



Protection of Health by Increasing the health Literacy of Pupils

R1 – COUNTRY ANALYSIS NATIONAL REPORT GREECE

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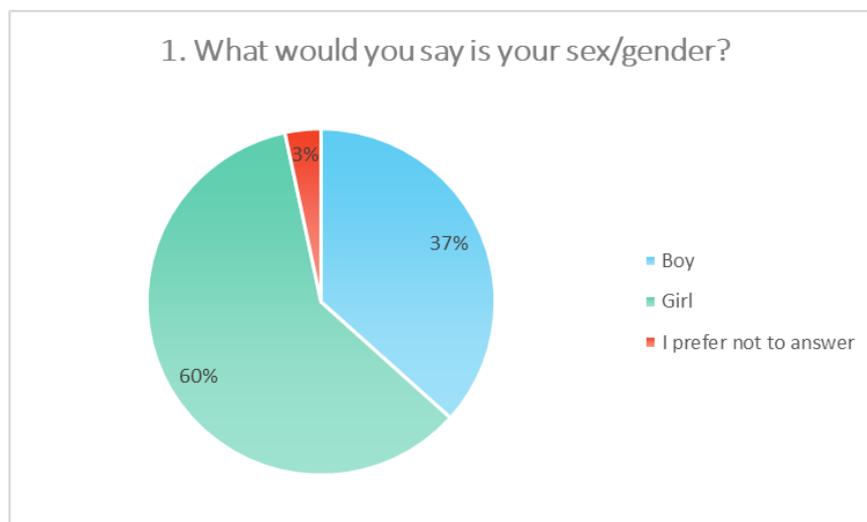


1 SURVEY AMONG PUPILS

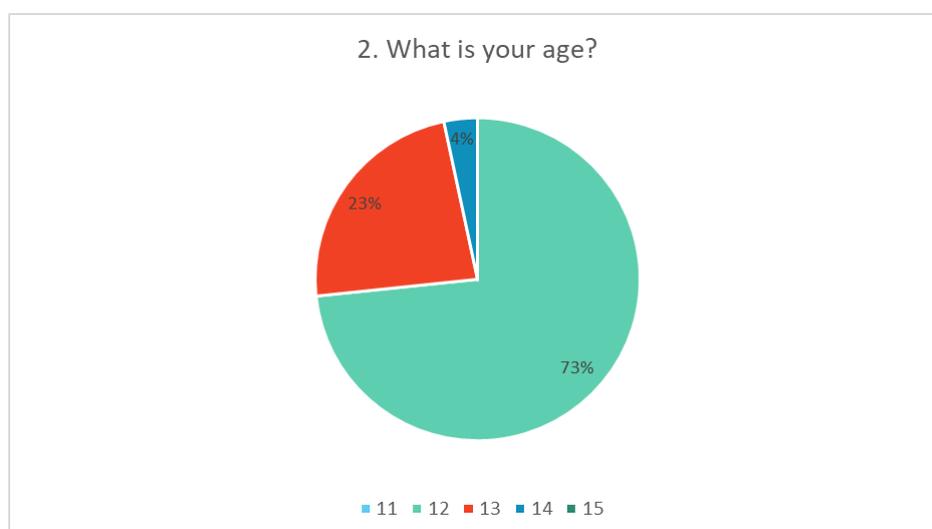
1.1 Introduction

Contact was established with the 2nd Gymnasio Karditsas (Secondary Education) in order to gather participants. The questionnaires were distributed to and completed by 30 pupils with the assistance of their teachers. All participants were informed that the data collection would be conducted confidentially, meaning that none of the project's researchers analyzing the results would be able to associate the participants' names or other personal information with their responses. All the information was entered into Google forms in order to assess the results.

