

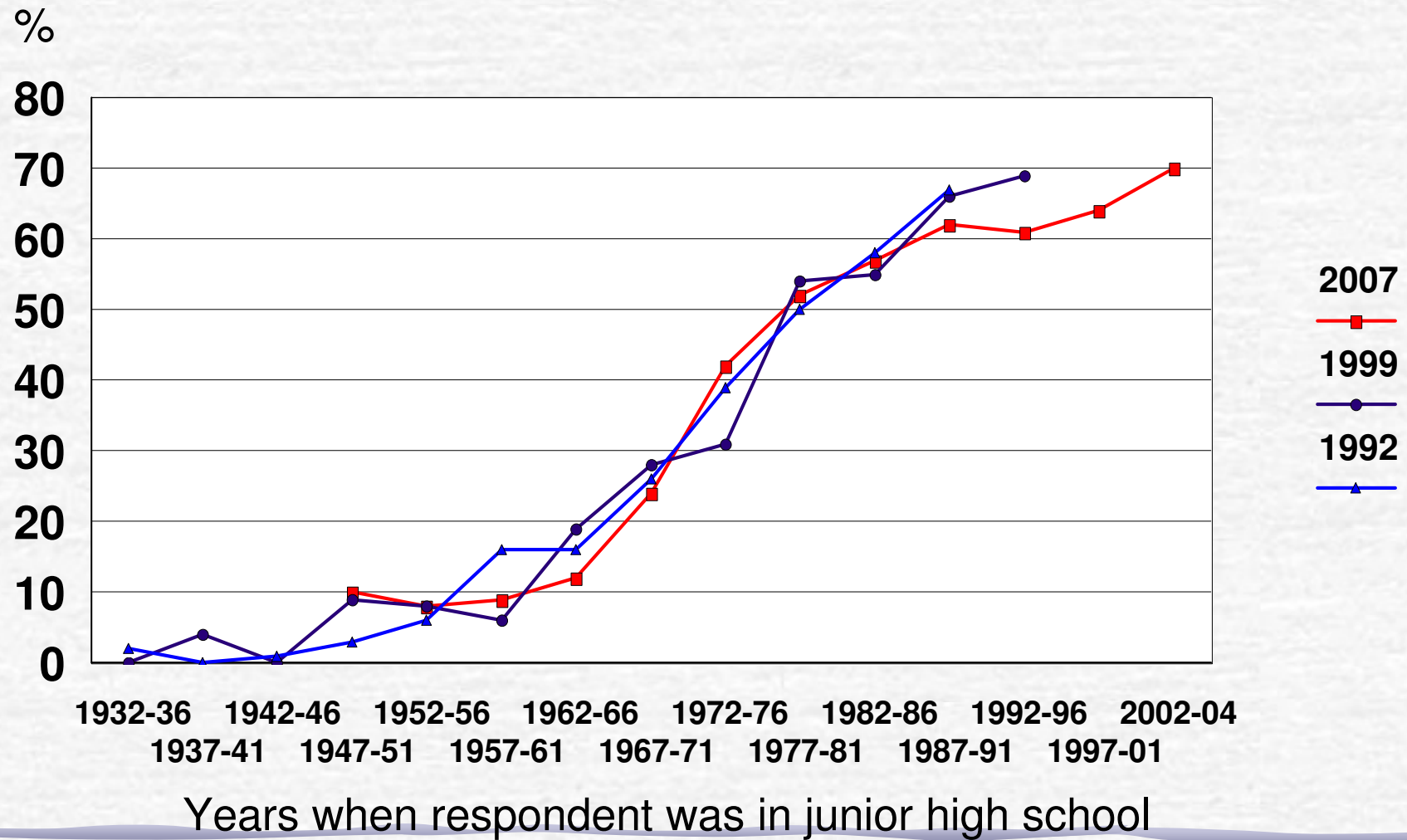
Sex Education in Finland: National Surveys of Sex Education at Grades 7-9 and of Sexual Knowledge at grade 8

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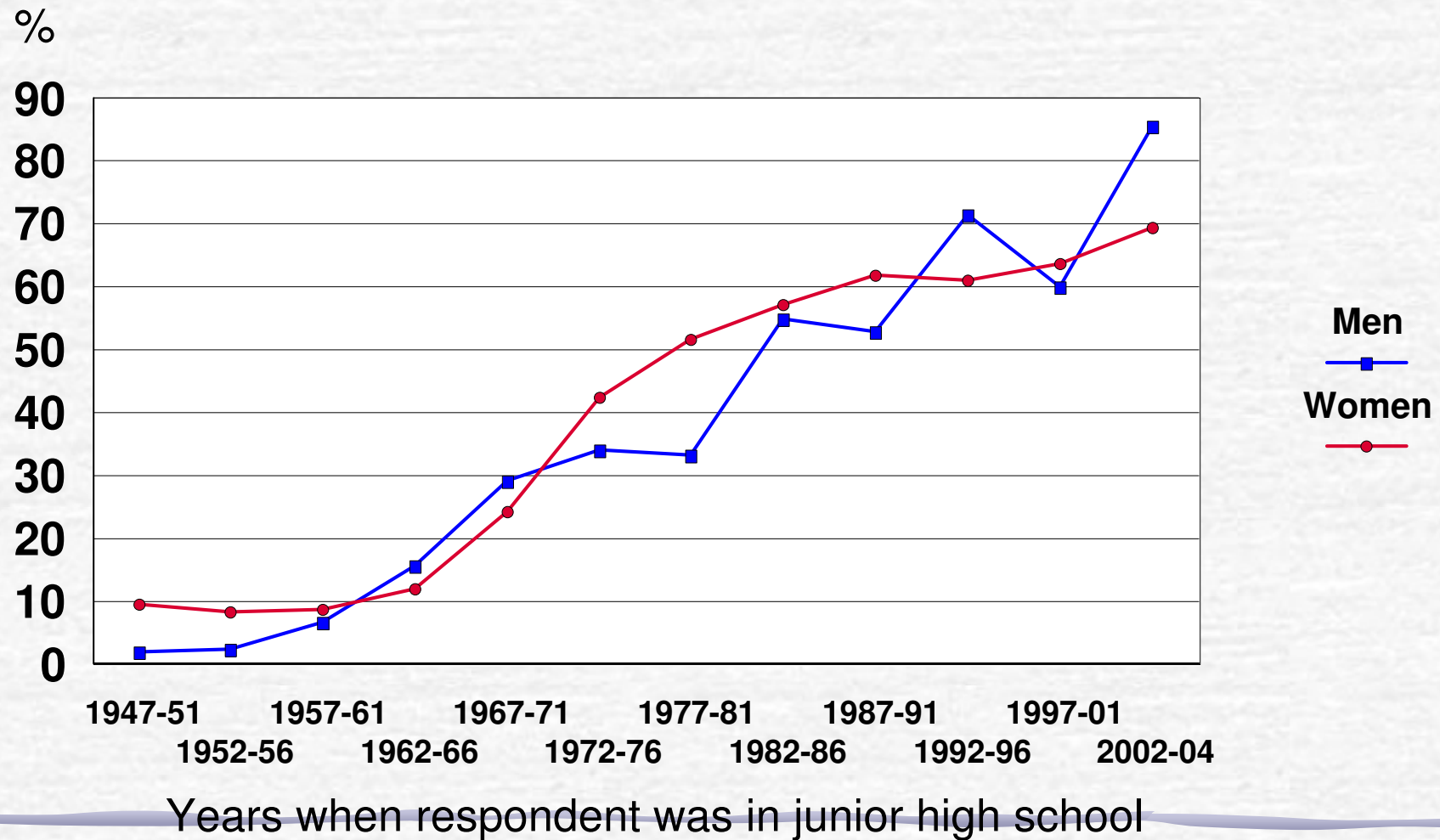
Provision of sexuality education in Finland

