During the last twenty years corporal punishment in the home has decreased, but violence is still present in the everyday lives of Finnish children and adolescents. Although corporal punishment of children is today prohibited by law it continues to exist and finds an increasingly violent expression. The aim of this study is to increase the knowledge about how corporal punishment in the lives of children and adolescents affect their health and suffering, and also to see the connections between corporal punishment and health behaviour and between corporal punishment and perceived health.

The study’s theoretical approach originates in a caring science perspective with certain ontological starting points. The axiom about health and suffering as inseparable parts of life constitutes the ontological basis of the study. The search for knowledge has, via previous research, led to the creation of six different hypotheses, which in turn have been tested with the help of a youth survey responded by 1,620 ninth graders. Selected parts of the Youth survey 2011 have been used in the study. Statistical analyses have been made using the material and the correctness of the hypotheses has been interpreted.

The results show that corporal punishment and violence affect the health and suffering of children and adolescents. The study shows a connection between corporal punishment and the health behaviour and perceived health of children and adolescents. Results show that those who have themselves been exposed to corporal punishment were more aggressive than those who have not been subjected to physical punishment, and that children who have been subjected to corporal punishment more easily fall victim to aggressiveness. Exposed children had lower self-esteem than those who had not been subjected to corporal punishment. These children and adolescents exhibited more depressive and psychosomatic symptoms than non-exposed ones. Alcohol consumption was also higher among exposed children than among non-exposed children. In addition, the suffering of children and adolescents often remains hidden.