1.2 Questionnaires data

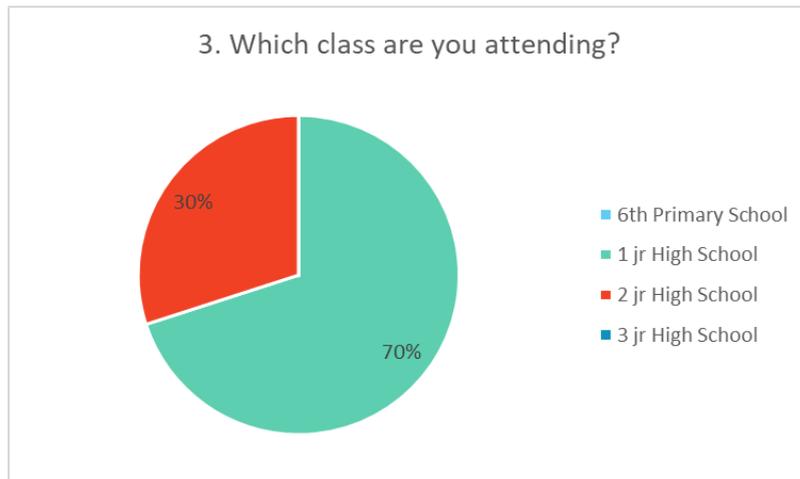


From the total number of children surveyed (30), 37% were boys, 60% were girls, and 3% decided not to answer.





The majority of adolescents (73%) were 12 years old, whereas a small percentage (23%) were 13 years old. Only one student was 14 years of age.

