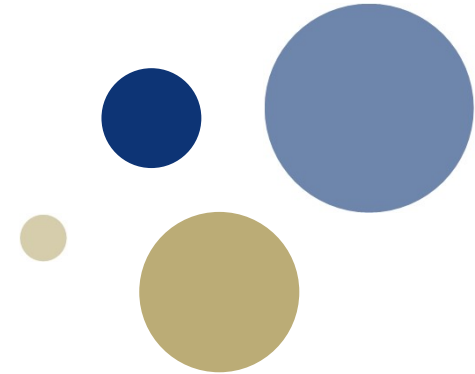




NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
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Exploring education in mental health (EMH) in Norway: How do secondary school students experience to learn about mental health literacy within a school context?

SHE Academy - 2020

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Norway

A world map with a light gray background. The country of Norway is highlighted in a bright red color. The word "Norway" is written in red text above the highlighted area.

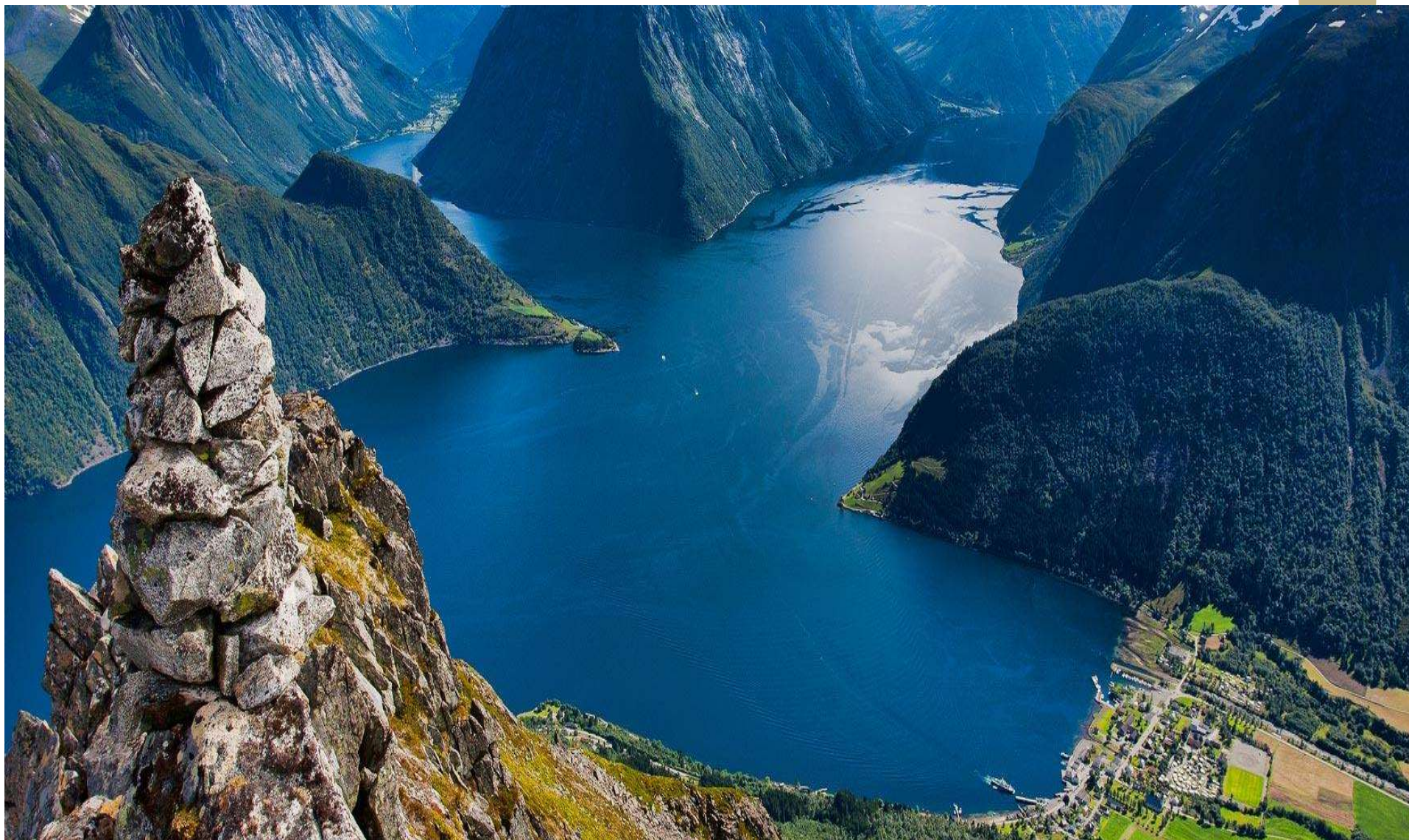
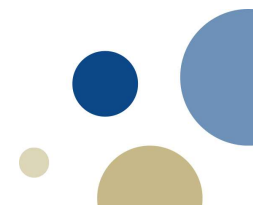
Norway

