

Mental health literacy among secondary school pupils and university students in Ireland

Bird, N., Costello, A., Duggan, S., Gilroy, J., Long,
R., McHugh, L., Nearchou, F., Hennessy, E.

School of Psychology



Mental illness and young adulthood

- 22% of young Irish adolescents were in the abnormal or approaching abnormal range for mental health difficulties (Coughlan et al., 2014).
- Lifetime prevalence of mental illnesses is up to 47% (Kessler et al., 1994).
- 75% of mental illnesses occur by mid-twenties (Kessler et al, 2007).



Mental health literacy

- Knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders that allow for recognition, management or prevention (Jorm, 2000).
- Facilitates help seeking for mental illnesses (Jorm, 2000).
- Poor mental health knowledge often associated with stigmatisation (Dogra et al., 2011).



Research aims

- To determine whether adolescents and young adults could identify that characters with depression or schizophrenia needed help.
- To determine how long they believed the mental health problems would last.
- To measure perceptions of societal and personal stigma towards peers with mental health problems.



Method

- **Sampling.**

- Random Selection from Irish Department of Education Post-Primary schools in Leinster.
- Snowball sampling of university students.

- **Questionnaires.**

- Friend in Need Questionnaire
- Peer Mental Health Stigmatisation Scale
- General Help Seeking Questionnaire



Participants

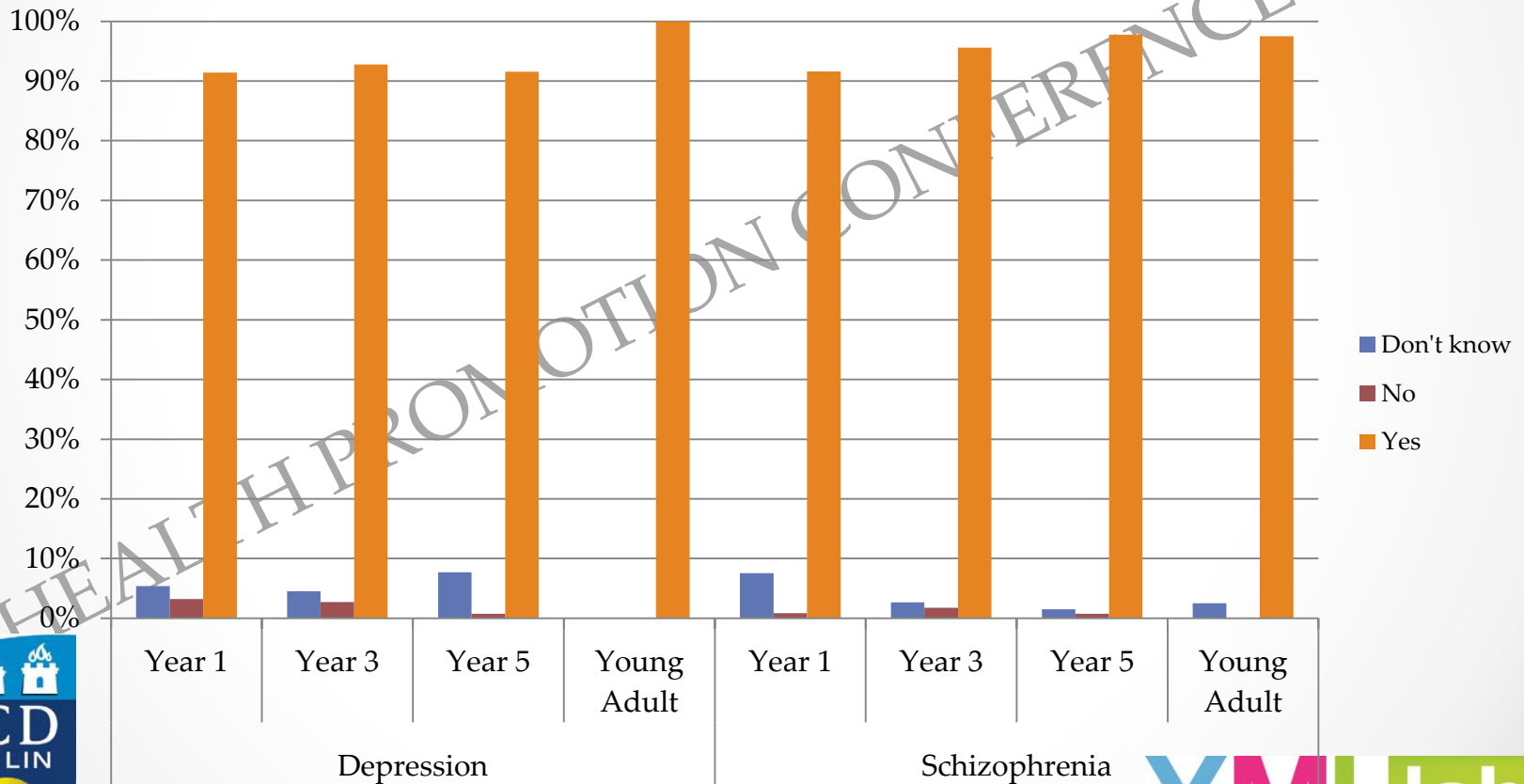
	Age	Gender	N
1 st year	12 - 13	48% Male, 52% Female	256
3 rd year	14 - 15	44% Male, 54% Female	239
5 th year	16 - 17	46% Male, 53% Female	279
Young adult	18 - 25	23% Male, 76% Female	187
Total		48% Male, 52% Female	961