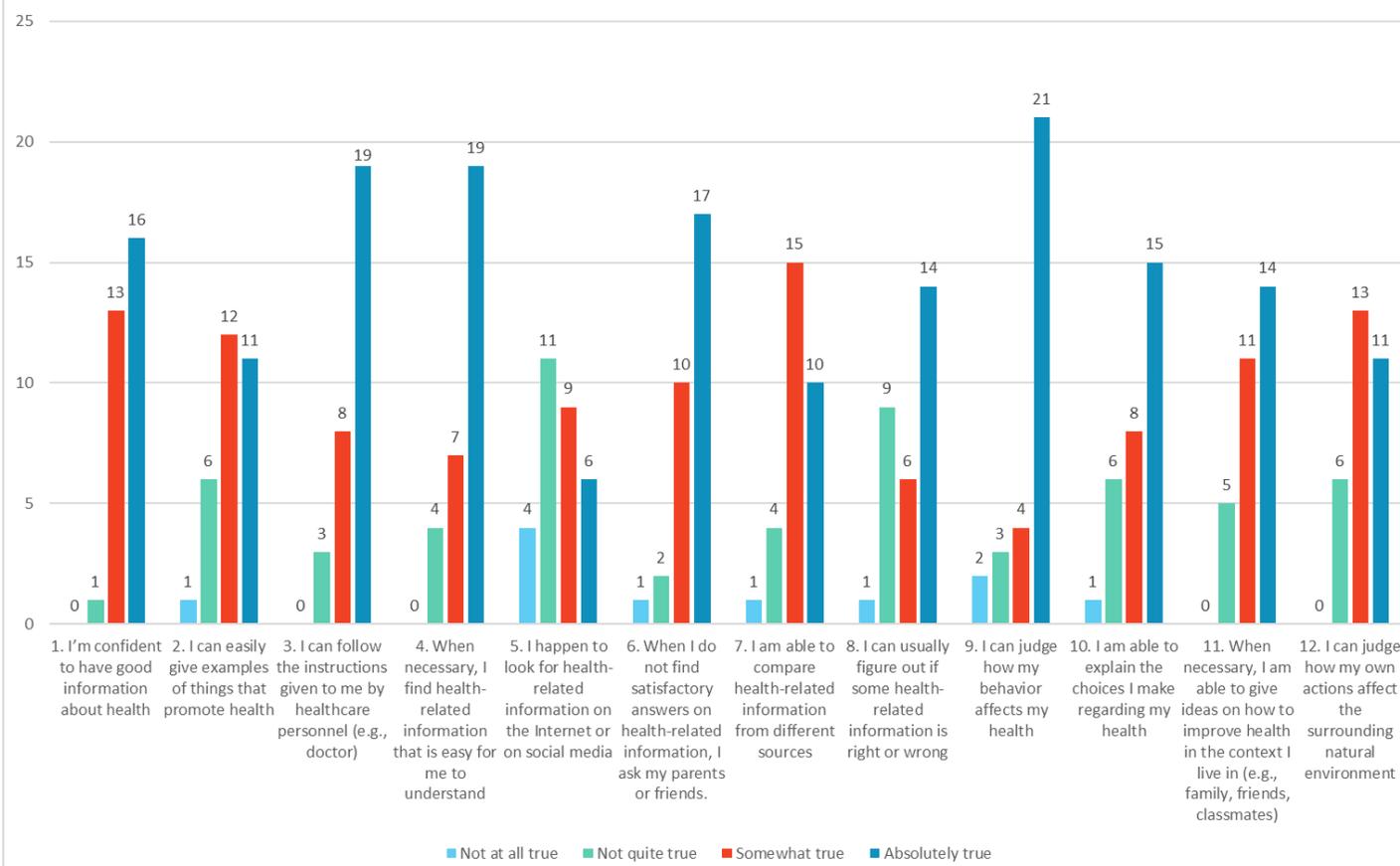


According to the graph, all of the surveyed pupils are enrolled in secondary school. With 21 (70%) participants, the most representative group corresponds to the 1st grade of junior high school. The remaining nine children (30%) are enrolled in the 2nd grade of junior high school.

They are pupils at a school (2nd Gymnasio Karditas) in a rural city in the center of the Greek mainland (Thessaly region). It is a small family city of approximately 40,000 inhabitants. Karditsa is one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in Greece due to its large cycling path network. According to the National Technical University of Athens, bicycles account for around 30% of all urban transportation.



4. From the following options, choose the one that best describes your opinion:



	Not at all true	Not quite true	Somewhat true	Absolutely true
1. I'm confident to have good information about health. Total answers collected for this line:	0	1	13	16
2. I can easily give examples of things that promote health. Total answers collected for this line:	1	6	12	11
3. I can follow the instructions given to me by healthcare personnel (e.g., doctor) Total answers collected for this line:	0	3	8	19
4. When necessary, I find health-related information that is easy for me to understand Total answers collected for this line:	0	4	7	19



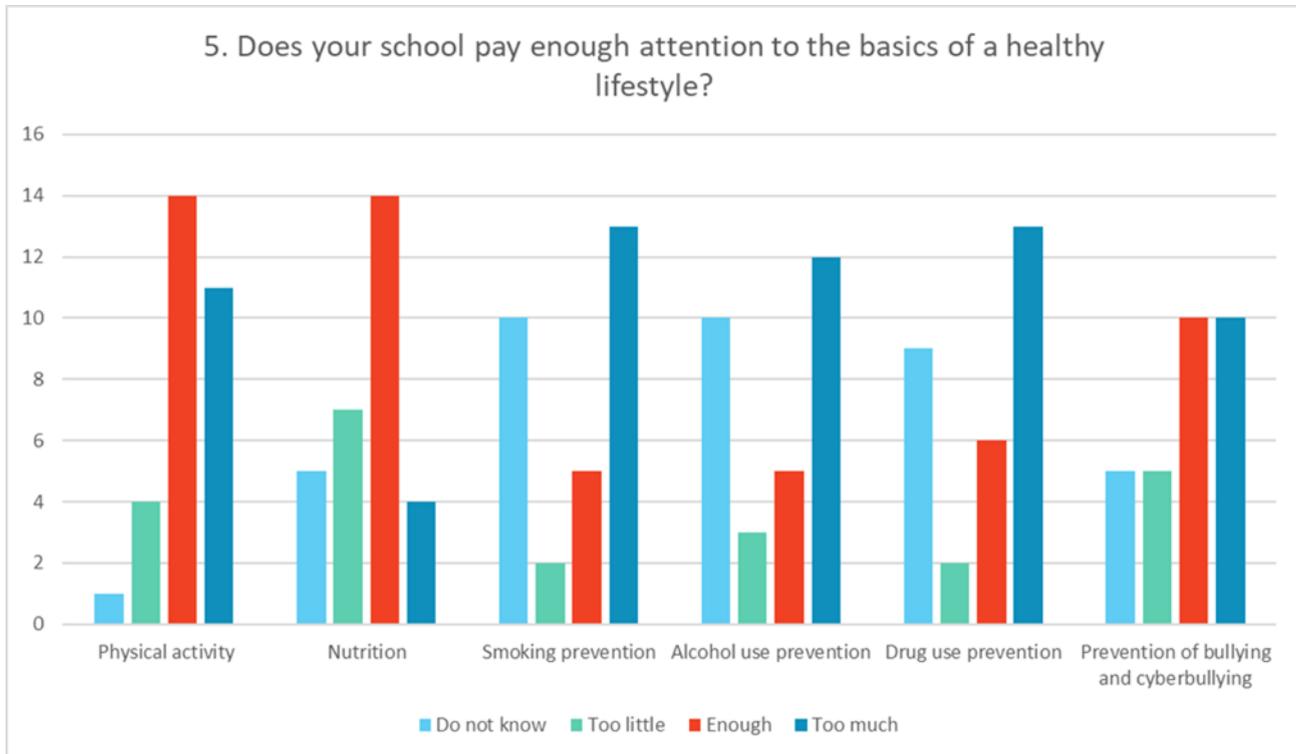
5. I happen to look for health-related information on the Internet or social media Total answers collected for this line:	4	11	9	6
6. When I do not find satisfactory answers on health-related information, I ask my parents or friends. Total answers collected for this line:	1	1	10	17
7. I am able to compare health-related information from different sources. Total answers collected for this line:	1	4	15	10
8. I can usually figure out if some health-related information is right or wrong Total answers collected for this line:	1	9	6	14
9. I can judge how my behavior affects my health. Total answers collected for this line:	2	3	4	21
10. I am able to explain the choices I make regarding my health Total answers collected for this line:	1	6	8	15
11. When necessary, I am able to give ideas on how to improve health in the context I live in (e.g., family, friends, classmates) Total answers collected for this line:	0	5	11	14
12 I can judge how my own actions affect the surrounding natural environment Total answers collected for this line:	0	6	13	11