Population: 5.3 million

High score on Human development Index

Among the happiest countries in the world

Beautiful nature



Northern lights



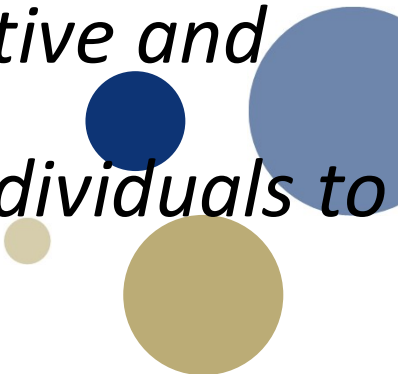


DO YOU KNOW THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES IN YOUR COUNTRY?



In Norway, 15–20 per cent of adolescents experience mental difficulties such as stress, depression, and anxiety, which influence their everyday functioning, coping and learning (Mykletun, Knudsen, & Mathiesen , 2009; Myklestad, Røysamb & Tambs, 2012).

Mental wellbeing is defined as; “*a positive and sustainable mental state that allows individuals to thrive and flourish*” (Clarke et al., 2011).



Mental health: ... “*a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community*” (WHO, 2014).

Schools are the ideal entry points for addressing mental health literacy (Slee, Dix & Askell-Williams, 2007).

(1) how to obtain and maintain good mental health

(2) understanding mental disorders and their treatments

(3) decreasing stigma related to mental disorders

(4) enhancing help-seeking efficacy

(Kutcher, Wei & Coniglio, 2016, Paakari & George, 2018).

From 2020 mental health literacy is a key element in the Norwegian school curriculum, integrated as part of other subjects (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2018). (Physical, mental health, sexuality, economy, feelings, thoughts, relations, gender, social media etc.)

The present study

Education in mental health (EMH) was offered to secondary school students (n = 164 students; 85 girls and 79 boys) as an independent subject for one school-year from August 2017 until May 2018).

The subject included for example topics like; mental health, thoughts and feelings, how to handle negative emotions and thoughts, stress management, relaxation techniques and self-efficacy.

Research questions:

- i) Do EMH have significant effect on means between T1 and T2 in 1) knowledge of mental health, 2) mental health problems, 3) coping, 4) school satisfaction, 5) friendship, 6) social support, 7) self-esteem, 8) resilience, and 9) future thoughts.

- ii) How do secondary school students view EMH?

Method:

Self-completion questionnaires were administered before EMH (baseline = T1) and after EMH (T2).

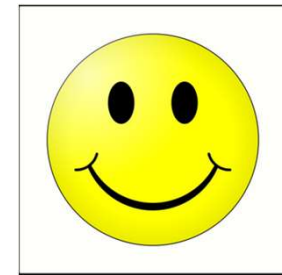
Findings and discussion

- Significant increase in **knowledge of mental health** (students know where to seek help, how to deal with stress and difficult thoughts), **coping** and depression. The increase in depression was significant in boys only.