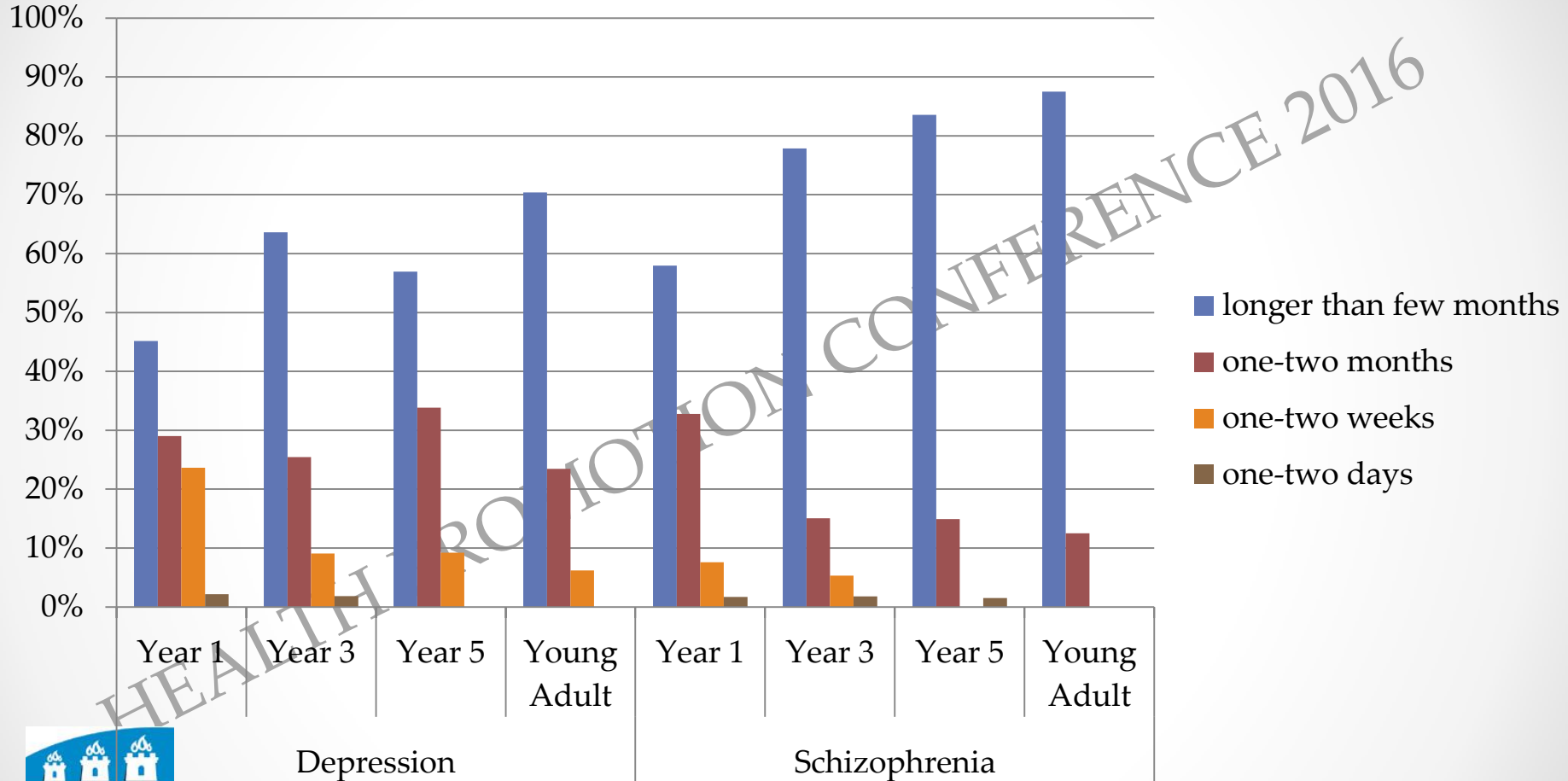
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Correct identification of need for help

