

ESSUS 2012



3rd European Symposium on Substance Use & Abuse
among University Students

University of Bradford

7 – 8th June 2012



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Welcome

Hello and welcome to the 3rd European Symposium on Substance Use & Abuse among University Students, hosted by the University of Bradford. This event brings together researchers, educators, health professionals and policy makers with an interest in the issue of substance use in university and college students.

The event will include talks from speakers from around the world and will cover a wide range of topics including binge drinking, smoking, legal highs, family and cultural factors, academic achievement, student athletes, drink driving and disability; along with a special session on social norms of student substance use and a presentation on peer education by students themselves.

This booklet will be made available as a PDF file on the conference website at www.essus.org, as will the slides from the talks when available. Details about the facilities at the event, including internet access, are given at the end of this document along with the delegate list and maps of the campus and Bradford city centre. There are also details on the 8th biennial conference of the International of Critical Health Psychology in 2013 which may be of interest to you.

We hope that you have some time to look around Bradford and to visit the picturesque nearby villages and countryside. If you have any queries please feel free to contact me at j.mcalaney@bradford.ac.uk or alternatively visit the registration desk in the Small Hall.

Dr John McAlaney

University of Bradford

About ESSUS

The 1st European Symposium on Substance Use among Students was organised and hosted by the University of Antwerp in 2008, with the 2nd event held at Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice in 2010.

Organising and Scientific Committee

Prof. dr. Guido Van Hal, University of Antwerp, Belgium (Chair)

Dr. John McAlaney, University of Bradford, UK

Dr. Christiane Stock, Syddansk Universitet, Denmark

Dr. Bridgette Bewick, University of Leeds, UK

Ferdinand Salonna, Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice, Slovakia

Dr. Rafael Mikolajczyk, University of Bremen, Germany

Claudia van der Heijde, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Schedule

Thursday 7th June - All talks in the John Stanley Bell lecture theatre	
9.30	Registration – Small Hall
9.55	Welcome Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Dale Smith Dr John McAlaney, University of Bradford
10.05	The association between educational achievement and alcohol use in university students; findings from the United Kingdom Associate Professor Christiane Stock, University of Southern Denmark
10.25	Is substance abuse in students of tertiary education an indicator of study problems? Claudia van der Heijde, University of Amsterdam
10.45	The influence of academic training and gender on the drug use of a Spanish university population Veronica Valera Mato, Loughborough University
11.05	Refreshment break – Small Hall
11.25	Exploring Individuals' Experiences of methoxetamine: An IPA Study Amy Roberts, Leeds Metropolitan University
11.45	The impact of ecstasy/polydrug use on prospective memory in university students Dr Florentia Hadjiefthyvoulou, Nottingham Trent University
12.05	Drinking experiences of first year female students: using narratives to explore the transition to university life Cheryl Barrass, University of Leeds
12.25	Just Having the Craic? An investigation of the role of alcohol expectancies in, and the phenomenology of, binge drinking patterns & behaviours of Irish undergraduates Sinead Ni Chaolain, University College Dublin
12.45	Lunch – Small Hall
13.30	Keynote address: The teenage origins of students' drinking habits Dr Tomi Lintonen, University of Tampere
14.00	Alcohol consumption in British student sports teams Mattia Rossi, University of Florence/ University of Bradford
14.20	Self-regulation skills, alcohol use and polydrug use among university students Dr Rene Sebená, Pavol Josef Safarik University in Kosice
14.40	Are university students at risk of developing alcohol problems more likely to report risky sexual behaviour? Ondrej Kalina, Pavol Josef Safarik University in Kosice
15.00	Refreshment break – Small Hall
15.20	Co-occurrence of alcohol misuse and disordered eating in young adults in higher education Professor Andy Hill, University of Leeds
15.40	Substance abuse in students with disabilities in tertiary education in the Netherlands Claudia van der Heijde, University of Amsterdam
16.00	Exploring the alcohol use of students in Wales : a socio-environmental context perspective Dr Annie Williams, Cardiff University
16.20	Close

