

ARTICLES:

Prospective Associations Between Negative Life Events and Adolescent Alcohol Use.....8 -26
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ABSTRACT

The prospective associations between negative life events (NLEs and adolescent alcohol use was examined using the Youth Asset Study. Participants (n=1040 adolescents, mean age = 15.8 years) completed annual interviews which included a life events scale and alcohol use in the last 30 days. Family structure and parent education were assessed as confounders. For the youngest group, each NLE increased the odds of alcohol use the next year compared to those with no events (ORs 1.66, 2.43, 2.65). For the middle age group, one or more NLEs doubled the odds of alcohol use the next year (ORs 2.01, 2.03, 2.05). A simple life events checklist can be a useful tool to assess an increased risk of future alcohol use in adolescents.

Key Words: Negative life events, alcohol use, adolescent

Portugal’s 2001 Drugs Liberalisation Policy: A UK Service Provider’s Perspective on the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016)27 - 45
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ABSTRACT

The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) and the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016) both reinforce the criminalisation of drug use in the UK. The Psychoactive Substances Act (2016) has been developed to control and monitor the use of legal highs, particularly in institutions. This study aimed to establish drug service providers’ viewpoints on how effective UK drug policies have been at curtailing criminal behaviours and whether existing policies should be aligned with the Portuguese drug liberalisation policy. A thematic analysis was conducted following semi-structured interviews with four UK based substance use service providers. Two superordinate themes emerged, (1) the need for change in UK drug policy including a clearer definition of the Psychoactive Substance Act (2016), and (2) an integrated systems approach to drug policy in line with the Portuguese liberalisation policy. This would curtail the criminalization of drug users, target those with substance misuse problems in the community and in prison and support an attuned systems approach to treatment.

Risky Behaviors on a Student’s Population.....46 - 70
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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Adolescence is a period of physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional changes, where autonomy from parental control is demanded. Adolescents are often self-discovering, frequently adopting sexual and drug exploration behaviors. As a result, health status in both adolescence and adulthood can be influenced. **Methods:** A pre-validated questionnaire was used to evaluate the prevalence and possible determinants of risky behaviors in a convenience sample of 8th grade students attending several Gaia schools in 2011-2012. **Results:** The present study included 375 students. From these students, 20.3% had experimented with tobacco and 23.7% of those used to smoke regularly. Regarding alcohol intake, 43.2% had experimented and 8% had at least one episode of alcohol intoxication. Consuming other drugs (3.7%) was associated with tobacco use. Sexual activity was reported in 9.9%, and 8.5% of the sample reported regular acknowledged condom use. Parental divorce, older siblings with academic failure, self-academic failure and self-perceived bad school integration were significantly associated with substance abuse behaviors and engagement in early sexual activity. Misconceptions regarding the risks of tobacco and alcohol use/misuse were the strongest predictors of experimentation and abuse. **Conclusion:** Adolescents are at-risk for tobacco, alcohol use, drug experimentation and early engagement in sexual activity. Risk factors are students with past school retention, lack of parental support structure, especially regarding those with older siblings who present past academic failure and a lack of study habits. We suggest that this information can be used to tailor interventions and to help implement preventive strategies.

Keywords: adolescence, risky behaviors, tobacco, alcohol, substance abuse, drugs, sexual activity, Vila Nova de Gaia, school

How Soldiers Perceive the Drinking Environment in Communities near Military Installations.....71 - 90
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ABSTRACT

Excessive alcohol use among military personnel is a significant concern. A potential contributor to this problem may be alcohol-serving environments around military installations; however, limited information is available about these environments. We conducted focus groups and interviews with Army personnel from two installations regarding soldier alcohol use and experiences with the drinking environment surrounding the installations. Soldiers perceive that bars and restaurants near installations tailor their business to soldiers (e.g., drink specials) and these establishments are predatory toward military personnel. Soldiers also perceive that certain components of military service (e.g., military culture, peer pressure) are associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Results can directly inform interventions focused on environments around military installations to address soldier alcohol use and related problems.