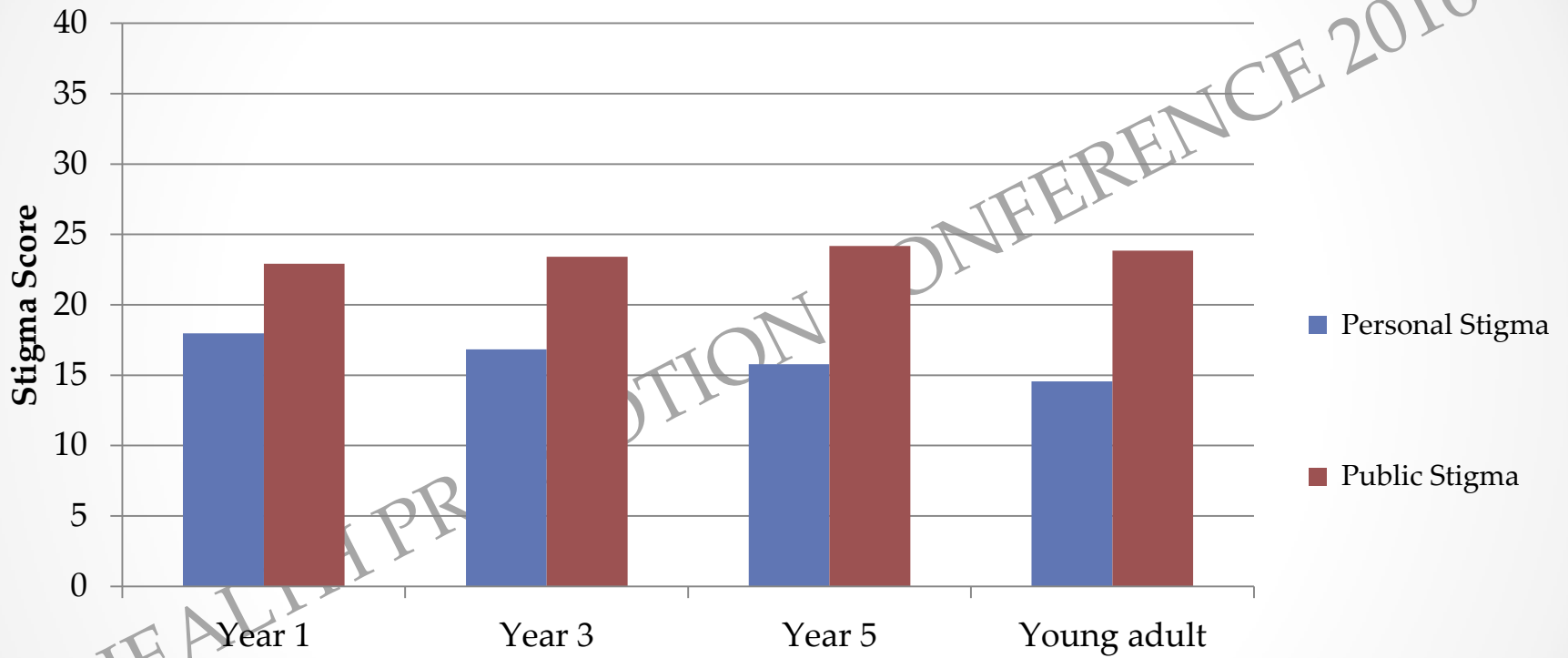
Does Emily/Connor Need Help?



How long will it take to feel better?



Levels of Stigma



Results summary

- Young adults significantly more likely to recommend seeking help than any other age group.
- Year 1 reported significantly less time to get better from mental illness.
- Year 1 had significantly higher levels of stigma than year 5. Young adults had significantly lower levels of stigma than Year 1 and Year 3.



Comparison with past studies.

- 90% of adolescents thought the character who had symptoms of depression needed to seek help (Byrne et al., 2015).
- Adolescents aged 14 – 16 found to have stigmatizing attitudes towards those with depression (Dolphin & Hennessy, 2016).



Implications

- Findings emphasise the importance of embedding mental health education within broad health education syllabi e.g. 'Social, Political and Health Education' (SPHE).
- Interventions to counteract stigma need to be focused on young adolescents.



Thank you

Any questions?

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