Findings and discussion

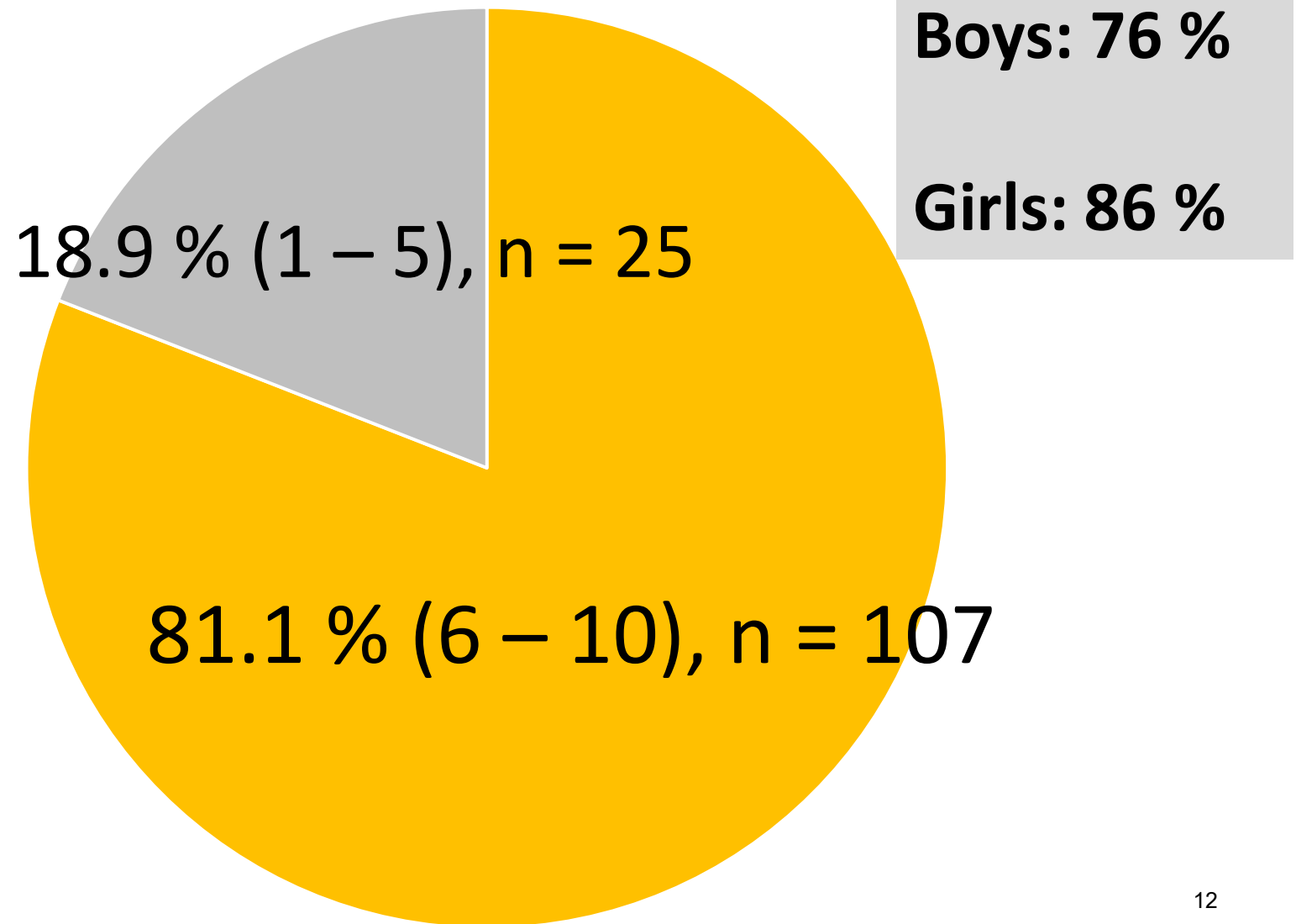


Within a scale from 1 – 10, how well do you like EMH?



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This finding matches results from previous studies for example in Ireland (Gabhainn et al., 2010; Klomsten & Stenseng, 2019).



Students thoughts about EMH	%
Aquired knowledge that are important to handle and how to master their own life	80
Like to continue with EMH in 10th grade	75
Positive about learning MHL as an integrated part of other subjects	68
Prefer to learn MHL when organized as a separate subject in school	84

Questions to the audience

- In your country, is mental health literacy (MHL) implemented in the school curriculum? If yes, in which way?
- Do you have knowledge of similar research?
- Are there alternative ways of understanding findings in our study? (I know there must be). Do you have suggestions? (Previous research, literature etc.)
- If you have further comments, thoughts or suggestions please contact me by e-mail: anne.klomsten@ntnu.no.