Friday 8 th of June - All talks in the John Stanley Bell lecture theatre	
9.30	Registration – Small Hall
10.00	Welcome Prof Guido Van Hal, University of Antwerp and ESSUS Founder and Committee Chair
10.05	Substance and alcohol use, internet addiction, mental stress and sleeping disorders among university students. A survey in Algeria, France and Hungary Dr Joel Ladner, Rouen University Hospital
10.25	Parental proximity and changes in beer drinking between academic year and vacation periods Johan Rosiers, Association for Alcohol and other Drug Problems
10.45	Slovak university students perceptions of alcohol policy on their campuses Ferdinand Salonna, Pavol Josef Safarik University in Kosice
11.05	Refreshment break – Small Hall
11.25	Social motives for drinking in students should not be neglected in intervention development Joris Van Damme, University of Ghent
11.45	A social norms approach to correct student misperceptions of substance use: What the flock? Dr Bridgette Bewick, University of Leeds
12.05	The social norms approach in 6th Form/FE colleges Norma Wilburn and Catherine Wilburn, NWA Social and Market Research LTD
12.25	Video showcase by Stockton Riverside College and Egglecliffe School students, in conjunction with NWA Social and Market Research LTD
12.45	Lunch – Small Hall
13.30	Keynote address: Social norms and student substance use interventions in the USA Dr Jennifer Bauerle, University of Virginia, Director of National Social Norms Institute
14.00	Riding along with a drunk driver: a social norms campaign in Antwerp students Professor Guido Van Hal, University of Antwerp
14.20	Students' perceptions of substance use amongst their peers Carolyn Montana, University of Leeds
14.40	Student responses to normative feedback regarding alcohol consumption: An experimental study Sarah Marley, University of Leeds
15.00	Refreshment break – Small Hall
15.20	An exploratory cluster randomised trial of a university halls of residence based social norms intervention in Wales, UK Dr Graham Moore, Cardiff University
15.40	R U Different? A modern and measurable approach to engaging with young people using Social Norms Gary Lovatt, Social Sense
16.00	Development and implementation of a social norms website for the prevention and reduction of legal and illegal drug use in European university and college students: The Social Norms Intervention for the Prevention of Polydrug Use (SNIPE) Study Dr Claudia Pischke, Bremen Institute for Epidemiology and Prevention Research (BIPS)
16.20	Close

Abstracts

Thursday 7th of June morning session

Chair – Dr John McAlaney, University of Bradford

10.05 – 10.25

The association between educational achievement and alcohol use in university students; findings from the United Kingdom.

El Ansari, W.¹ and Stock, C.²

¹University of Gloucestershire, ²University of Southern Denmark

This cross-sectional study assessed the associations between educational achievement and alcohol consumption, whilst controlling for age and gender. Three measures of alcohol consumption were employed: frequency of alcohol consumption; heavy episodic drinking (had ≥ 5 drinks in a row); and problem drinking (CAGE score). Three indicators of educational achievement were utilized: students' reflection on their academic achievement (importance of achieving good grades); students' subjective comparative appraisal of their overall academic attainment (academic performance in comparison with their peers); and, an external objective teacher evaluation of the students' overall academic accomplishment (actual module mark). We surveyed students (N=375) from one University in the UK (2008–2009), and students' registration numbers linked the responses of the questionnaires to the university database to import the grades that students actually achieved in their studies. About 68% of the sample consumed alcohol at least once a week, 40% had ≥ 5 drinks in a row at least twice during the last month, and 13% had a CAGE score >2 indicating problem drinking. Mean grade achieved by students across the modules examined was 51.6% (SD 12.9%). Linear regression models were undertaken for each of the three different measures of alcohol consumption, each model using the indicators of educational achievement, gender and age as independent variables. Male gender was significantly positively associated with the three measures of alcohol consumption. Age was significantly negatively associated with heavy episodic drinking, but not with frequency of alcohol consumption or with problem drinking. While students' importance of good grades was negatively associated with all three measures of alcohol consumption, the academic performance in comparison with peers was negatively associated with heavy episodic drinking and with frequency of alcohol consumption. No significant associations were found between actual module mark and any of the measures of alcohol consumption. We conclude that alcohol consumption negatively correlates with motivation for and subjectively achieved academic performance. The lack of association between drinking variables and objectively measured grades might be explained by methodological difficulties in linking a sufficiently large number of individual marks with behavioural outcomes. Alcohol prevention activities at universities might have a positive impact on academic success among students.

10.25 – 10.45

Is substance abuse in students of tertiary education an indicator of study problems?

Van der Heijde, C.¹, Vonk, P.¹ and Meijman, F.J.^{1,2}

¹Department of Research, Development and Prevention, Student Health Services, University of Amsterdam, ²Department of Metamedica / Medical humanities, VU University Medical Centre, Amsterdam The Netherlands

Several studies have found significant relationships between substance use (smoking tobacco, alcohol, drugs) and dependency and academic performance, but others have failed to demonstrate such effects. For instance with regard to alcohol use (e.g. Gill, 2002). More often effects fail to reach significance or disappear when other factors such as place of residence and earlier performance (high school) are included. In one research significant effects remained for smoking and academic performance (De Berard et al, 2004). The question is if using one (or more) substance(s) and substance dependence for users can be used as an indicator of study problems.

