

## Regional health differences in Østfold

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 26 August 2010 00:00

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Did you know that one in four 10th year pupils in Østfold spends 5 hours or more a day in front of the TV or PC on weekdays? Did you know that on average half of them walk or cycle to school in summer?

These are a couple of the points from a survey of young people called “Østfold Health 2008”, which is published today.

- The survey covers very many areas and the reason for this is that there are extremely many factors that affect the state of health. For example, we see lifestyle habits, social networks, the school environment, sexual behaviour, drink and drugs, medicine use, education plans and so on. The survey has given the opportunity to bring forward the information that local authorities need to plan their operations and services. With this survey, they get information about a number of circumstances for which there are no national statistics, says the deputy manager of Østfold Health and deputy mayor of Sarpsborg, Linda.

### Regional differences

The survey shows a number of significant differences in the regions Halden, Sarpsborg, Moss and inner Østfold measured against the county average. For example, the survey shows that Sarpsborg has a somewhat greater problem with substance abuse among 10th year pupils, but at the same time this municipality has the fewest daily smokers. The Moss area is the region where young people complain most about noise pollution, but where most young people have plans for higher education. Young people in Halden seem to have somewhat fewer pains and so slightly less use of pain killers, while young people in inner Østfold are not quite as good at using car seat belts as those in other places. However they score somewhat higher on teachers helping them with personal problems.

Examples of significant \* findings from different parts of the county.

Inner Østfold

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- Five per cent state that they have tried hash and this is significantly lower than the county average (8%).
- Significantly fewer in inner Østfold than elsewhere in the county use a seat belt in the front seat of a car (80% against the county average of 85%).
- Young people in inner Østfold were less happy about public transport than any others. 55% were satisfied with daytime public transport and 37% with the evening services. (The county average was 63% and 47% respectively.)
- 88% of 10th year pupils think it is easy to get an appointment with the public health nurse against the county average of 82%, and inner Østfold had the best score on this question of any of the four regions.
- 70% think that teachers help them with personal problems when they need it, and here inner Østfold was highest of the four regions in the county. The county average was 63%.

### The Moss region:

- There is a significantly higher proportion of overweight and obesity in the Moss region (19%) measured against the county average (13%). Here the Moss region came out rather worse than the other regions in the county.
- A significantly lower proportion in the Moss region (28%) say that they have had intercourse, compared with the county average (35%). The Moss region came out a little better on this question than the other regions.
- Significantly more in the Moss region than elsewhere in the county use a seat belt in the front seat of a car (90 % against the county average of 85%). Here too the Moss region had a somewhat better score than the other three regions.
- The Moss region has the highest use of non-prescription pain killers (61%) and self-reported headache (69%). Young people in the Moss region are also those most likely to report pains (86%) and that they have been home from school for three days or more in the past year because of pains (33%). The county average here is 29%. The Moss region comes out slightly worse than the other regions in questions relating to the use of painkillers and self-perceived pains.
- 55% believe that teachers help them with personal problems when they need it. The county average here is 63% and the responses from the Moss region are lower than the other regions for this question.

### Sarpsborg:

- The number of daily smokers is 4%, which is significantly lower than the county average of 7%. Sarpsborg was the best of the regions in the county here.
- Seven per cent state that they have tried drugs and this is significantly higher than the

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county average (4 %).

- None are as happy with air quality as the young people of Sarpsborg. 14% thought air quality was poor, compared with the county average of 19%.

- None are as happy with public transport as the young people of Sarpsborg. 70 % were satisfied with daytime public transport and 58 % with the evening services. (The county average was 63% and 47% respectively.)

Halden:

- Four per cent state that they have tried hash and this is significantly lower than the county average (8%). Halden came out best of the four regions.

- One per cent state that they have tried drugs and this is significantly lower than the county average (4 %). Halden came out best of the four regions.

- The Halden region has the lowest use of non-prescription pain killers (44%) and self-reported headache (52%). Halden came out best of the four regions.

- Halden has the lowest use of non-prescription pain killers (61%) and self-reported headache (69%). Young people in Halden are also those least likely to report that they have been home from school for three days or more in the past year because of pains (21%). The county average here is 29%.

*The term statistically significant finding refers to findings in the survey that cannot be explained by being affected by random circumstances (such as a low response percentage, methodological weaknesses or the like) and that in all probability are true. That the significant findings have a high degree of credibility does not necessarily mean however that they are important or that the percentage stated 100 per cent reflects reality.*