

SUE SISSONS

Social and Personal Education – some survey findings

In October 1981 a cross-section of pupils from all years, in the comprehensive school of which I am Health Co-ordinator, filled in the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire compiled by J. W. Balding of Exeter University. The purpose of the questionnaire was to aid the identification of areas of concern which could be starting-points for an integrated Health and Social Education course within the school. In addition to this, some members of the Social Education team interviewed members of the public associated with the youth of the school.

For the purposes of this report, only the results of responses to selected questions are presented. The results of questions omitted were thought to be either insignificant or of little general

interest. However, every department received copies of the questionnaire, and the master copy was available for perusal.

Homework

Since there had been several discussions on homework in recent months, this table was of interest to everyone. It can be seen that on the night in question, a significant percentage of pupils, particularly in the first and second year, did no homework at all. The majority of the remainder spent up to one hour on it.

Hygiene

The responses to four questions are given here (see overleaf):

Do you wash your hands after visiting the lavatory? (WASHHAND)

Last week, how many times did you have a bath or shower? (BATHFQ)

How often do you clean your teeth? (TEETHFQ)

Do you use an anti-perspirant/deodorant? (DEODORFQ)

It was felt that, on the strength of these results, some personal hygiene education should be given to all 1st-year pupils. This is further endorsed by the response of a youth leader from the local youth club, who felt that the main health problem among local teenagers was personal hygiene. There should also be follow-up work at the end of the 2nd year, or the beginning of the 3rd year, on personal and clothes hygiene. It was also thought that teaching on dealing with menstruation should be given to all 1st-year girls.

| | | HOMEWORK (%) | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| | | None | Up to 1 hour | Up to 2 hours | Up to 3 hours | Up to 4 hours | Over 4 hours | |
| BOYS (year) | 1 | 51 | 46 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 2 | 49 | 47 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 3 | 24 | 47 | 24 | 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| GIRLS (year) | 1 | 33 | 61 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 2 | 31 | 49 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 0 | |
| | 3 | 24 | 47 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 4 | 14 | 30 | 33 | 15 | 7 | 1 | |
| | 5 | 24 | 33 | 19 | 20 | 4 | 1 | |

Doctors

The responses to the following questions are reproduced:

Do you usually see your doctor on your own? (GPALONE)

Do you generally feel at ease when talking to your doctor? (ATEASEGP)

It was felt that some help should be offered to pupils with regard to talking to doctors, since it is important for people to understand their own health (or ill-health) and its treatment. Where there is reticence on the patients' part, they may discover very little. The year most likely to benefit from such discussions would seem to be the 3rd or 4th year, as the number attending the doctor alone appears to increase at this time, while the degree of ease of communication, especially among girls, decreases.

Food

There followed many questions on food habits, the analysis of which was lengthy. The Home Economics department is studying these closely for aid in planning future nutrition teaching programmes.

Smoking

The following questions examined smoking:

Which of the following most nearly describes you? (CIGHABIT)

How many cigarettes did you smoke yesterday? (NOOFCIGS)

In response to a question regarding the age at which they started smoking, 57% of 2nd-year boys started at either 8 or 9 years, whilst the majority of the rest of years 1-3 started between the ages of 10 and 12 years. In the 4th and 5th year, the majority started between the ages of 12 and 14 years.

Smoking appears to be in the experimentation stage amongst 2nd-year boys and 3rd-year girls. Discussion on the issues involved in smoking could usefully take place in the 2nd year, first term. Follow-up work could then take place in the 3rd year. Some work is already being done by the science department in that year.

Relationships

There followed several questions on

| | | WASHHAND (%) | | | BATHFQ (%) | | | | | TEETHFQ (%) | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| | | Never or almost never | Sometimes | Whenever possible | Not at all | Once | 2 or 3 times | 4 or 5 times | 6 or 7 times | Never | Some days | Once a day | Twice a day | More than twice a day |
| BOYS (year) | 1 | 5 | 37 | 58 | 3 | 24 | 60 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 18 | 21 | 50 | 11 |
| | 2 | 7 | 42 | 51 | 0 | 37 | 49 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 19 | 28 | 47 | 2 |
| | 3 | 13 | 44 | 42 | 0 | 24 | 49 | 18 | 9 | 0 | 22 | 36 | 40 | 2 |
| GIRLS (year) | 1 | 0 | 20 | 80 | 0 | 14 | 61 | 14 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 67 | 16 |
| | 2 | 2 | 22 | 77 | 0 | 12 | 59 | 22 | 8 | 0 | 6 | 28 | 53 | 14 |
| | 3 | 0 | 29 | 71 | 0 | 16 | 66 | 8 | 11 | 0 | 5 | 24 | 61 | 11 |
| | 4 | 4 | 29 | 67 | 1 | 7 | 53 | 26 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 70 | 6 |
| | 5 | 0 | 13 | 88 | 0 | 8 | 45 | 24 | 24 | 0 | 4 | 20 | 60 | 16 |