- Education on Human Relationships and Sex was introduced as mandatory into curriculum in 1970
- During the 1970s and 1980s coverage of Sexuality Education increased and minimum standards were created/enacted
 - A major decrease in teenage pregnancies and abortions
- Since 1994, apart of biology curriculum Sex Education was left to individual schools to determine
- In 2001, Sex Education became again mandatory as part of Health Education

Received enough sex education in their school, WOMEN Based on their own judgement



Received enough sex education in their school Own judgement in 2007 national sex survey



The Aim of the Study

- 1. To follow-up how sex education has progressed from 1996 to 2006 in grades 7-9 and what has been the outcome of the renewal of mandatory Health Education curriculum into Sex Education in the 2000s
- 2. To follow-up how the level of sexual health knowledge of adolescents (grade 8/14-15 years old) has progressed from 2000 to 2006 and how some relevant variables explain differences in their sexual knowledge
- 3. To study how some applied features of sex education were related to students sexual health knowledge in 2006 at the grade 8

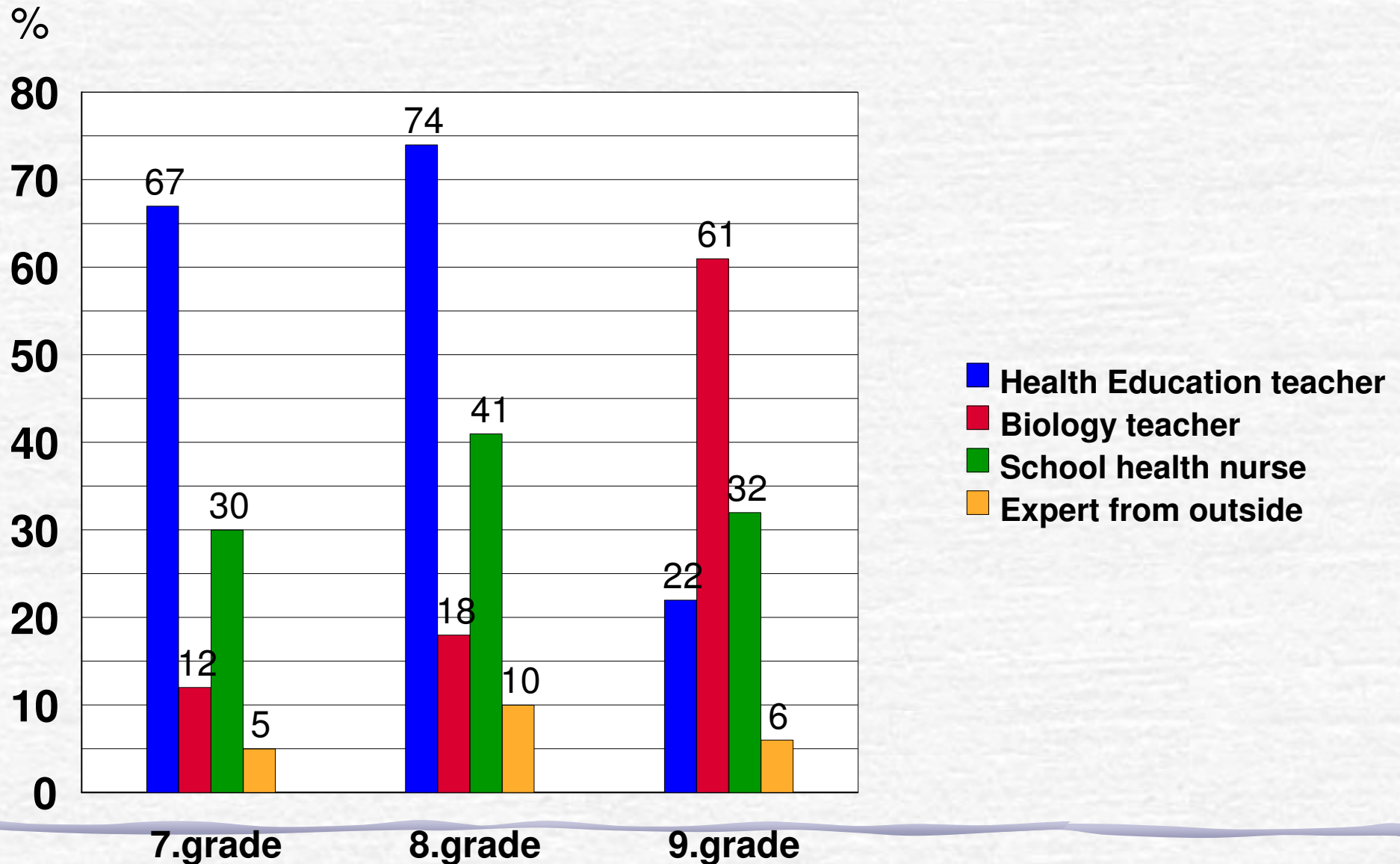
Research material

- ☞ **1. National surveys to health education teachers**
 - 1996 421 schools - Response rate 70%
 - 2006 518 schools - Response rate 70%
 - 286 variables in the data set (2006)
 - 223 variables in common 1996/2006

- ☞ **2. National sexual health knowledge quizzes**
 - 2000 401 schools - 30241 students (born 1985)
 - 2006 462 schools - 33819 students (born 1991)
 - 75 items in common that measure sexual knowledge
 - Maximum points of the knowledge are 75
 - Each item has 4 alternatives of which one is correct

- ☞ **3. Combined surveys to teachers and students**
 - 2006 responses from 339 schools to both surveys

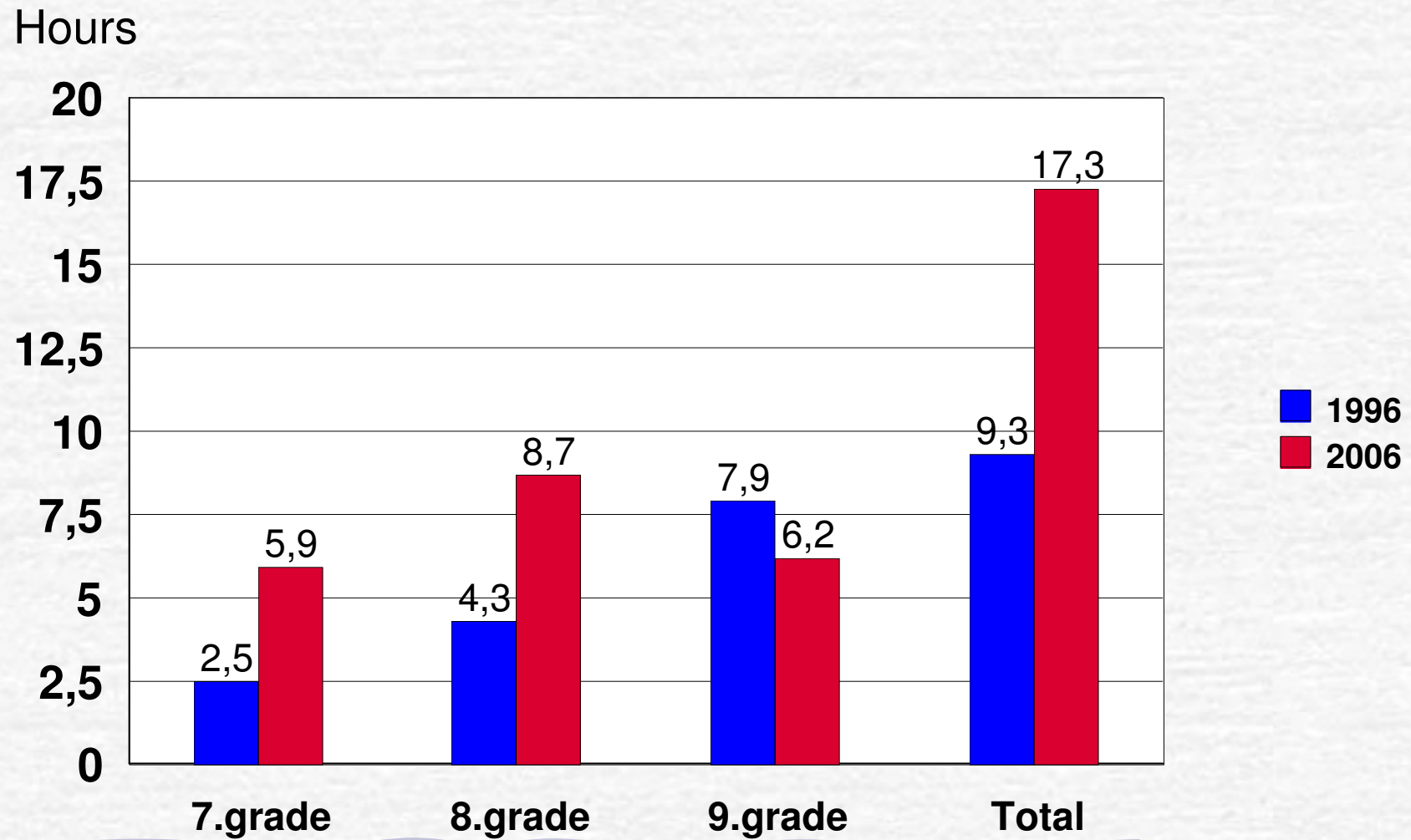
Sex Education was provided in schools in 2005-2006 by:



