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Bullying and cyberbullying: comparison between children and adolescents *Good online practices to combat bullying*

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As part of a project titled, "Psychology in support of child and adolescent rights", implemented by the Lombard Board of Psychologists, a study has been carried out on bullying and cyberbullying in collaboration with the Casa Pediatrica, paediatric service run by the Fatebenefratelli Sacco hospital, the first hospital in Italy that offers a full service to both victims and bullies.

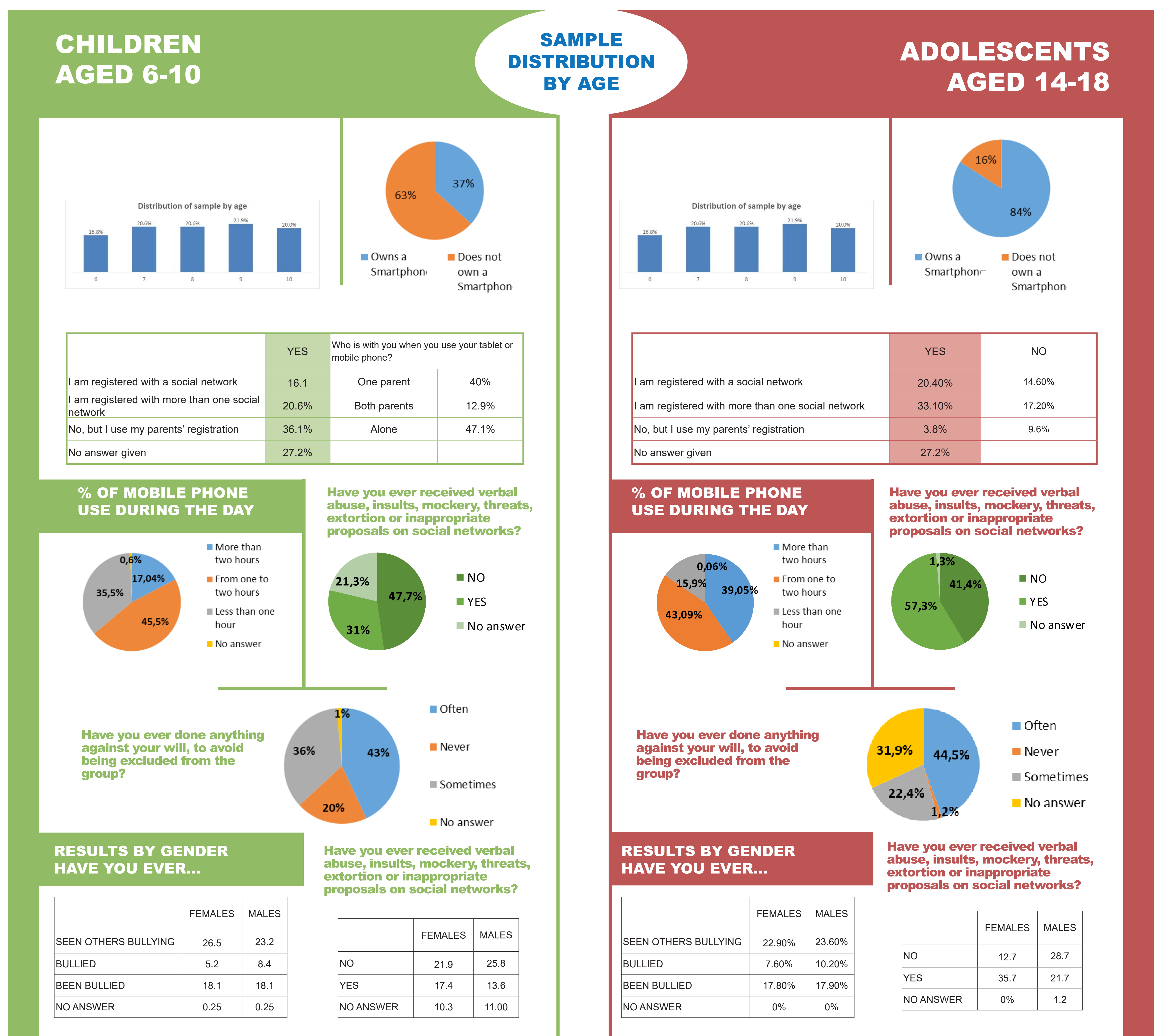
AIM

The study presented here sets out to evidence the perception held by the children and adolescents who use the service of the Casa Pediatrica, with regard to the phenomenon of bullying and cyberbullying.

SAMPLE and METHODOLOGY

312 questionnaires were distributed to the sample, consisting of 155 respondents aged between 6 and 10 years (49.7% females, 50.3% males) and 157 respondents aged 14-18 (48.4% females and 51.6% males). The data were collected personally by three researchers in the form of a structured questionnaire, requiring open-ended answers.

RESULTS



ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Within the ambit of the Convention on the rights of the child and adolescent, this study aims at highlighting the perception held by the children and adolescents (girls and boys) who use the service, by listening to both the bullies and their victims. What they have to say evidences how cruel the issue of social inclusion can be.

With regard to the sample of children, it emerges that 49.7% of the children say they have witnessed "others engaged in acts of bullying" and 36.2% state that they "have been bullied themselves"; only 13.6% admit to "having bullied others". 37% of the child sample have declared their ownership of a Smartphone, and 31% of the children making up the sample state that they have received "verbal abuse, insults, mockery, threats, extortion or inappropriate proposals on social networking sites".

As far as adolescents are concerned, 84% of the sample say they own a Smartphone. 46.5% of adolescents declare that they have witnessed "acts of bullying by others", 35.7% say they have "been bullied" themselves. Only 17.8% of the sample admit to "having bullied others". So, on an overall basis, 60% of the minors questioned declare that there have been episodes of bullying in their schools. 47.7% of the children and 57.3% of the adolescents report having received verbal abuse, insults, mockery, threats, extortion or inappropriate proposals on social networking sites. The percentage of cyberbullying victims is higher among girls in both age groups.