



The Netherlands Institute for Social
Research



School absenteeism of young carers

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Increasing attention

- Demography
- Public interest
- Scientific research





Definition Young Carers

Growing up with an ill household member: parent, sibling, other kin

Chronically ill: for longer than 3 months

Illness: physically and/or mentally, also mental retardation

Performing more or less tasks





Quantitative research

Survey Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)

survey of 2013; fieldwork in autumn 2012

N= 5187, 12-16-year-olds

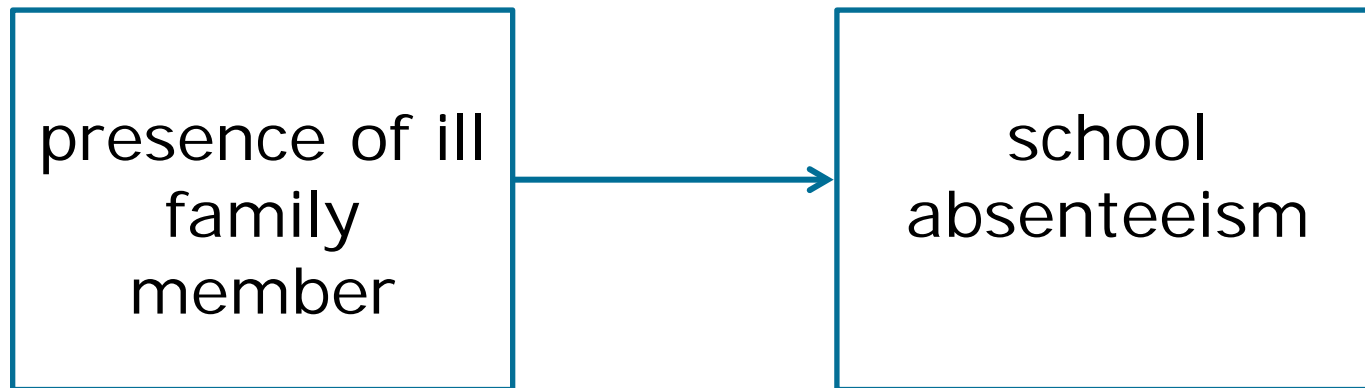
Pupils from secondary school

- youngsters *with and without* sick family members
- youngsters who *do('nt)* stay away from school without permission, & lessons missed among truants



