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### Health promoting schools: the perception of parents

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**BACKGROUND:** All basic and secondary schools in Portugal are Health Promoting Schools (HPS)<sup>[1]</sup>, that is, they implement a structured and systematized plan to improve the health of all students and of teaching and non-teaching staff<sup>[2]</sup>. The HPS have six fundamental pillars: i) healthy school policies; ii) the physical environment; iii) the social environment; iv) individual health skills and competencies for action; (v) the connection to community; and vi) health services<sup>[3]</sup>. **OBJECTIVE:** This study is focused on the connection to community, particularly in the relationship between school and the students' families. The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: (i) what perception do parents have of their children's schools? (ii) What do they think about health education in schools? **METHODS:** The non-probability convenience sample consisted of parents of 9th grade students from nine school clusters of Braga, a total of 455 participants of both sexes, predominantly female (79.8%), with an average (SD) of 44.2 (5.57) years. Data was gathered using a questionnaire and submitted to descriptive statistical analysis using the SPSS, using a significance level of 0.05. **RESULTS:** The majority (99.8%) of parents consider health promotion and education in school important as well as their participation (87.5%) and students' participation (94.9%) in the health education teams of school clusters. Participants (81.0%) agree that school implements measures which promote health and well-being for all, except for sanitary facilities, where 52.2% disagree on the cleanliness and availability of toilet paper and soap. Most of the parents (79.1%) consider that school fosters knowledge on health through various activities, allowing students to know how to choose / adopt healthy lifestyles. The contents covered in the different subjects help students learn how to be healthy (84.4%). **CONCLUSIONS:** In conclusion, this study shows that parents consider health promotion and education in schools important as well as their participation and students' participation in the health education teams of school clusters. It also shows that parents consider their children's schools as HPS.

**Keywords:** *Parents, Health promotion, Health Education, School*

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