The graph and table above display the responses to the 4th Question, "From the following alternatives, select the one that best reflects your perspective." In general, it can be observed that pupils responded positively to these points, which is a positive sign of their knowledge, access to, and transmission of health information. Regarding the 1st point, it is evident that the students have confidence in the health knowledge they possess.

It is worth noting that 11 students chose "Not quite true" for the 5th point, 9 students chose "Not quite true" for the 8 point, and 6 students chose "Not quite true" for Points 10 and 12. The majority of them

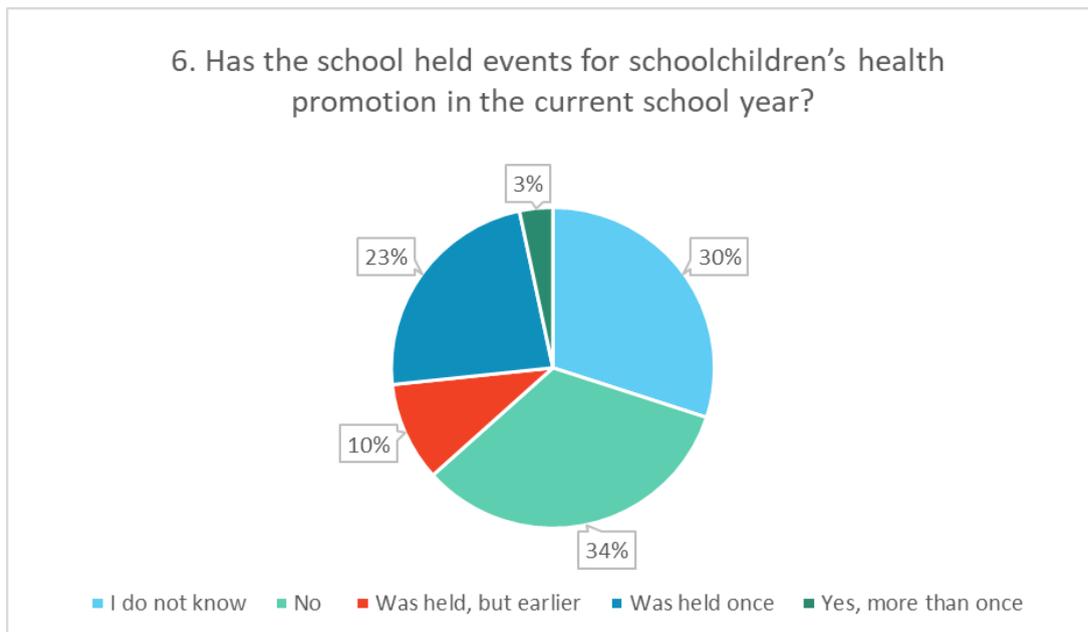


say that the information is readily available, but it is difficult to determine if it is reliable or not. Last but not least, they claim that the choices that they make regarding their health are not always conscious.