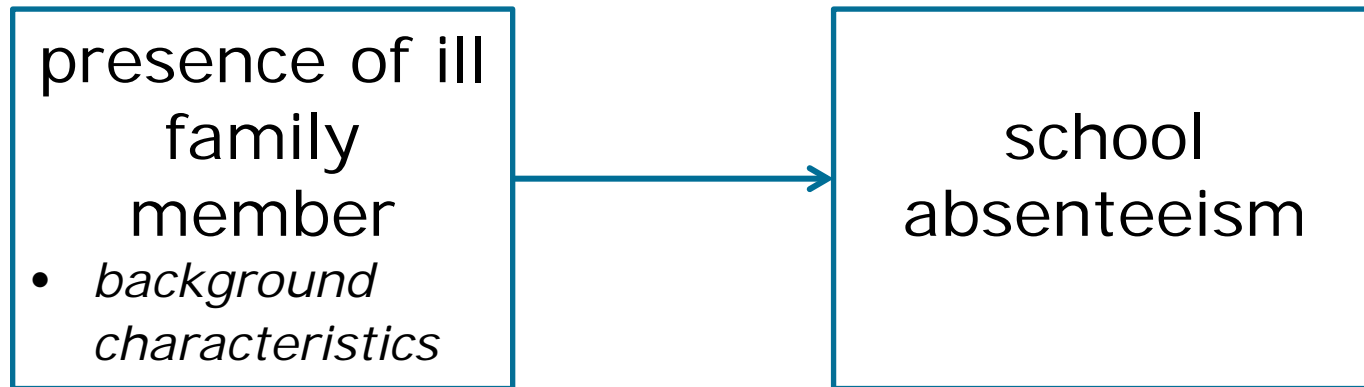


Research question 1



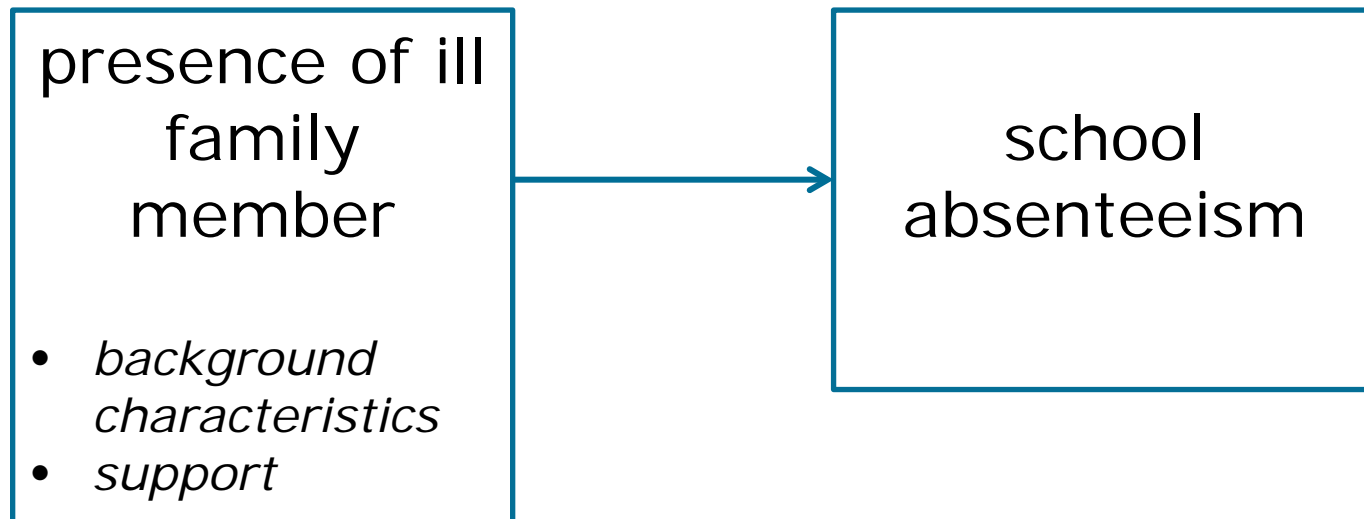


Research question 2





Research question 3





Measurements



School absenteeism

- Number of lessons stayed away from school without permission during the last 4 weeks;
Percentage absenteeism and lessons missed among truants

Demographic characteristics

- age, gender, school level, ethnicity, FAS, family structure

Support

- Family support; tries to help, getting emotional help, talking about problems, helping to make decisions
- Teacher Support; accepting, caring, trust in teachers



Key figures from sample

total sample

mean age: 13,9 years

51% girls, 49% boys*

23%, 27%, 27%, 23%, 4 school levels

79% indigenous families

32% high FAS*

74% complete families*



young carers (n=586, 11,3%)

56% girls, 44% boys

22% high FAS

68% complete families





School absenteeism question 1

Percentage school absenteeism:

- 9,4% without ill family member
- 8,7% with an ill family member

Number of lessons being absent (truants):

