


# PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PROJECT MENTAL HEALTH DATA (DÁTA O DUŠEVNOM ZDRAVÍ)

This document is an abridged version of the original material.  
You can find [the full version of the document \(in Slovak\)](#). 

## WHAT IS THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REVIEW (PRR)?

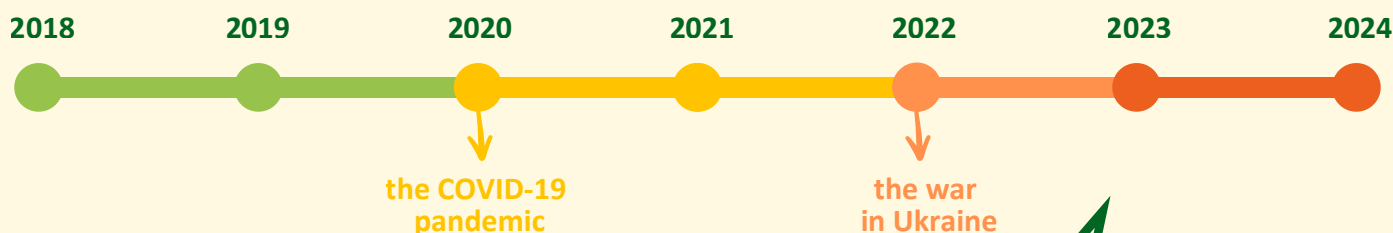
It is a synthesis of findings and aggregated anonymized data on mental health of the target group of children, pupils, and students aged 3 to 26.

## HOW WAS IT CREATED AND WHAT DOES IT CONSIST OF?

It is the result of analytical and descriptive processing of an extensive set of more than 260 sources of various types (some relevant data and information sources may have been overlooked and were not included in the Preliminary Research Review). e.g.:

- recurrent international research and surveys (e.g., EU Kids Online Slovakia, European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) Slovakia, Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Slovakia),
- domestic and international research,
- publicly accessible data sources and datasets provided by stakeholders (e.g., the Slovak Centre for Scientific and Technical Information, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the National Health Information Centre of the Slovak Republic, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, the Directorate General of the Prison and Court Guard Service of the Slovak Republic, the National Helpline for Children in Danger VIAC AKO NI(c)K, the Child Safety Line and UNICEF Slovakia, among others) for the purposes of the Preliminary Research Review.

The PRR is defined by the time frame of 2018–2024, in order to capture trends in the field of mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic right up to the present, based on the most recent data available.



24% of young people aged 15 to 24 report that their mental health has been affected by specific events such as the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change (Eurobarometer, 2023).

## WHO IS THE FOCUS OF THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REVIEW?

Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and Generation Alpha (born since 2010) – they are concerned with mental health and seek professional help more often than older generations (American Psychological Association, 2018).

# WHAT ARE THE STARTING POINTS?



## DUAL-FACTOR MODEL OF MENTAL HEALTH

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

Tracking trends in positive mental health indicators, such as overall life satisfaction and experiencing positive emotions.

Girls in all age groups surveyed (11, 13, and 15 years old) reported lower levels of life satisfaction than boys. Comparisons between 2018 and 2022 showed a decline in satisfaction especially among 15-year-old girls (HBSC, 2023). Higher satisfaction was recorded among children from eastern Slovakia, but at the same time, young people from smaller towns and rural areas showed lower life satisfaction (EU Kids Online, 2022).

30% of young people (aged 15-24) feel tired and exhausted (Eurobarometer survey, 2023).

### NEGATIVE INDICATORS

Most of the manifestations of risky behaviour in young people, as captured by the ESPAD survey (2024) among 16-year-olds or the HBSC study (2023) among 11-15-year-olds, reach high levels of risk only in a small portion of the population.

First attempts with addictive substances most commonly occur between the ages of 14 and 16 (ESPAD, 2024; EHIS, 2019; National Health Information Centre of the Slovak Republic, 2024).

As many as 93.5% of juvenile offenders committed the crime under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Addictions are a key risk factor for youth crime (Directorate General of the Prison and Court Guard Service of the Slovak Republic, 2025).

