc.
  - Bike to work scheme
    - tax-free, €1k, pay over 12mths
- Mostly weekend, group cycles (sub-urban/rural areas)
- Car owners who are parents & grandparents
- Most visible type of cyclist outside Dublin
  - Non-lycra transport cyclist is “*not normal*”

***‘Proper’ cyclists!***



## 2. Obsessing on safety: teenage girls' attitudes to cycling

Elaine Mullan, MA, PhD and  
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### Attitudes to cycling for transport (CFT)

- Perceived barriers to cycling to school
- Attitudes to the safety of cycling
- Influence of parents' attitudes on transport decisions

### 2 semi-structured focus groups

- 6 females in each, aged 15-16yrs
- Volunteers, all-girls school
- Asked to comment on images

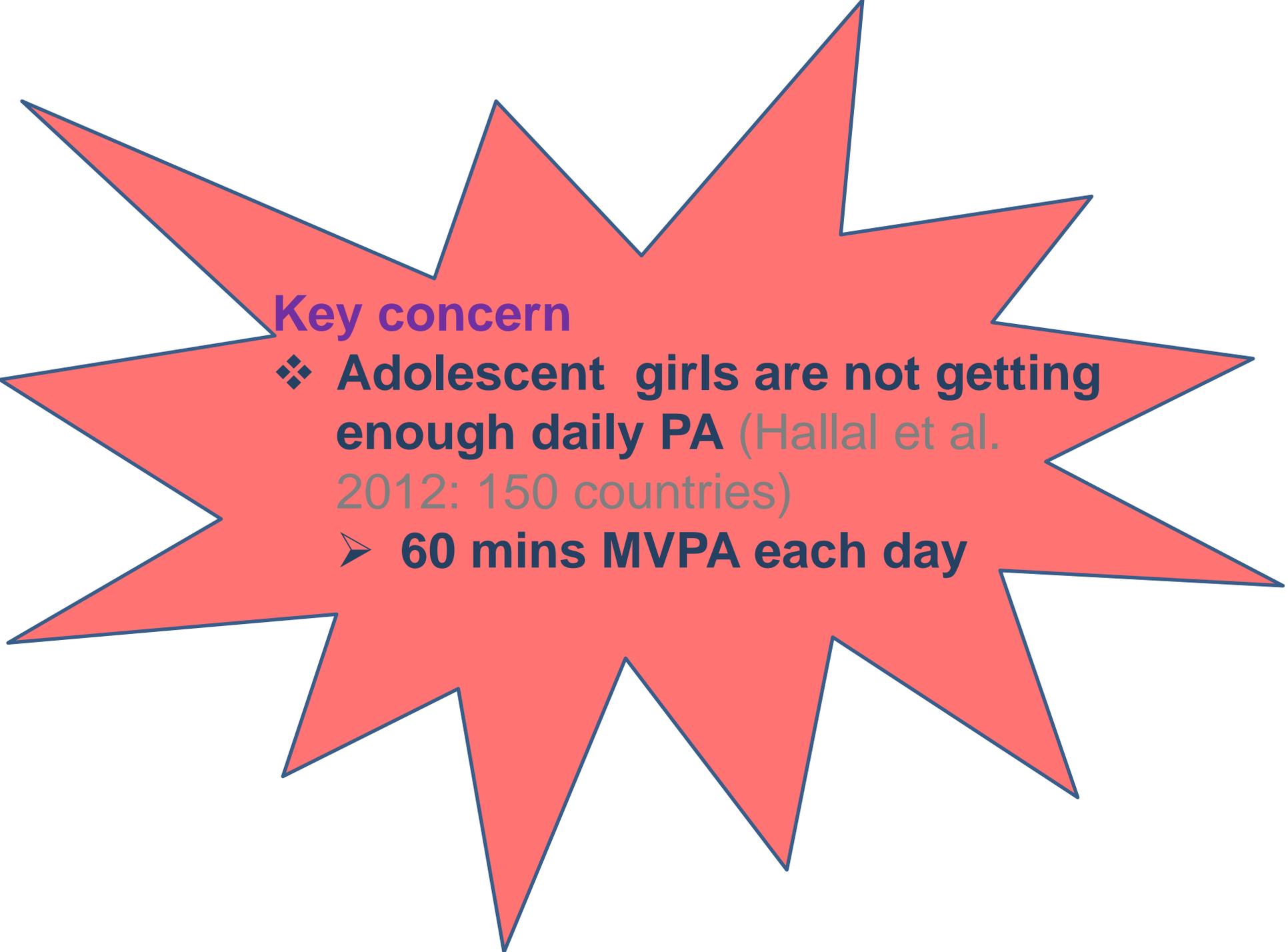




# Very low levels of cycling among teenage girls

## Why?

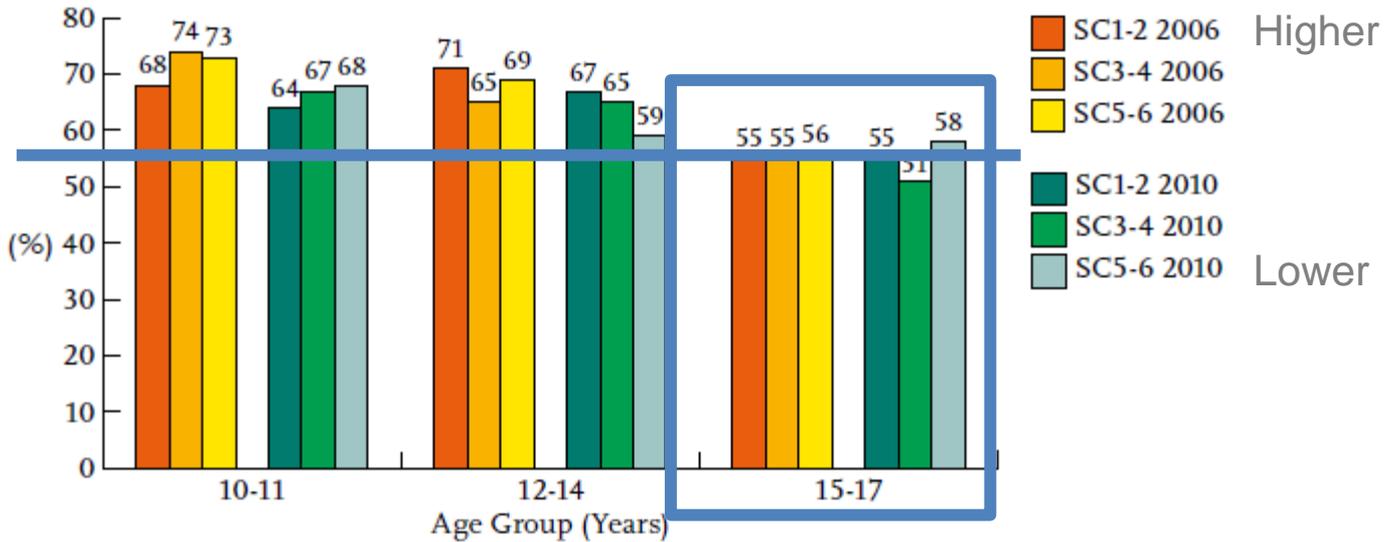
- **Image concerns such as 'helmet hair' and attractiveness** (Osborne, 2007; Kirby & Inchley, 2009)
- **Lack of confidence** (Heesch et al., 2012)
- **Parental concerns about 'stranger danger'** (Garrard et al., 2009)
- **Social stigma of cycling** (Underwood & Handy, 2012).