The ranking of the educational aims in sex education

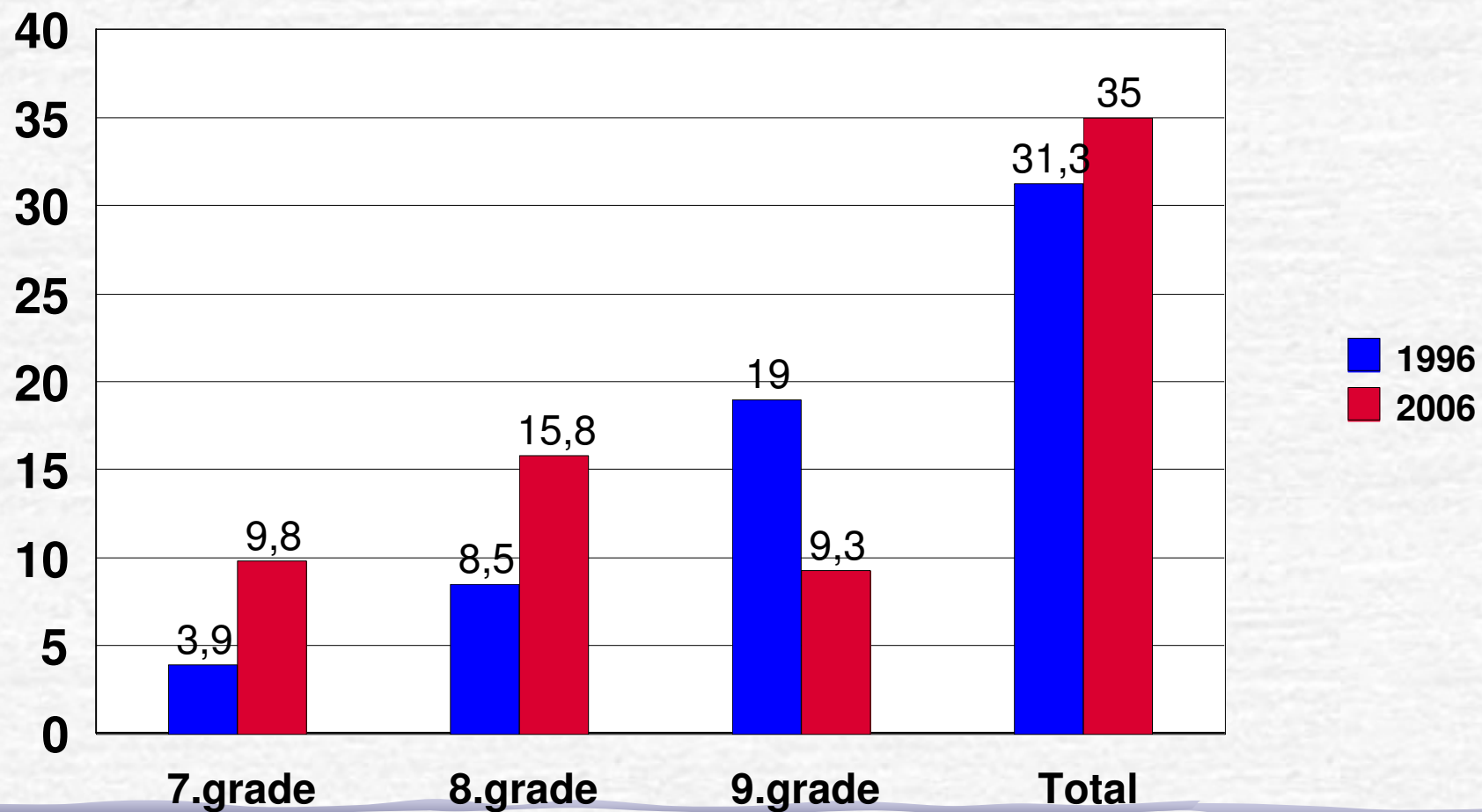
Educational aims	2000	2006
1. Educating to responsibility	2,5	2,8
2. Providing correct facts	3,1	3,4
3. Learning natural attitude on sexuality	4,6	4,7
4. Educating total personality	4,6	5,2
5. Emphasizing the importance of emotions	6,5	6,2
6. Ability to establish balanced relationships	6,3	6,9
7. Ability to make independent decisions	8,3	7,2
8. Teaching tolerance	6,6	7,4
9. Learning good communication	8,3	8,0
10. Preventing teenage pregnancies	8,4	8,3
11. Learning to understand the expectations of the other gender	9,5	10,2
12. To experience sex nice and stimulating issue	10,4	10,8
13. To learn the unsatisfactoriness of casual relationships	10,3	10,9
14. Educating to sexual abstinence	12,5	12,4