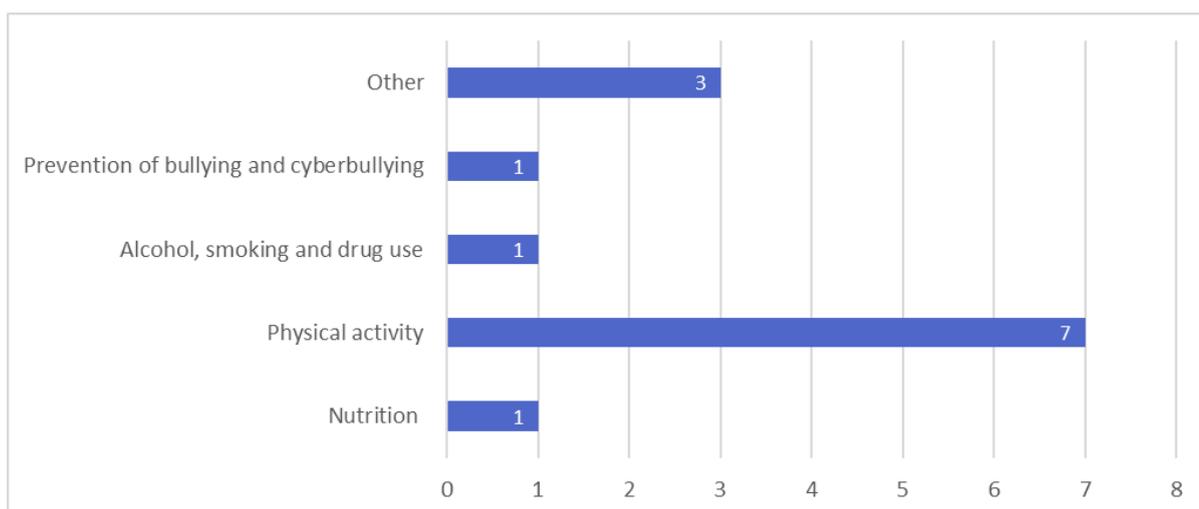
From the graph above, it can be inferred that the majority of pupils who responded to the survey believe the trainings and projects developed by schools regarding "physical activity," "nutrition," "smoking prevention," "alcohol use prevention," "drug use prevention," and "prevention of bullying and cyberbullying" are enough. Physical activity, nutrition, and bullying and cyberbullying prevention are the activities on which the schools work on the most ("Enough," "Too much").

A



total of 30% of the students said they did not know if the school had held events to promote good health among schoolchildren. There were no health-related events arranged, according to 34% of respondents. A small fraction (23%) of respondents indicated that the school hosted such event once. In this instance, they specified that the event's most common topics were "Physical activity" or "bullying and cyberbullying."

If yes which of the following topics did the school events focus on?





1.3 Summary/conclusions

The majority of questioned students responded positively to the questionnaire, which is a positive indicator of their knowledge and access to health-related information. Self-reflection is demonstrated by their ability to evaluate how their behavior and decisions effect their health, as indicated by the graphs. They are also able to comprehend and adhere to health instructions provided by healthcare professionals. However, we should keep in mind that pupils do not always seek out health-related information, even when it is easily available, and when they do, they are unable to determine whether it is correct or incorrect.

Last but not least, we cannot disregard the fact that the majority of pupils say their school does not host many health-related events, and others do not even know whether such events have ever taken place.





2 INTERVIEWS WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

The selection of the interviewees was based on the topic of the project. So, the most important professional field related to Health literacy among children are education and health services. Professionals in these fields can give a general overview of the topic since they are in touch with children every day. Besides, the topic is interesting for these professionals, as they have to deal with this problem and, sometimes, suffer the consequences of the lack of health literacy. It was easy to involve them to collaborate with the interview.