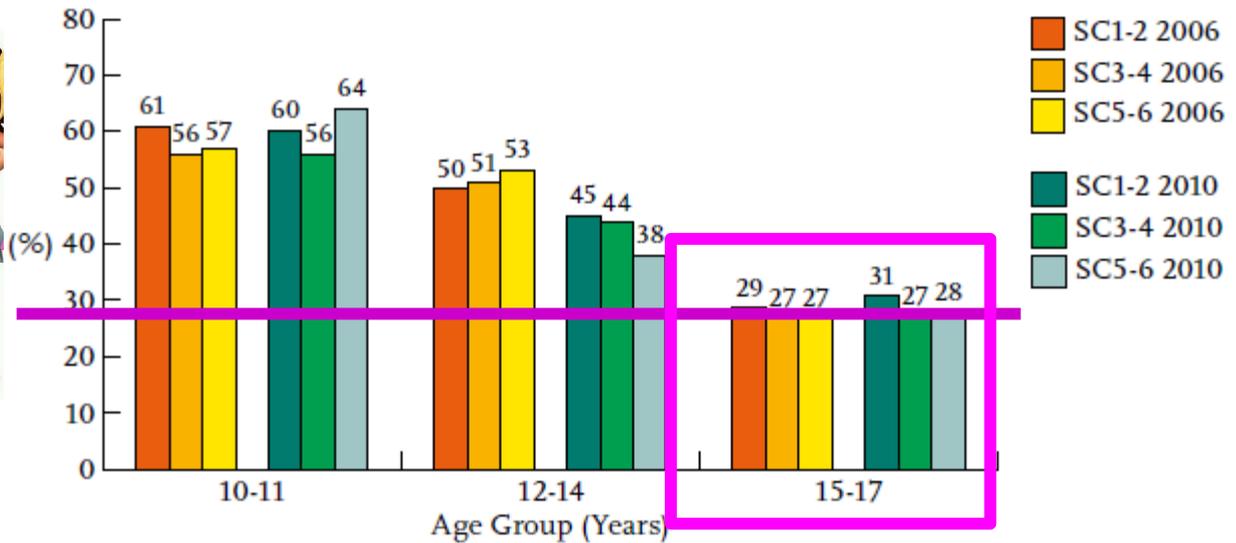
## **Key concern**

- ❖ **Adolescent girls are not getting enough daily PA** (Hallal et al. 2012: 150 countries)
  - **60 mins MVPA each day**

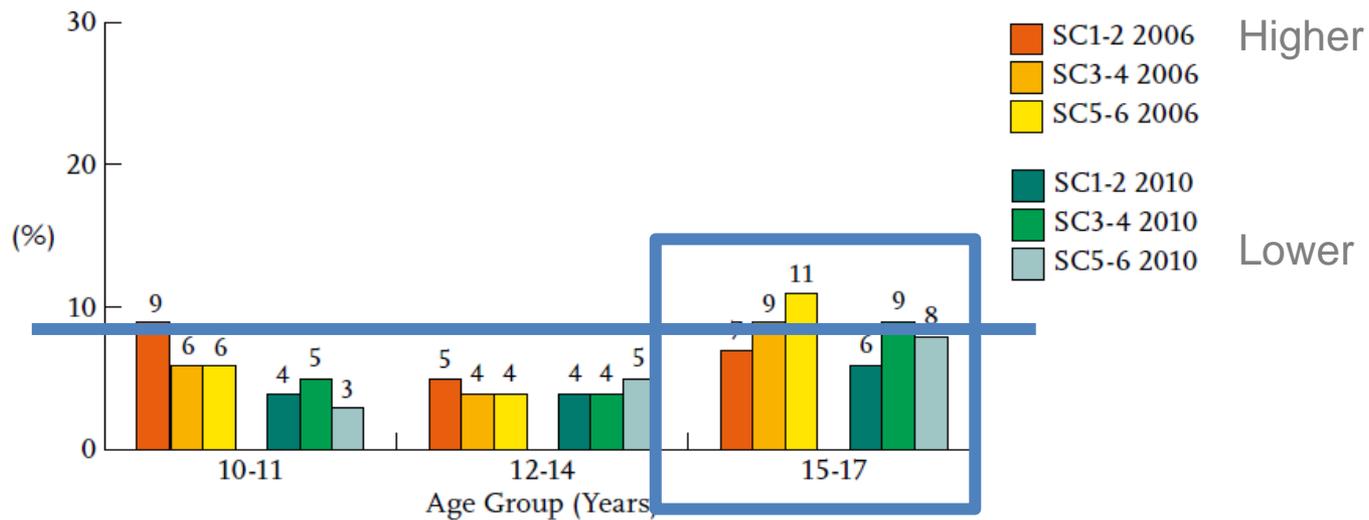
**Figure 46: Percentages of boys who report participating in vigorous exercise four or more times per week**