Hours allocated to Sex Education in 2005-2006



Number of contents in Sex Education

Contents



Sexual contents in 2006

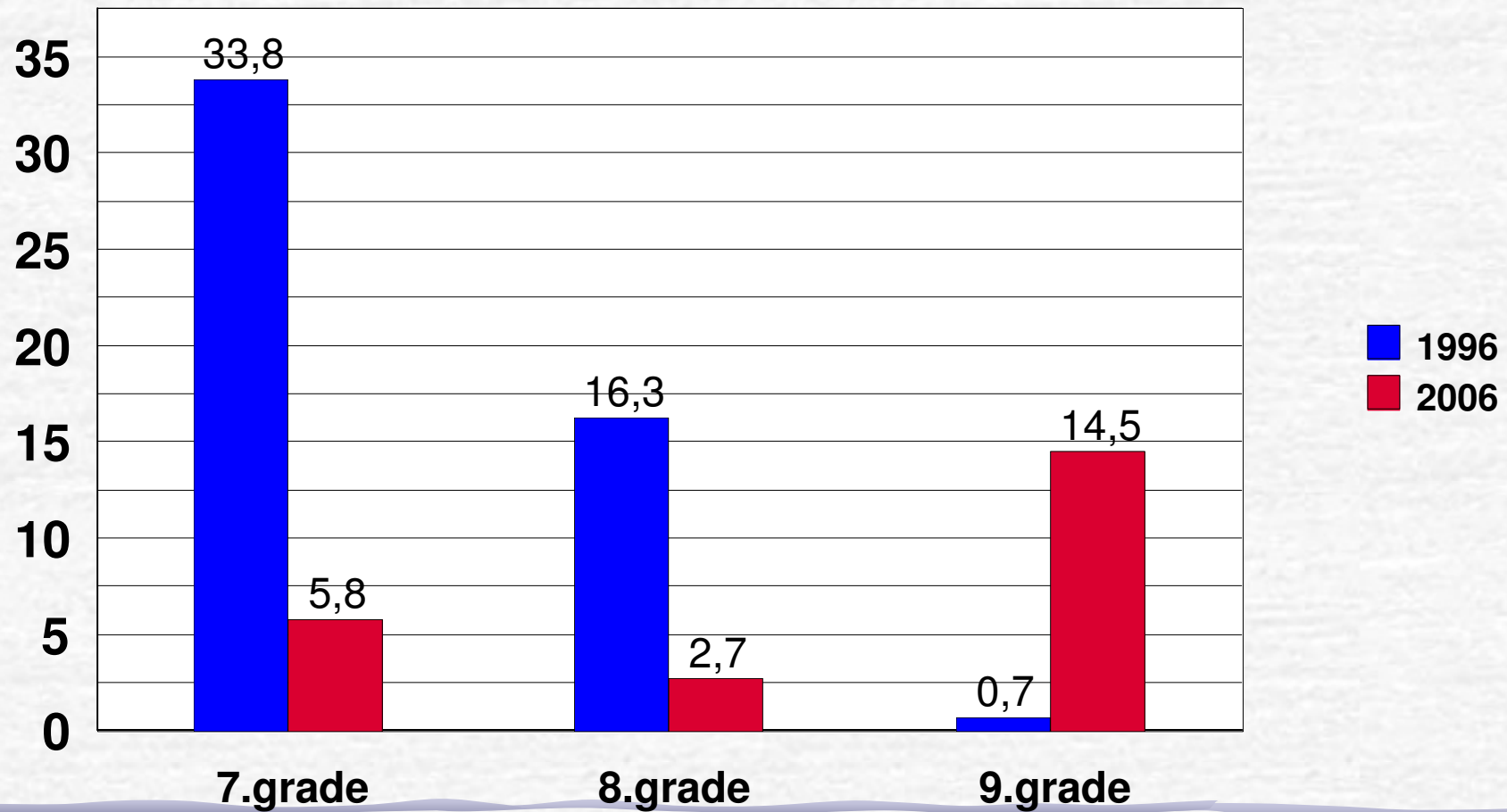
	7.grade	8.grade	9.grade
Sexual organs and functions	66	52	47
Menstruation	80	52	42
Ejaculations	70	56	36
Conception	25	51	62
Pregnancy and birth	9	34	66
Contraception	31	87	51
Abortion	11	62	53
STIs, AIDS	15	74	50
Puberty	88	58	36
Intercourse	24	82	43
First coitus	27	83	26
Masturbation	50	68	22
Child sexuality	47	47	14
Masculinity and femininity	44	55	25
Dating	54	86	32
Emotional life	68	78	32
Communication skills	62	60	25
Sexual life in adult age	9	42	39
Sexual and gender minorities	18	66	37
Sexual vocabulary	39	71	38
Sources of sexual knowledge	40	67	38
Sex in media	36	61	27
Sexual moral and ethics	22	57	42
Sexual rights	35	65	26
Sexual harassment	27	67	26
Sexual legislation	25	65	30

Remodelling of contents:

	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
Contents:	7.gr	7.gr	8.gr	8.gr	9.gr	9.gr
Sexual organs	22	66	38	52	96	47
Menstruation	41	80	49	52	90	42
Contraception	22	31	60	87	97	51
Intercourse	15	24	46	82	92	43
Dating	28	54	56	86	82	32
Sexual minorities	5	18	22	65	74	37
Sex in media	6	36	18	61	43	27
STIs	11	15	49	74	96	50
Harassment	5	27	16	67	40	26