Methods

The study was undertaken as part of the project Stoplights: The Student Health Check, a self-regulation instrument for the promotion of student health, including a personalized feedback tool. Student users' substance dependence was registered using the CDS-5 (smoking) and AUDIT (alcohol) and DAST-10 (drugs). To capture study problems we used the average grade, estimated grade for study pace and estimated chance of quitting the study. The relationship of academic performance with substance abuse was tested for with regression analyses (controlled for age, gender, living situation and average high school grades).

Results

The first round of project Stoplights (January-July 2011) yielded 3982 respondents from various study programs and phases. The male –female proportion was 30%-70% and the average age was 22.8 (SD=4.28). Preliminary results especially indicated negative significant differences for smoking students, both for average grade [F (7, 2440) =14.60; p=, 000] as well as for estimated grade for study pace [F (7, 2440) =41.33; p=, 000]. We did not find a significant relationship of smoking with estimated chance of quitting the study. [F (7, 2440) =3.08; p=.103].

As regards smoking, alcohol use and drugs dependence for the users, we also found significant relationships with academic performance: Regarding smoking, we found a trend for higher smoking dependence with lower average grade [F (5, 688) =11.14; p=.081], and a negative significant effect for estimated grade for study pace [F (5, 688) =5.79; p=.042]. Regarding alcohol we found a trend for higher alcohol dependence with lower average grade [F (7, 2440) =41.33; p=, 000], and significant negative effects for estimated grade for study pace [F (7, 2440) =41.33; p=, 000], and higher chance of quitting the study [F (7, 2440) =41.33; p=, 000]. Regarding drugs we found a trend for higher drug dependence with higher chance of quitting the study [F (5, 451) =1.65; p=, 070]

Conclusions

Smoking seems to be the most striking and pregnant indicator of study problems. Furthermore trends and significant effects were found regarding smoking, alcohol and drugs dependence with study problems for users. Regarding these findings, we suggest additional studies into the relationship between substance abuse (and especially smoking) and academic performance, as concerning confounding factors, including patterns of consumption (e.g. Gill, 2002)

10.45 – 11.05

The influence of academic training and gender on the drug use of a Spanish university population

Valera Mato, V.¹, Clemens, S.¹, Cancela Carral, J. M.², and Ayan, C.²

¹Loughborough University, ²University of Vigo

In 2010, a study was undertaken with the focus of assessing lifestyle and habits related to drugs consumption, particularly tobacco and alcohol amongst university students at Vigo University, Spain. The 985 Spanish participants, 664 of whom were women (67.4 %) and 321 men (32.6%) submitted their information via a questionnaire. The principal aim of this research was to establish whether patterns of consumption vary depending on gender and academic discipline, which was assessed by means of a questionnaire specifically designed for this purpose in young Spanish populations. Consequently, the sample was divided into three groups according to the kind of university degree that they were studying. Group A was composed of students who were training to become health professionals; Group B included students doing an education-related degree and Group C included those students which fields differed from the aforementioned groups.

The results showed a high percentage of students who habitually consumed alcohol, especially at weekends (77%). Although consumption was lower for women (OR 0.58 (0.41-0.83); $p=0.0007$), binge drinking was more common amongst female students than in male students (OR 1.79 (1.29-2.47) $p=0.0004$).

Regarding tobacco consumption, it seems that around a third of students of both genders claimed to be habitual smokers, with slightly higher prevalence of tobacco consumption in women, (OR 1.06 (0.78-1.43); $p=0.38$).

On the same note, consumption of illegal substances is a common habit among university students and approximately one third of the respondents admitted that they had used illegal substances, while a lower consumption prevalence in women was found (OR 0.53 (0.40-0.71); $p<0.0001$).

According to the influence of academic training, no significant differences were found in the assessment of alcohol consumption, but this was not the case regarding smoking, with Groups B and C showing a higher prevalence than Group A (34.9% and 41.7% vs. 22.0%). Concerning the consumption of illegal substances, significant differences were observed among the university degrees with Group C showing a higher prevalence than Groups A and B (44.1% vs. 29.4% and 30.6%).

The findings suggest that the university population studied show a high prevalence of unhealthy habits, including high rates of tobacco consumption and a high percentage of heavy recurrent

drinkers. Although students of health-related university degrees tend to smoke less and use illegal substances less frequently, a clear influence of the academic training on this kind of behaviour has not been observed. Thus, it could be stated that university education seems to be insufficient to achieve a healthy lifestyle. However, clear differences can be found regarding the habits of male and female students, which could be accounted for by gender differences in aspects like dealing with stress and socialisation processes.

In closing, it seems that Spanish university students lead an unhealthy lifestyle, especially in women. Academic training seems to have little influence on this behaviour. There is a need to foster gender-sensitive strategies to promote a healthy lifestyle among university students.

11.25 – 11.45

Exploring Individuals' Experiences of methoxetamine: An IPA Study

Roberts, A.