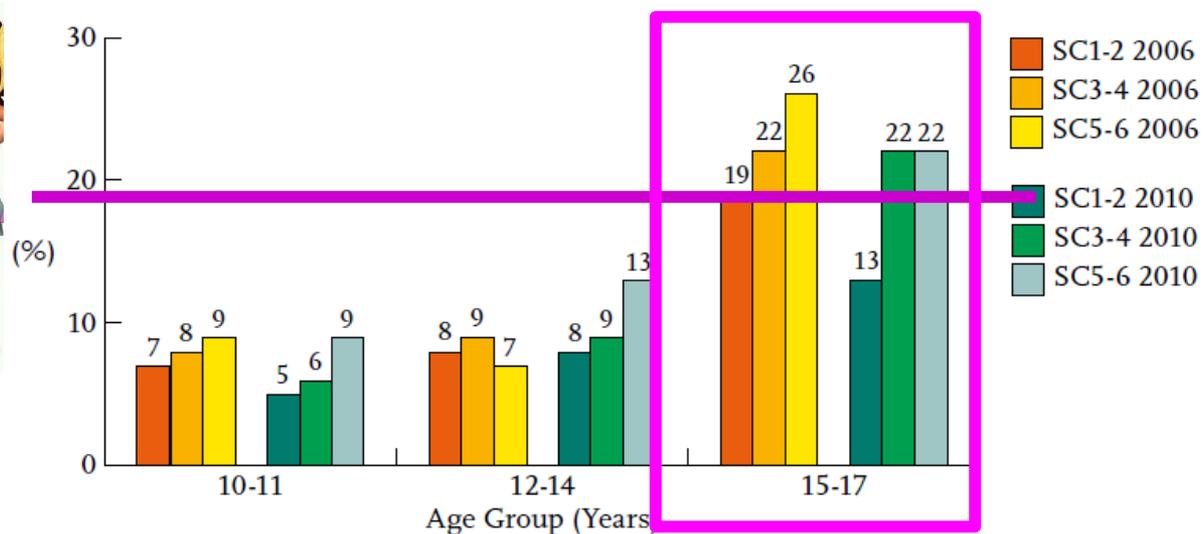
**Figure 47: Percentages of girls who report participating in vigorous exercise four or more times per week**



**Figure 49: Percentages of boys who report participating in vigorous exercise less than weekly**



**Figure 50: Percentages of girls who report participating in vigorous exercise less than weekly**



# Teenage girls' attitudes to cycling

Previous

Blog home

## What's stopping teenage girls from riding bikes?

Campaigns to get women cycling seem to focus on how to look good over other concerns. Is this really all girls care about?



Post Sara Tues 2009 thegr J (151)



Article

Life



Research in recent years shows teenage boys cycle 138 miles a year and girls only 24 miles. Photograph: Image Source/Rex Features

"Use waterproof mascara when it's raining on your bike, and take a powder compact for a quick refresher on arrival" (Sustrans 'Bike Belles')



# Key findings

- ❖ Predominant theme = extremely safety conscious
  - Overarching obsession with safety
- ❖ Image: cycling in casual clothing or without a helmet was viewed as a highly irresponsible and dangerous pursuit
  - Hi-vis, helmet & cycling gear essential



*“Her elbows are not covered. Her arms are all...and she’s no helmet and she’s on the phone. Oh my God, there’s so many things wrong with this picture!”*



*“She’s doing it right. She has a helmet on and she has a high vis jacket; she has cycling gloves; she’s not wearing heels, yeah”*



*“I think you have to look safe. Bring a helmet and reflective jacket”*

*“Her hair. I wish she’d tie her hair back. The wind blows in her face and she can’t see anything”*

*“The shoes are ridiculous. What is she doing with her life?”*



*“She’s cycling with her heels on. It’s unsafe. And she has no elbow pads or anything”.*

*“If she’s holding an umbrella, the ground looks wet as well, so it’s slippery, so you have that extra hazard, and her bag and basket... she is holding a lot, so she could fall, she could. There’s a lot of different ways that she could get hurt”*

*“It’s still the rules of the road though, to be wearing something reflective, something decent. They’re in their everyday wear!”*

*“The bag could get caught in the wheel!”*



*“...and I don’t think you should wear a dress on a bike either”.*

*“I think you have to look safe. Bring a helmet and reflective jacket.*

*Something you know, runners or flats or whatever you want”.*



*“They should have helmets”.*  
*“Yeah. There’s a lot of children”.*  
*“If there’s loads of people around, there’s bound to be some of ‘em cycling into each other”*  
*“Or something that’s blocking their path. And they could fall so easy (sic)”*  
*“They could even stumble on a rock or something. You know”.*