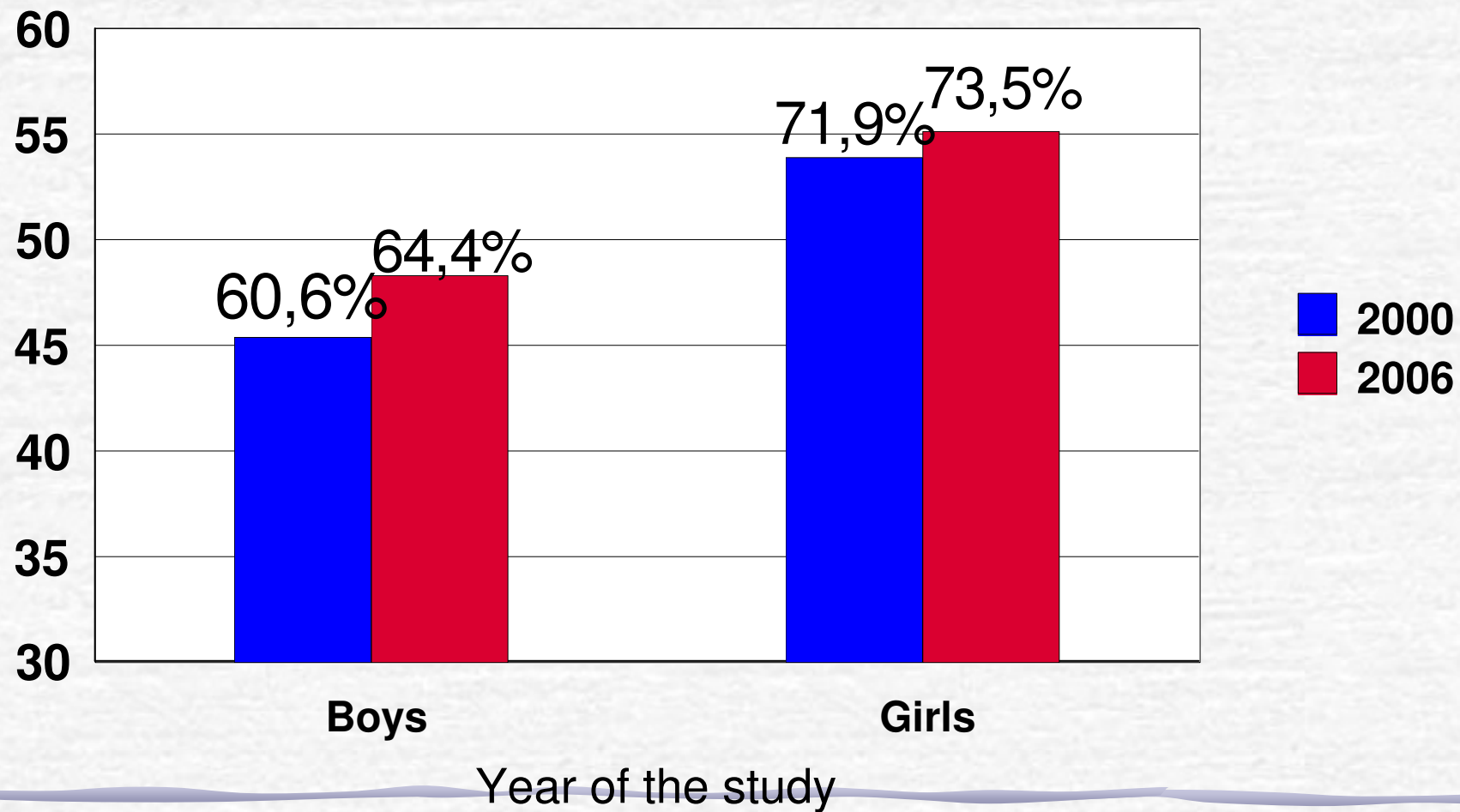
No Sex Education provided in last year

%



Total scores of sexual knowledge by gender

Points



Correct answers in 2006 in selected items that measure sexual health knowledge

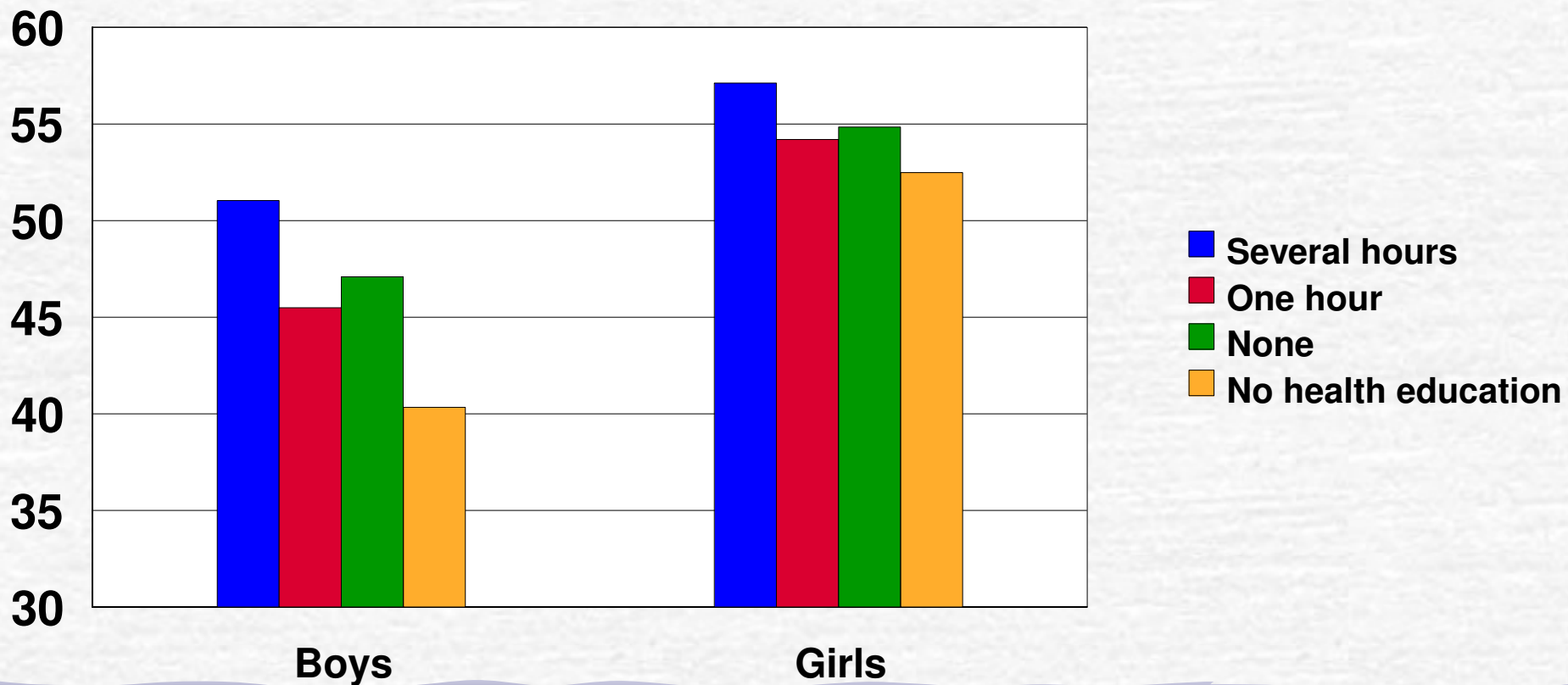
	Boys	Girls
Clitoris is a tactile sensitive bulge above the labia	73.9	80.0
Woman gets most easily pregnant in a middle of the menstrual cycle	25.7	48.9
Pills are most secure contraceptives to prevent pregnancy	23.0	45.0
Day after pills should be used as soon as possible after the intercourse but at minimum in 72 hours after the unprotected intercourse	72.4	84.8
Girl principally decides if her pregnancy will be carried on	63.1	76.7
The best solution to avoid forgetting to use contraceptives is to carry condoms always with oneself	83.4	87.7
The STI infection can <u>often</u> remain without symptoms	26.0	36.2
Masturbation is not harmful in given three conditions	80.3	91.8
Length of penis does not make difference in ability to fertilize a woman	79.4	89.5
The interval from the first intercourse to the first orgasm in intercourse is, on the average, 2 – 3 years	7.1	6.8
A person is considered a great lover she/he provides pleasure both to her/his partner and to him/herself	85.7	95.5

Proportion (%) of correct answers to the scales of sexual knowledge

Knowledge (%)	Puberty	Sexual organs	Mastur- bation	Intercourse	Pregnancy	Contra- ception	STIs
2000							
Girls	71.7	70.0	86.4	56.0	79.6	79.7	58.8
Boys	51.9	61.4	72.3	47.8	65.5	70.4	49.9
2006							
Girls	71.8	72.9	88.5	59.0	79.2	80.4	61.6
Boys	54.8	67.7	78.8	51.0	68.0	72.3	54.7
Number of items	(10)	(14)	(5)	(9)	(10)	(15)	(9)

Total scores of sexual knowledge by the hours of sex education in health education in the last school year

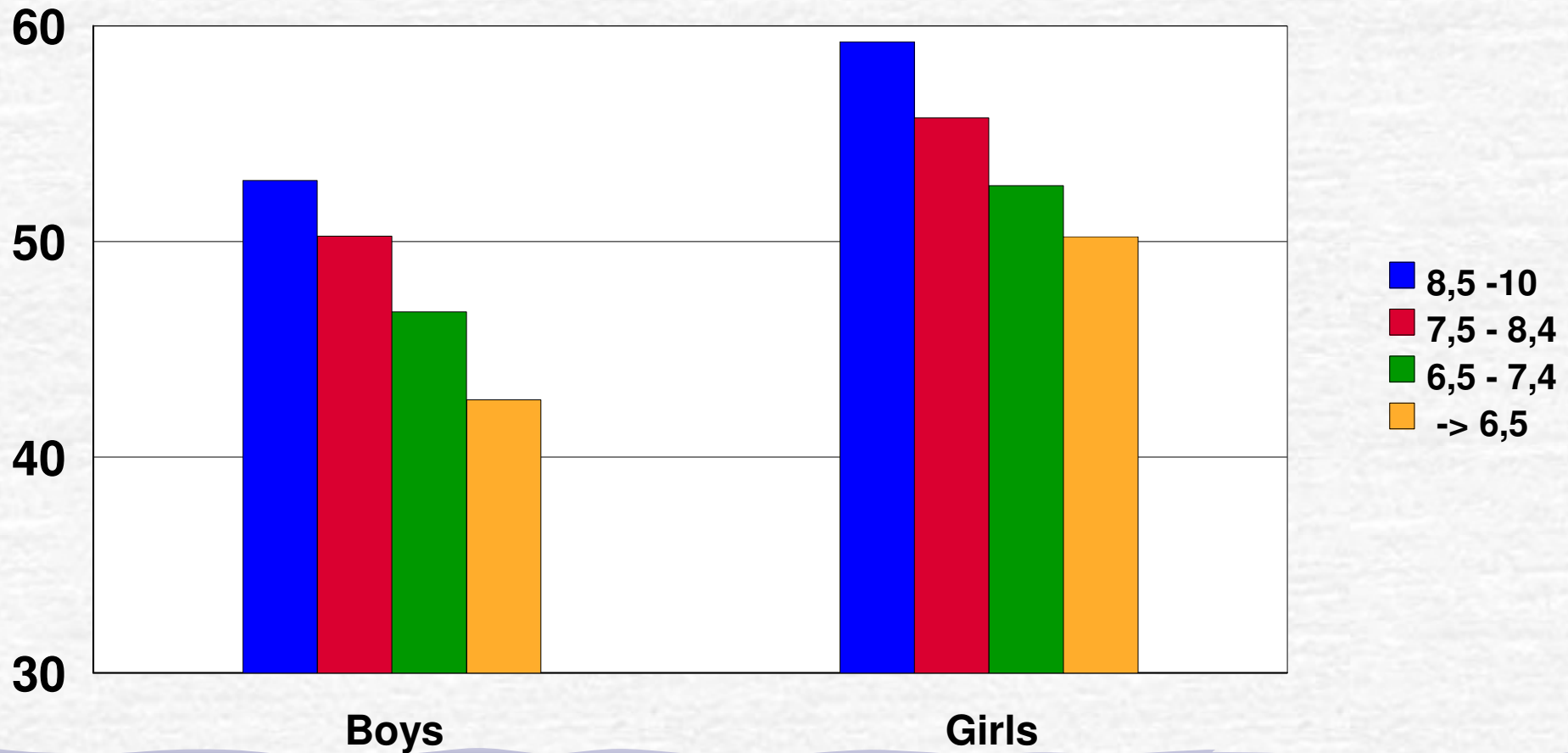
Points



Hours of sex education

Total scores of sexual knowledge by the average grades (4-10) in the last school report

