

# Personality Traits of Adolescents Placed in Institutional Care in Comparison with the Population Norm Using the HSPQ Questionnaire



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**BACKGROUND:** This research study provides information about a comparison of the at-risk population, adolescents placed in preventive and protective institutional care, and the population of adolescents attending regular primary and middle schools. We decided to investigate whether the personality characteristics of these individuals are different from the norms. **AIMS:** The first aim was to compare the study participants with the norms in the HSPQ questionnaire. Our second aim was to look for any differences between the boys and the girls placed in preventive and protective institutional care. **DESIGN AND MEASUREMENTS:** The research involved a comparison study using the standardised High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ). The questionnaire works with the current general population norms. **PARTICIPANTS:** The study sample consisted of 180 individuals aged 13–18, 74 (41%) of them being boys and 106 (59%) girls. The average age was 15.1. The research was conducted in seven institutions for preventive

and protective care. The institutions under study included rehabilitation institutions, children's homes with schools, and institutions for juvenile delinquents and children with behavioural disorders ("diagnostic institutions"). **RESULTS:** The comparison of all the participants with the norms showed differences in nine personality factors assessed by the HSPQ, with the boys and girls differing from each other in seven factors. The boys differed from the norms in five factors, while the same comparison for the girls showed a difference in nine factors. **CONCLUSIONS:** The causes of the differences from the norms and the gender-specific differences may include the influence of the primary family and psychological or social deprivation. The results of this study may contribute to individualised work with adolescents which will take their personality profile into account. They may also be useful for psychologists in preventive and protective care institutions as another norm in addition to the general population norms.

**KEY WORDS:** INSTITUTIONAL CARE – PERSONALITY – ADOLESCENCE – HSPQ

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