*“If you seen (sic) a child that young cycling here, most people would be saying, ‘What is she doing?’”.*



*“O my God! There’s a fella in Waterford that does it as well. The child is... it’s literally only a toddler and it doesn’t have a helmet on or anything. It seems just like, that’s an accident waiting to happen”*

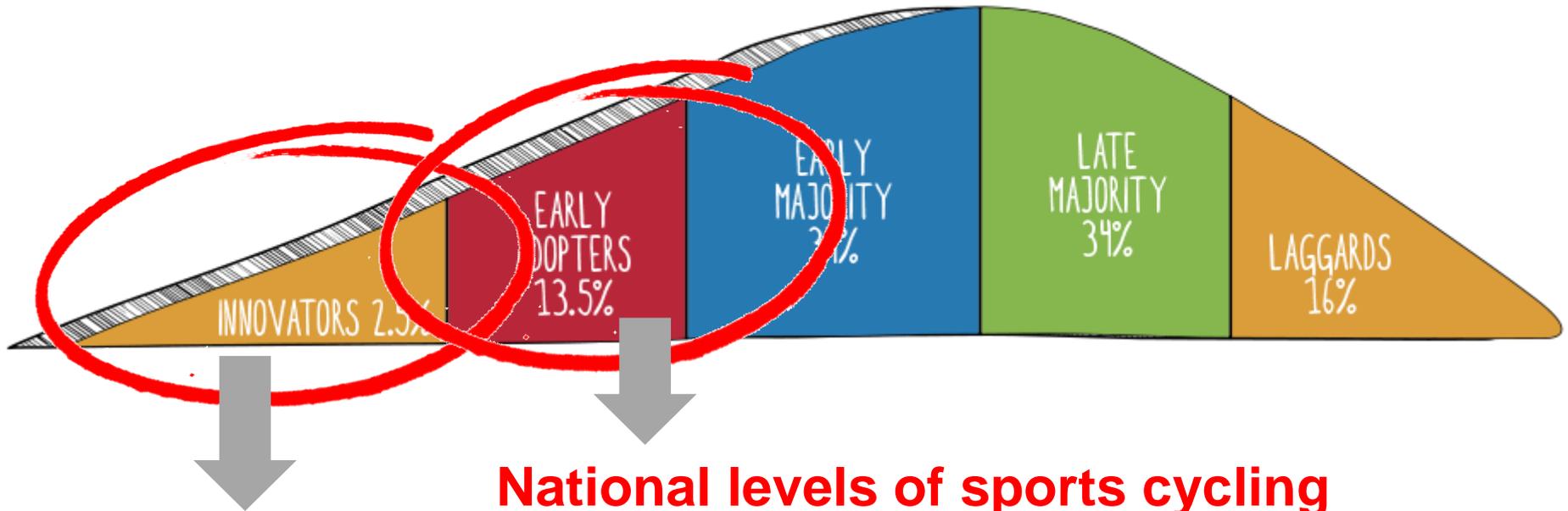
*“Yeah, I...it’s...sorry, but it’s just ridiculous! It’s practical if you need to get from A to B, but they should have a driving licence!”*

*“They are definitely trained, and they have proper gear. That’s proper sports stuff. Obviously, the gear they have is case they have accidents”*

*“Safer. They really know what they’re doing”.*



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‘Catch 22’: without a change in the image of transport cyclists as ‘not normal’, and needing hi-vis, helmets and training, it will be difficult to get the critical mass of utility cyclists necessary to change this image.



*“Cars are too many, too fast & too close”*

“Vulnerable road users need to take extra care when using the roads”  
(RSA, Aug. 2014)

Don't worry, wear hi-vis & helmets to protect yourself



“Men are sexually abusing me”

Don't worry, stay indoors, avoid alcohol, don't dress up nicely



*“Implementation of modal shift to date has been unsuccessful as trends show an ever-increasing dependency on car-based travel”* (35% increase predicted: DoTTS Review of National Land Transport System, August 2014)



## Concluding thoughts

- Utility cycling image = danger image
- ‘Safety’ focus may be preventing modal shift
  - *And environmental change*
- Cohort of young people who have never cycled for transport
  - Parents (born in 1980’s) who’ve never cycled either
- Challenge = how to 'normalise' utility cycling given the increase in sports cycling