

Current Health Event

Youth health

Young people's health is of particular concern. Promoting healthy practices during adolescence, and taking steps to better protect young people from health risks are critical for the prevention of health problems in adulthood, and for Lebanon future health and social infrastructure.

Editorial note:

The school health program is part of a global initiative for WHO that fosters health and learning targeting youth. This program strives to provide a healthy environment, school health education, opportunities for physical education and recreation, and programmes for counseling, social support and mental health promotion.

Lebanese children of school age are estimated at around 1 million, of whom approximately 300 000 are attending public schools. 42% of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR are aged 3–18 years. In addition, at least 100 000 Syrian children were attending public schools in 2014-2015.

Since 2007, the national school health programme has been supported through a tripartite agreement between WHO, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). It has 3 main components: medical screening, health education and school health environment.

As part of the national school health programme, the MEHE and MoPH have set the medical screening process as a health priority and a right of all students in public schools in order to maintain good school health.

The medical screening process has

Figure: Global Student Health Survey: Lebanon National Fact Sheet. WHO (2005-2011).

Results for students aged 13-15 years	Total (2005)	Total (2011)
Alcohol Use		
Percentage of students who drank at least one drink containing alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days	20.0	28.5
Percentage of students who drank so much alcohol that they were really drunk one or more times during their life	13.6	21.2
Mental Health		
Percentage of students who ever seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months	15.8	15.0
Percentage of students who had no close friends	3.2	3.4
Violence and Unintentional Injury		
Percentage of students who were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months	45.9	48.5
Percentage of students who were seriously injured one or more times during the past 12 months	31.1	39
Percentage of students who were bullied on one or more days during the past 30 days	33.9	25.1

become a more pressing issue due to the overcrowding in public schools caused by the influx of Syrian refugees.

In 2015, the guidebook on school-based health screening was revised under the technical support and supervision of WHO. 250 doctors involved in the medical screening process were trained by the Lebanese Order of Physicians on the revised guidebook.

WHO also supported the MEHE in the development of an electronic version of the students' medical screening files and an electronic data base. 25 schools will be chosen to pilot the Health Information System in 2016-2017.

In 2015-2016, 650 public schools received medical equipment to perform medical screening. Two e-learning modules will be introduced in 2016-2017.

WHO has supported the implementation of the Global school-based student health survey (GSHS) and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey in Lebanon during 2005 and 2011; which reported an increase in smoking, substance abuse, mental health diseases including depression, suicide ideations and violence. WHO is currently in the process of preparing with MEHE and MoPH for the 2016 version of the GSHS survey.

Cumulative Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon*

Disease	2015	2016**	July	August
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
AFP	75(9)	60 (6)	7 (1)	0 (0)
Measles	37(11)	28 (11)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Mumps	1400 (337)	429 (66)	11 (2)	1 (1)
Pertussis	37(6)	31 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rabies	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rubella	9(1)	5 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Tetanus	3(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Viral Hep. B	140(22)	182 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	333(57)	257 (110)	34 (7)	6 (3)
Cholera	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Hydatid cyst	14(1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Typhoid fever	473(50)	286 (1)	50 (1)	15 (0)
Viral Hep. A	877(159)	168 (23)	20 (3)	0 (20)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	32(23)	12 (11)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Meningitis	309(53)	314 (33)	45 (6)	15 (0)
Viral Hep C	65(3)	42 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)

*Numbers in brackets refer to Syrian **as of 19 August 2016