Points

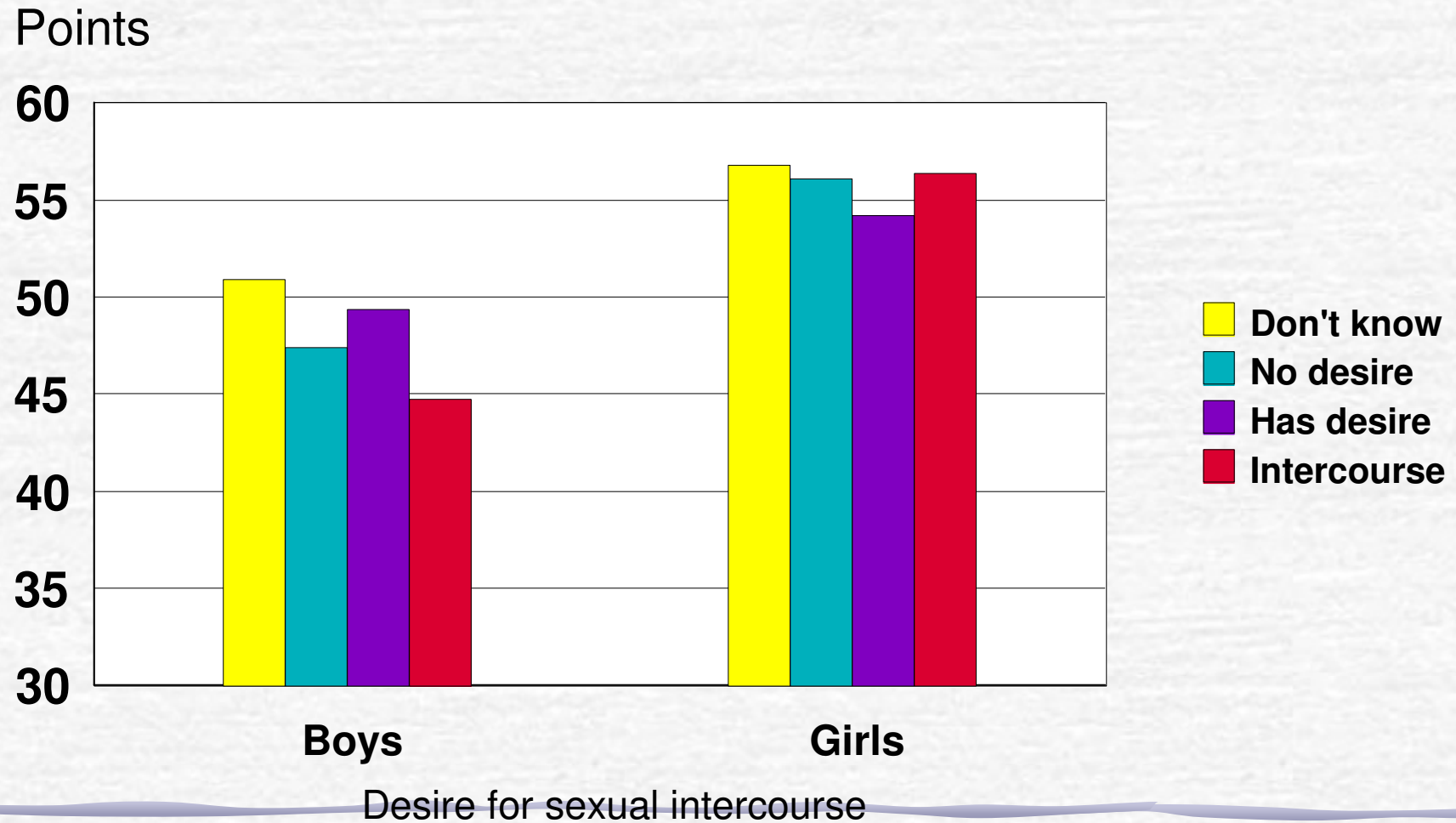


Average grades

Osmo Kontula

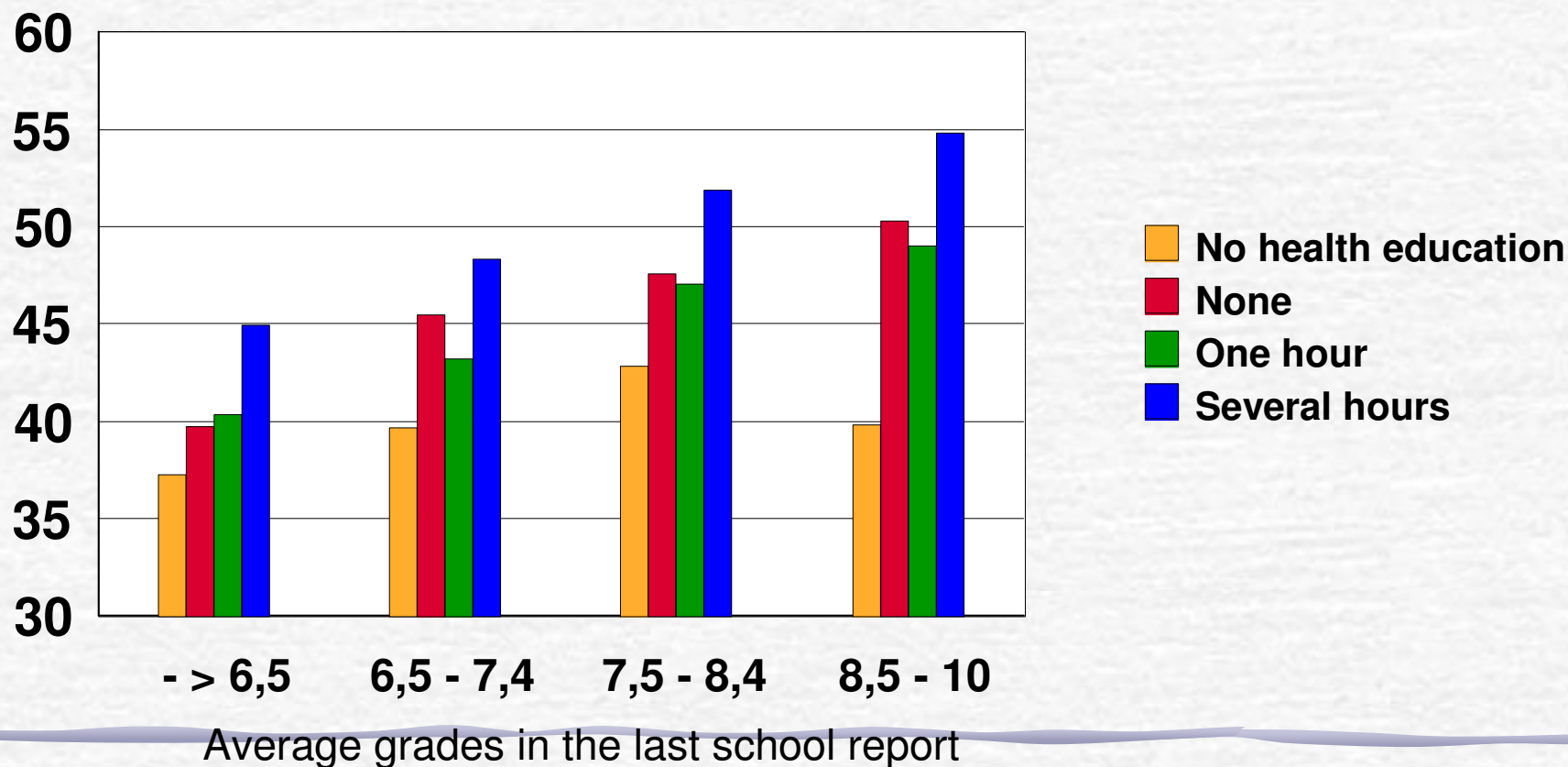
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Total scores of sexual knowledge by the desire to have sexual intercourse