The interviews were conducted following the next standards;

- Explanation of the main objectives and project results of the project
- Set up a time and date for the interview that the respondent prefers.
- Ask questions with confidence and make interviewees feel at ease so that they would be comfortable and able to confidently respond to challenging queries.
- Clarify some questions with examples.
- Write the answers down and verify them with the interviewees.

2.1 In-depth interviews

Name and surname	Apostolia Tsekoura
Professional field	Psychologist
Current occupation (specify your role and how long have been doing it)	- Deputy Psychologist <i>In the past four years, I have worked as an assistant psychologist in five different schools every week. My responsibilities include identifying pupils that require educational-psychological evaluation and additional support.</i>
What is the level of familiarity with health-related information of children and adolescents you work/have worked with?	<i>The majority of students do not have a strong background in matters pertaining to health, and they show some interest in only those subjects that really appeal to them.</i>
Based on your experience, what is the attitude of	<i>In general, they do not appear to be particularly interested in acquiring this type of information, nor do they appear to be particularly interested in disease and virus prevention.</i>





children/adolescents towards the health-related information?	
What are the challenges children/adolescents face when finding health information? Do you believe the pandemic has affected these challenges?	<i>The majority of the time, they do not obtain information from official sources and instead search for it on the Internet, where there is an abundance of data. This means that children and teenagers dedicate insufficient time to locating credible sources. In addition, they struggle to comprehend the terminology and more sophisticated concepts. They have been afflicted by the epidemic because they are unable to distinguish between accurate and misleading information due to information overload.</i>
Do you think the digitalization can affect on the children health literacy?	<i>The process of digitalization can make information and sources more readily available, which can help reduce the amount of time spent researching for them. It is possible that as a result of this, pupils will have a greater motivation to search for information regarding health and acquire the knowledge they seek.</i>
What is the sector responsible for delivery of children/adolescents health promotion and education? Please also specify which professionals should be involved.	<i>Given that health education should begin in the classroom, I believe the Ministries of Education and Religious Affairs and Health should coordinate their efforts to promote health through the educational system. It is the educational body in charge of educating children on critical issues, and this education should begin at a young age. Thus, there could be a special subject developed relating to health to be added to the curriculum. Other important occupations include health workers. The educational and health sectors should collaborate to develop and spread health education and preventative initiatives programmes and workshops, that should be implemented on a regular basis.</i>
Are there initiatives for health education among pupils?	<i>No, I don't think so. I have never got information on this subject in my four years of employment.</i>

If there you have any other relevant information concerning this topic not mentioned above, please use this space to explain it:

N/A





Name and surname	<i>Andreas Giannakos</i>
Professional field	<i>Health Services - Doctor</i>
Current occupation (specify your role and how long have been doing it)	<i>General Medicine Practitioner – 36 years Pediatrician – 27 years</i>
What is the level of familiarity with health-related information of children and adolescents you work/have worked with?	<i>The Internet is becoming the primary source of information for children and teenagers. This, however, does not guarantee a high level of knowledge because the vast amount of data available makes it difficult for individuals to assess and compare what they read and find reliable sources. What is more, students have no education over important health issues affecting our society today, such as diet or sexual health. Moreover, the extensive use of smartphones has caused a number of issues to children, such as exhaustion, lack of concentration, dizziness bad eyesight, insomnia etc. Furthermore, the widespread use of smartphones has resulted in a variety of problems for children, including weariness, lack of attention, dizziness, poor eyesight, insomnia, and so on. This has resulted in a low level of wellbeing and knowledge, which should be one of the primary goals of modern education.</i>
Based on your experience, what is the attitude of children/adolescents towards the health-related information?	<i>They are uninterested and look for very specific information on the internet to satisfy their curiosity.</i>
What are the challenges children/adolescents face when finding health information? Do you believe the pandemic has affected these challenges?	<i>Their inability to interpret the terminology of health information or failure to identify official sources is one of the obstacles they confront, as the majority of their information comes from the Internet. They have been affected in two ways by the pandemic. Apart from causing them stress and anxiety, it has enhanced their awareness of the importance of a solid health system.</i>
Do you think the digitalization can affect on the children health literacy?	<i>Children are more concerned with their physical image than their health, as they are influenced by unrealistic online images and social expectations. They focus on the present rather than the potential future consequences of their actions.</i>
What is the sector responsible for delivery of children/adolescents	<i>The Ministries of Education and Religious Affairs and Health should coordinate their efforts to promote health through the educational system, by developing a health oriented project or even program to be added to the curriculum.</i>





health promotion and education? Please also specify which professionals should be involved.	<i>Educators and Health Sector professionals could also be involvea, proviaing clearer information for children and adolescents, taking their time with them, and making sure they have understood the information.</i>
Are there initiatives for health education among pupils?	<i>None that I know of. Parents and family members provide the necessary guidance to their children.</i>