31% of calls from children and young people to the Child Safety Line (operated by a Slovak NGO) were related to fear, sadness, anxiety and stage fright, and another 24% were related to feelings of insecurity and loneliness (Child Safety Line, 2025).

### EDUCATIONAL DOMAIN

A declining level of school satisfaction as pupils get older (HBSC, 2023).

Satisfaction with school	11-year-olds	13-year-olds	15-year-olds
Boys	26%	19%	18%
Girls	31%	17%	17%

78% of primary and secondary school (grammar schools included) pupils and students (N = 4,757) rated the classroom atmosphere as good (State School Inspectorate, 2022).

### SOCIAL DOMAIN

Adolescents without social support turn to the online space (social networks) as a substitute for social contact (Dvorská, 2022).

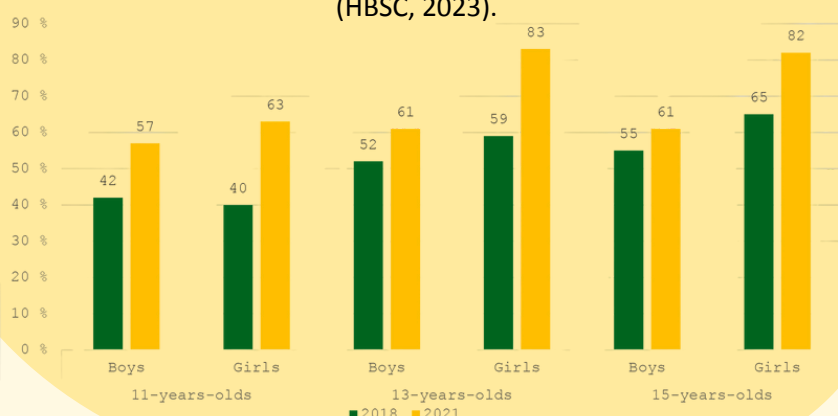
### COGNITIVE DOMAIN

21% of pupils did not reach the average level of reading literacy; 6% did not reach even the basic level. Slovak 15-year-old pupils scored below the OECD average in reading, mathematics, as well as science (National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements, 2019; National Institute for Education and Youth, 2023).

Approximately 80% of 11-year-old children, 60% of 13-year-olds, and less than 50% of 15-year-olds sleep at least eight hours on school nights. A significant proportion of children sleep less than the recommended optimal duration of sleep (HBSC, 2023).

### EMOTIONAL DOMAIN

Between 2018 and 2021, there was an increase in the experience of negative emotions and feelings among pupils aged 11 to 15 (HBSC, 2023).



# WHAT HAVE WE (NOT) FOUND?



- The current state of knowledge is **fragmented**.
- There is a lack of systematic data collection and a unified research framework.
- Most of the data processed is of a cross-sectional nature, longitudinal monitoring is lacking.
- Most of the data focuses on problems (e.g. depression, anxiety), with less attention paid to the positive indicators of mental health (e.g. life satisfaction).
- There is a lack of representative data.
- Mental health in preschool and younger school-age children (3-10 years) is currently under-researched.
- There is a lack of data that would allow for a consistent and comprehensive characterization of the mental health status of specific groups of children and youth (e.g., people with disabilities, children and youth from marginalized Romani communities, displaced persons from Ukraine, clients of special educational institutions, and young people who are not in employment, education or training – the so called NEETs).
- There is a lack of both qualitative and quantitative research focused on the relationship between mental health and criminal career.

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?



The findings and identified limitations from the Preliminary Research Review will be used to set up a nationwide representative data collection on the mental health of children, pupils, and students within the National Project Mental Health Data. The research data from the project will be available after data collection, which will be conducted in the 2025/2026 school year.

Data collection will be carried out starting September 2025 in selected kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and universities and will focus on children and young people aged 3 to 26. The results will be published in the Main Research Report in 2026 and subsequently in the first National Report on the Mental Health of Children, Pupils and Students 2026. The report will identify the state of mental health among children and young people in Slovakia and will serve as a basis for policy-making beyond the education sector.

**A list of references and data sources will be provided by the authors upon request.**