ESPAD: Trends and drives in drinking habits of young people and of the alcohol-related harm they suffer

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ESPAD – The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs

• Students that will become 16 years old during the year of the data collection
• Nationally representative samples of classes
• 26 countries in 1995
• 30 countries in 1999
• 35 countries in 2003
• 35 countries in 2007 (plus 7 in 2008)
Target population

• Students that will become 16 years old during the year of the data collection
• About 2,400 participating students in each country
• Variation: 400 – 10,000 (in 2007)
• More than 100,000 European students
Purpose (1)

• Collect comparable data on drug use among students in as many European countries as possible

• Monitor trends in
  – single countries
  – Europe

• Serve as an incitement for alcohol and drug prevention among youth
Purpose (2)

• Provide data that can be used as a part of the evaluation of
  – EU action plans on drugs
  – WHO Europe declaration about young people and alcohol
Strategy: standardisation

• Target age group
• Random sampling of classes
• Questionnaire
• Survey leader protocol
• Data collection procedure
• Anonymity
• Time of data collection
It probably functions pretty well to compare countries, if you

• standardise as much as possible

• try to prevent methodological problems as much as possible

• follow up all methodological uncertainties

• accept that the validity might differ a little between countries

• don’t overestimate small differences between data collections or countries
Lifetime use of any alcoholic beverage 40 times or more.
2003.
Changes between 1999 and 2003 in lifetime use of any alcoholic beverage 40 times or more.
Estimated average consumption of beer, wine and spirits, in cl 100% alcohol, on the last drinking occasion. 2003
Proportion of all students who have been drunk 20 times or more in lifetime. 2003
Changes between 1999 and 2003 in the proportion who have been drunk 20 times or more in lifetime.
Proportion of all students who reported "binge drinking" 3 times or more during the last 30 days. 2003
Figure 17a. Changes between 1999 and 2003 in the proportion who have reported "binge drinking" 3 times or more during last 30 days. Countries above the line have increased prevalence rates, and countries below have decreased. All students.
Correlation between positive expectancies of own alcohol consumption and the proportion who have been drunk 3+ times last 30 days $r_{xy} = .76^{**}$, $r_{rank} = .68^{**}$
Cross-national average of students who report having each of 14 problems because of their alcohol use and because of other reasons

- Hospitalised: Alcohol 2, Other reasons 29
- Problem with teachers: Alcohol 2, Other reasons 35
- Robbed: Alcohol 2, Other reasons 14
- Poor school: Alcohol 3, Other reasons 40
- unprotected sex: Alcohol 4, Other reasons 9
- Trouble with police: Alcohol 4, Other reasons 10
- Regret sex: Alcohol 5, Other reasons 6
- Accident or injury: Alcohol 6, Other reasons 44
- Problem with friends: Alcohol 6, Other reasons 45
- Fight: Alcohol 7, Other reasons 39
- Loss of valuables: Alcohol 8, Other reasons 41
- Problem with parents: Alcohol 8, Other reasons 45
- Argument: Alcohol 11, Other reasons 69
- Damaged possessions: Alcohol 12, Other reasons 37
Experienced problems caused by alcohol
Correlation between any experienced problem and the proportion who have been drunk 3+ times last 30 days

\[ r_{xy} = .85**, \quad r_{\text{rank}} = .87** \]
## Correlates of alcohol consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less drinking</th>
<th>More drinking</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father’s education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent + step parent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family economy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental control</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings’ alcohol use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some conclusions (1)

- Alcohol consumption was most frequent in south and northwest of Europe
- The intoxication rate was stable in most countries (16) and increased in 9 (7 in the East)
- Drunkenness was most frequent in the British Isles and in the North
- Binge drinking was stable in most countries (11) and increased in 9 (6 in the East)
- Binge drinking was most frequent in the British Isles and the North
Some conclusions (2)

• Strong correlation between drunkenness and positive expectations
• Strong correlation between drunkenness and alcohol related problems
• Important alcohol related problems: Regret sex, unprotected sex, trouble with police
• Important correlates: Parental control, truancy, siblings alcohol use
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