| | | DEODORFQ (%) | | | | | GPALONE (%) | | ATEASEGP (%) | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----|--------------|----|------------|
| | | If Yes: | | | | | | | | | |
| | | No | Yes | Some days | Most days | Every day | No | Yes | Yes | No | Don't know |
| BOYS (year) | 1 | 90 | 10 | 20 | 0 | 80 | 84 | 16 | 34 | 21 | 45 |
| | 2 | 80 | 21 | 30 | 3 | 40 | 86 | 14 | 51 | 14 | 35 |
| | 3 | 50 | 50 | 32 | 27 | 41 | 73 | 27 | 30 | 30 | 41 |
| GIRLS (year) | 1 | 61 | 39 | 63 | 21 | 16 | 90 | 10 | 37 | 24 | 39 |
| | 2 | 33 | 67 | 59 | 27 | 15 | 92 | 8 | 26 | 40 | 34 |
| | 3 | 11 | 90 | 62 | 21 | 18 | 87 | 14 | 29 | 42 | 29 |
| | 4 | 8 | 92 | 71 | 13 | 16 | 78 | 22 | 14 | 52 | 34 |
| | 5 | 1 | 99 | 74 | 19 | 6 | 71 | 29 | 25 | 46 | 29 |

relationships. It is hoped that active tutorial work will help pupils deal with the many different kinds of relationship they have to build up, both in and out of school. In careers, work is already done in connection with interviews; possibly this could be extended to include relationships in both work and social situations.

First Aid

The question was:

Have you ever done a course in First Aid?

The responses to this question revealed that the majority of pupils had received no such tuition. A place for a full course on First Aid within the curriculum can-

| | | CIGHABIT (%) | | | | NOOFCIGS (%) | | | | | MAININF (%) | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------|----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-------|--------|---------|--------------|-------------|----------|---------|------------------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-------|
| | | Never started | Given up | Like to stop | Not want to stop | None | 1 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 15 | More than 15 | Parents | Teachers | Friends | Brothers/Sisters | GP/Family | Planning | Books/Mags/TV etc. | Other |
| BOYS (year) | 1 | 87 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 97 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 6 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 21 | 3 | |
| | 2 | 63 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 88 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 12 | 37 | 7 | 2 | 10 | 0 | |
| | 3 | 79 | 14 | 0 | 7 | 93 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 21 | 26 | 7 | 0 | 12 | 2 | |
| GIRLS (year) | 1 | 96 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 98 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 70 | 9 | 13 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | |
| | 2 | 80 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 90 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 7 | 24 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 2 | |
| | 3 | 50 | 24 | 18 | 8 | 76 | 18 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 11 | 30 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 0 | |
| | 4 | 60 | 17 | 22 | 1 | 82 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 10 | 48 | 6 | 1 | 12 | 3 | |
| | 5 | 56 | 23 | 16 | 5 | 84 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 33 | 5 | 39 | 5 | 0 | 11 | 0 | |

not readily be envisaged. But the Home and Family section on safety in the home could well be extended to cover First Aid for accidents in the home, as this is already partially covered.

Sex

Who or what is your main source of information on sexual matters?

MAININF)

It would appear from these responses that many youngsters still regard their friends as their greatest source of information. Although some teaching is already included in the science syllabus in the 1st and 3rd years, in the minds of the pupils this figures as a relatively small part of their total sex education.

Alcohol

The responses to questions on alcohol showed that between 59% (5th year) and 100% (1st year) girls, and between 66% (3rd year) and 79% (1st year) boys, either did not drink at all or had had only one alcoholic drink in the previous week. Most of those questioned who did drink at all started at the age of 10 years. A more detailed survey on alcohol among

4th-year girls, of middle-lower ability range, revealed that 41% had suffered from some of the listed effects of alcohol.

In view of these results, some preliminary work could be done in the 1st year, and further work in the 3rd or 4th year.

Money

Questions about money revealed that pupils receive widely differing amounts to spend on themselves, and it is spent in a variety of different ways. Some work on budgeting and other financial matters should be included in every pupil's education, at some stage.

Work on consumer education is included in the Home and Family syllabus in the 2nd year and in the English syllabus in the 3rd year, and care must be taken to see that these two complement rather than repeat each other.

(In the next issue of **Education and Health**, Sue Sissons will describe the proposals put forward by the team reviewing Social and Personal Education in her school. — Ed.)

Health Topic research: interest expressed in each topic plotted against frequency of selection as one of the three most important topics, for 3rd-year boys (see list opposite).