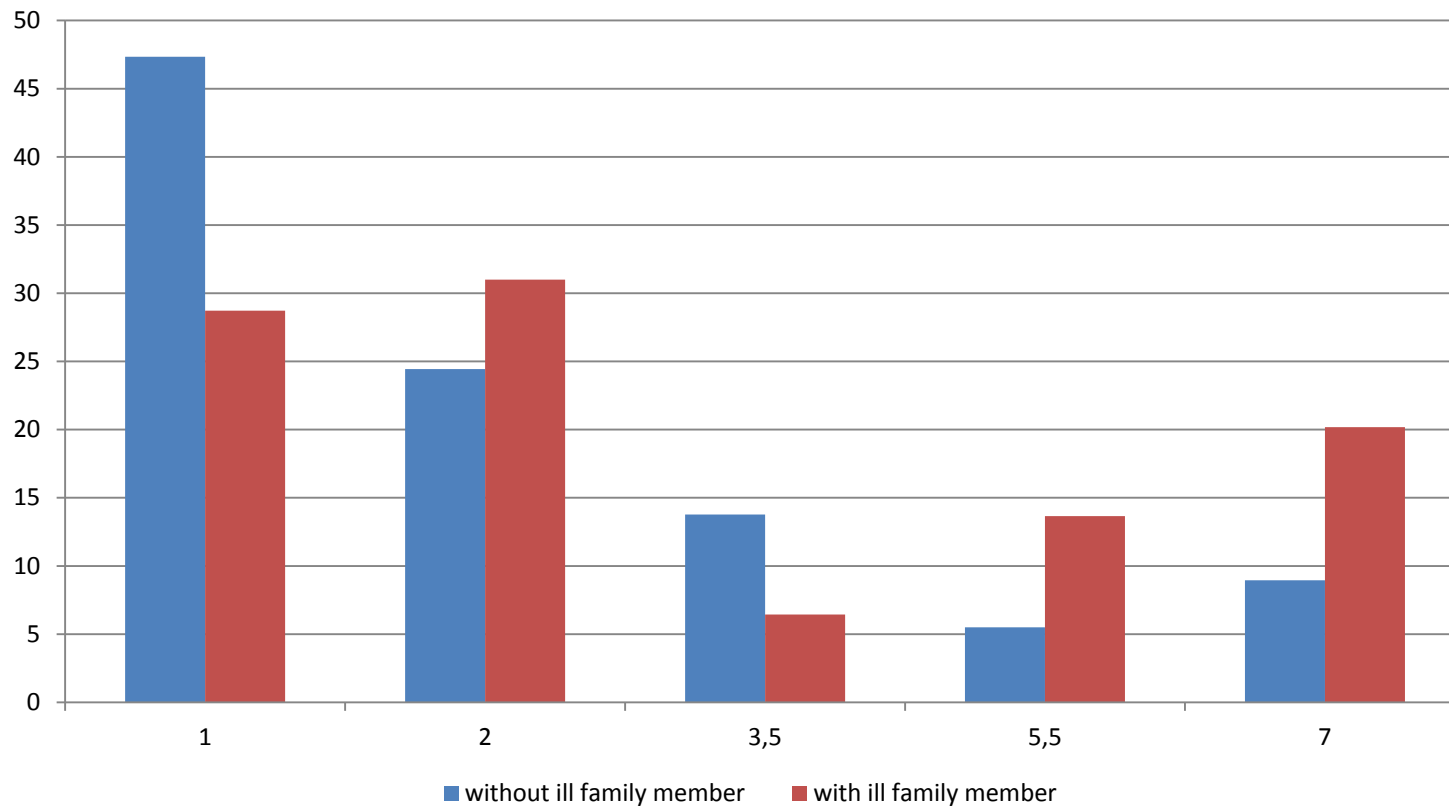
- 2,4 lessons without ill family member
- 3,3 lessons with an ill family member*





Lessons being absent among truants question 1

Figure 1. Lessons being absent among truants of youth with and without an ill family member, n=483





School absenteeism questions 2 and 3

Staying away from school

- More often among: boys, older youth, western migrants and adolescents in incomplete families
- More teacher support → less school absenteeism

Lessons being absent among truants

- Young carers are still more lessons absent from school when controlling for demographic characteristics and support
- More family support → less lessons being absent





Conclusions

- Young carers play equally truant as youngsters without an ill family member
- But when they are absent from school without permission, they stay away more lessons than 'average' youth,
- Even after controlling for demographic characteristics and support from their family and teachers
- Young carers more often grow up in incomplete and less affluent families and they experience less family support



Discussion

- Having a chronically ill family member is a risk factor for youngsters' school absenteeism
- Role of schools in identifying and supporting young carers
- Role of family support, whole family approach
- Future research HBSC 2017/18:
 - role of tasks at home in school absenteeism
 - also 17- and 18-year-olds (in NL)
 - characteristics of schools; size and denomination
 - international comparison



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