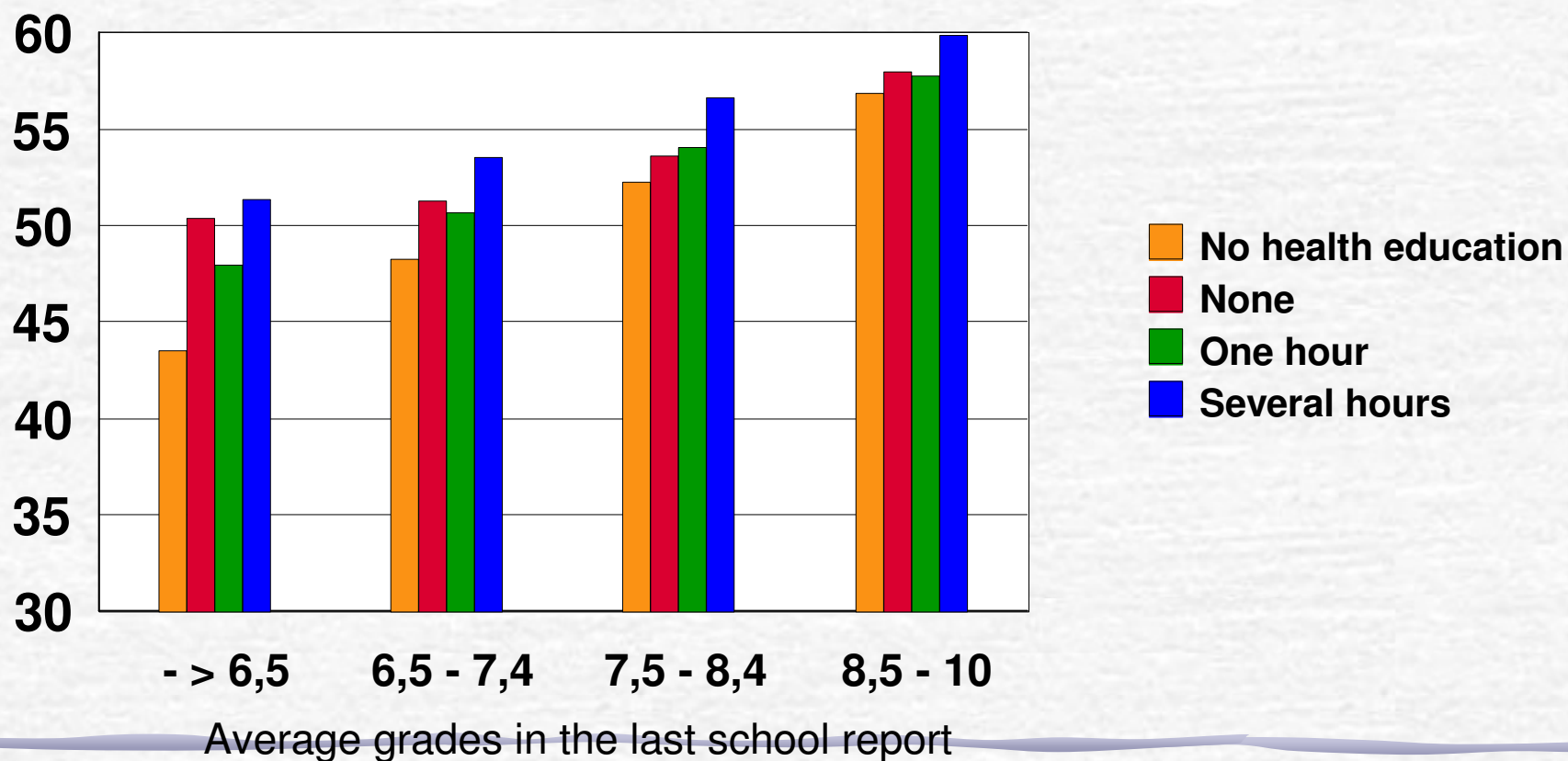
Boys' total scores of sexual knowledge by the average grades in the last school report and the hours of sex education in health education

Points



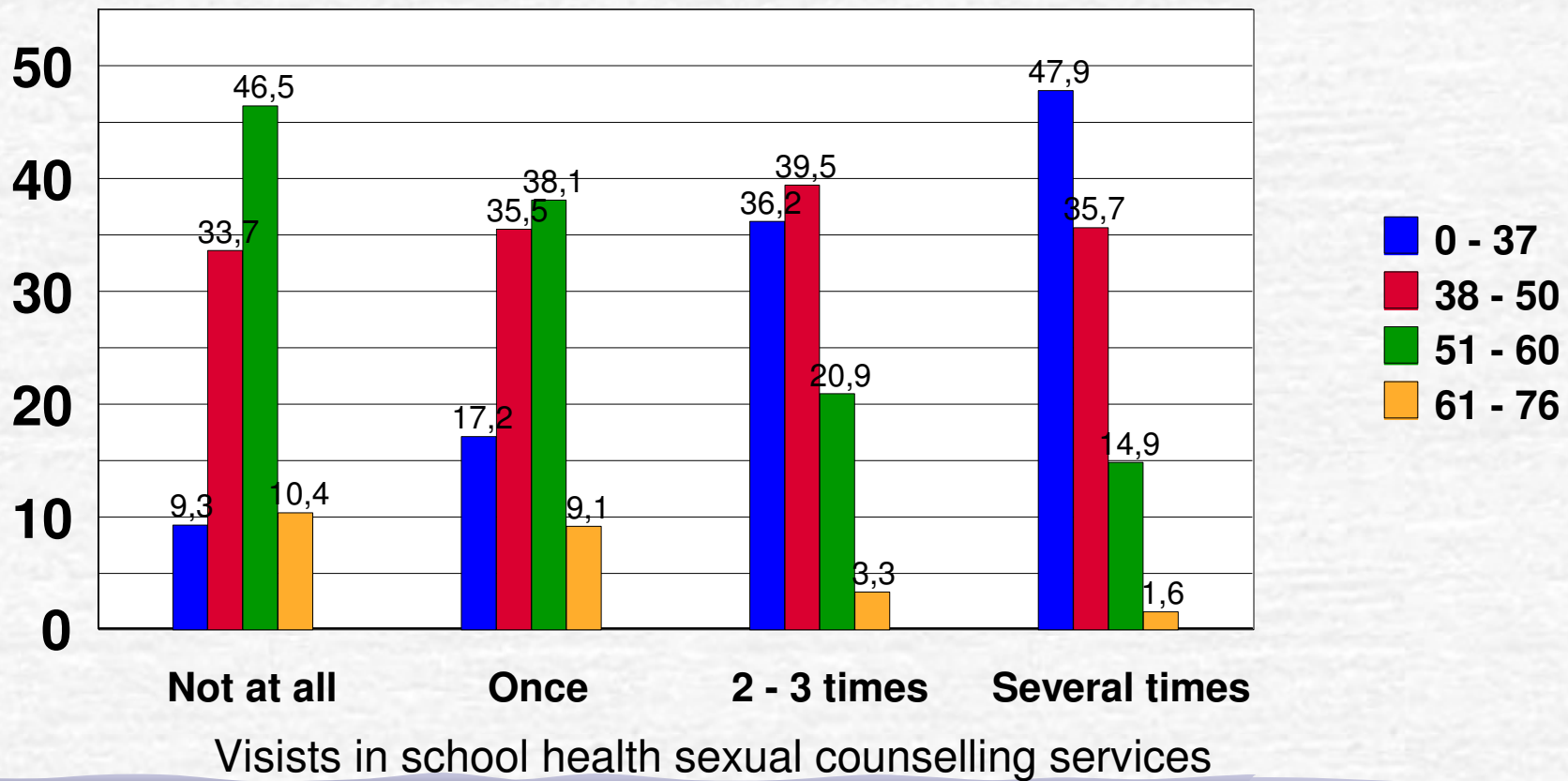
Girls' total scores of sexual knowledge by the average grades in the last school report and the hours of sex education in health education