If there you have any other relevant information concerning this topic not mentioned above, please use this space to explain it:

N/A

Name and surname	<i>Maria Malliora</i>
Professional field	<i>Education</i>
Current occupation (specify your role and how long have been doing it)	<i>ICT Teacher: 22 years</i>
What is the level of familiarity with health-related information of children and adolescents you work/have worked with?	<i>I believe that pupils are not very knowledgeable about health issues. The Ministry of Education should make a concerted effort if we want to attain better results. Currently, the endeavors in my school are mostly the result of the initiative and concern of a few of teachers.</i>
Based on your experience, what is the attitude of children/adolescents towards the health-related information?	<i>Except for those who have a health-related difficulty, they generally do not demonstrate extreme. Their attitudes vary widely and are heavily influenced by their families.</i>





<p>What are the challenges children/adolescents face when finding health information? Do you believe the pandemic has affected these challenges?</p>	<p><i>Probably the biggest challenge is comprehending the information they receive. In addition, they are unable to distinguish between credible Internet sources and non-Internet sources, in order to retrieve accurate information. We must consider that the first thing they do is check the Internet for any doubts, and that they frequently visit dubious websites.</i></p>
<p>Do you think the digitalization can affect on the children health literacy?</p>	<p><i>Digitalization can help students increase their knowledge. However, students need to be trained how to look for information safely.</i></p>
<p>What is the sector responsible for delivery of children/adolescents health promotion and education? Please also specify which professionals should be involved.</p>	<p><i>To my mind, the Greek Ministry of Education should make a concerted effort by integrating health issues into as many subjects as possible and educating instructors to deliver these topics.</i></p>
<p>Are there initiatives for health education among pupils?</p>	<p><i>None that I am aware of.</i></p>
<p>If yes, please provide the following information per initiative: (add rows if you have more than one initiative to report)</p>	
<p>N/A</p>	

2.2 Summary/conclusions

From the responses, it can be observed that the majority of students are unfamiliar with health issues and are uninterested in learning more about their own or others' health. The professionals surveyed also said that adolescents obtain the majority of their knowledge from the Internet, where there is an abundance of material, making it difficult for them to determine their credibility and that of the sources they visit.

Everyone agrees that, when used properly, digitalization may be a useful tool for enhancing students' health literacy. Now, the majority of people rely on any information they find online without consulting





official websites such as WHO or DSM, or even being influenced by unrealistic photos, which can cause health problems due to rigid diets in order to achieve a flawless figure.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the experts were unaware of any health education initiatives for students, indicating that substantial efforts should be done to increase their knowledge and skills. Everyone was of the opinion that both of the educational sector and the Ministry of Health should develop a health related programme to be added to the schools' curriculum.





3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

In general, it can be inferred that the pupils' responses are somewhat contradictory. Most of them state that they are able to evaluate how their behavior and decisions effect their health and to comprehend and adhere to health instructions provided by healthcare professionals. On the other hand, though, they are do not show interest in searching for health-related information from valid sources and they are unable to determine whether they information they look for is correct or incorrect.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the pupils to be worried about this topic, the expert interviewees agree that the majority of adolescents are unconcerned about health issues. There are both beneficial and negative effects of the Internet and social media. The issue is that students do not search for information on trusted websites and typically accept the advice of influencers, which could lead to dangerous behavior.

The experts also agreed that the Ministries of Education and Health should collaborate on developing health literacy programs and training teachers to teach such subjects in the classroom if they wish to raise the health literacy levels of adolescents.

In conclusion, it is indisputable that adolescents in Greece have a low level of health literacy, and immediate steps should be taken to increase their awareness and knowledge.