Points

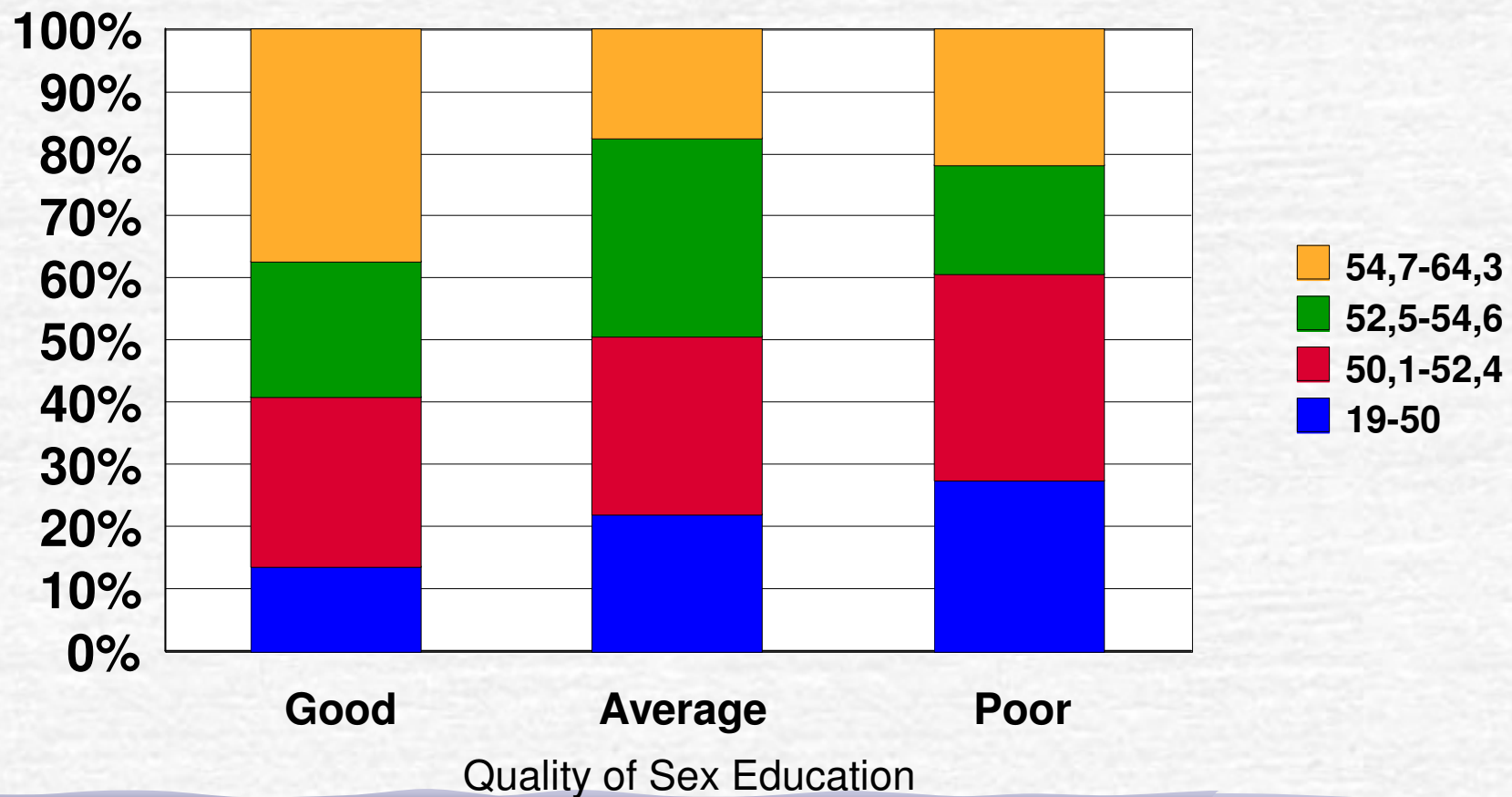


Relationship between the number visits in school health sexual counselling services and the level of sexual knowledge scores among the boys

Scores



The proportion of four levels of sexual knowledge score according to the quality of sex education in school (measured by the number of hours and contents in sex education)



Features of Sex Education that promote higher levels of sexual knowledge among adolescents

- Nomination of the teacher who was responsible of sex Education in their school
- Very important aim of the school Sex Education was educating to sexual tolerance
- Very important aim of the school Sex Education was to learn natural attitude on sexuality
- Teacher considered sexual issues very easy to discuss with students
- Male teacher – more contents and hours
- Applied teaching methods were in most cases drama and role playing
- Applied teaching methods were in most cases drafting and writing up lectures and lessons
- Teacher had talked fairly frankly of his/her own life in relation to Sex Education hours
- Free condoms/examples were provided for students in school

Summary and Conclusions

- Sex Education has been integrated to Health Education and Biology
- Hours allocated to Sex Education almost doubled from 1996 to 2006 and they were located to 7th and 8th grade
- Total number of contents of Sex Education did not increase much, but there was a major increase in 7th and 8th grade - more emphasis was given to sexual harassment, sex in media and child sexuality
- The most important aims of Sex Education were educating to responsibility and providing correct facts – teachers relied on adolescents own judgement

Summary and Conclusions

- The average score of sexual knowledge increased to 69% (52 points) of the total (75 points)
 - Information is missing how much sexual values, motivations and skills have improved or changed
- Girls' level of knowledge (55 points) was considerably higher than boys (48 points), but boys had improved more their knowledge
- The lowest scores were reached in the scales of Intercourse and STIs
- Sex Education in school has been more important for boys than girls in relation to their knowledge
- Success in school made a big difference to the sexual knowledge – among girls it was much more important than Sex Education

Why boys have so much poorer sexual knowledge than girls?

- 1. Boys achieve their sexual maturity around one year later than girls
- 2. Boys receive less sexual knowledge from their homes, especially from their mothers
- 3. Scales of sexual knowledge were more focused in this study on the specific feminine aspects of sexuality (23 questions of female aspects vs. 9 questions of male aspects)
- 4. Girls' cognitive superiority/better school performance in teenage
- 5. Boys do not always want to reveal their true knowledge in their responses (a significant portion of boys clowns in their responses)
- 6. Boys have often a symbolic and even loud opposition against Sex Education due to its excessive feminine approach

Summary and Conclusions

- Desire for sexual experiences or experience of sexual intercourse did not improve adolescents' sexual knowledge
- Sexually experienced boys had even the lowest level of sexual knowledge – those with highest motivation to intercourse do not have motivation to know more cognitive issues of sexuality
- More hours allocated to Sex Education, a fair number of contents included and open and relaxed atmosphere in teaching situation result higher level of students' sexual knowledge
- Based on comparisons conducted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the results of this study the quality of Sex Education in Finland is at the top level in Europe