University of Leeds

Methoxetamine is a Novel Psychotic Substance (NPS) and novel chemical analogue of Ketamine, more commonly known as a legal high. This substance has been available to purchase from the internet and in head shops throughout the UK. Individuals use the drug to achieve psychoactive effects purported to be similar to Ketamine. The information available about Methoxetamine is limited and largely unverified as there is a distinct lack of scientific literature about its pharmacology, toxicology and safety. The aims of this study are similar to previous research on Ketamine and focus on users' knowledge before use, motivations to use MXE, individual experiences of MXE intoxication and attitudes towards MXE as a legal high and health risks. The participants were five males over the age of 18 and with no current or past addictions or dependencies on any substance. Within an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews were undertaken. Four super-ordinate themes emerged from the interview analysis; The Impact of Prior Knowledge on Expectations, Novel Physical and Emotional Experiences, Perceived Risk of MXE use and Attitudes towards Legal Highs. This research adds to the limited body of knowledge around legal highs and Methoxetamine specifically and may provide a basis for further, specific investigation. Further investigation into the potential long-term effects of Methoxetamine use would be useful in determining the risk associated with the substance.

11.45 – 12.05

The impact of ecstasy/polydrug use on prospective memory in university students

Hadjiefthyvoulou, F.

Nottingham Trent University

The impact of ecstasy/polydrug use on prospective memory in university students was investigated across two different studies. Prospective memory deficits in recreational drug users have been

documented in recent years. However, the assessment of PM has largely been restricted to self-reported measures that fail to capture the distinction between event-based and time-based PM. A variety of both self-report and laboratory measures of prospective memory were administered in both studies to test whether any ecstasy/polydrug-related or cannabis-related impairments on different aspects of PM were present. Ecstasy/polydrug associated deficits were observed on both laboratory and self-reported measures of PM. The present studies extend previous research by demonstrating that deficits in PM are real and cannot be simply attributed to self-misperceptions. The deficits observed reflect some general capacity underpinning both time- and event-based PM contexts and are not task specific. Among the group of ecstasy/polydrug users in both studies recreational use of cocaine was also prominently associated with prospective memory deficits. These two studies are the first to link recreational use of cocaine to prospective memory deficits.

12.05 – 12.25

Drinking experiences of first year female students: using narratives to explore the transition to university life

Barrass, C., Bewick, B.M., Martin, C., Sugden, H.

Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds

Introduction: Regular heavy drinking amongst the university student population continues to be a current mental health concern (Royal College of Psychiatrist, 2011). There has been a rise in the number of female undergraduate students consuming dangerous levels of alcohol on a regular basis (Gill, Donaghy, Guise and Warner, 2007). Qualitative research that explores the drinking behaviour of female undergraduates is limited, especially research that explores individual difference and experience.

Aim: To explore how female undergraduates experience and understand their alcohol use within the context of their university lifestyle.

Method: Three female first year undergraduates were recruited and selected via an online drinking behaviour questionnaire. All three participants were drinking to harmful levels on a regular weekly basis. A Free Association Narrative Approach was used (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) to elicit biographical narratives from participants during two face-to-face interviews. Through detailed consideration of interview transcripts common themes were identified.

Results: Themes such as understanding drinking as 'the norm', experiencing guilt and shame associated with drinking, and minimising the impact of drinking upon aspects of university life were apparent across all three participants and a range of contradictions emerged such as autonomy v's dependency, conformity v's identity, which could be identified throughout the individual accounts and were explored further in the group analysis.

Conclusion: The implications of these results will be discussed further in terms of developing support for students throughout their university experience.

12.25 – 12.45

Ni Chaolain, S.

University College Dublin

The aim of this study is to examine the phenomenology of the binge drinking culture that has developed in Ireland, particularly within the young adult population, over the last two decades. More specifically, this study aims to investigate the role of Alcohol Expectancies in the levels and patterns of alcohol consumption of Irish undergraduate college students and why harmful patterns of alcohol consumption continue despite experience of negative consequences. The study will use an ecological model and mixed methods design, involving a quantitative and a qualitative phase. Quantitative data consists of participants (n=303) responses to a battery of detailed measures of alcohol consumption that replicate measures used in national studies (Palmer & O'Reilly, 2008) and comparative studies (Boland et al, 2006), and the Khavari Alcohol Test (Khavari & Farber, 1978), their expectancies towards alcohol, both positive and negative, (Leigh and Stacey, 1993), the frequency of experience of negative consequences as a result of alcohol consumption, as measured by the Rutgers' Alcohol Problem Index (White & Labouvie, 1989) and a series of open-ended questions relating to the participants perception of the role of alcohol in Irish society. Participants were 303 UCD undergraduate students, 148 male and 155 female, with an age range of 18 – 25 years (M = 19.35 years; SD = 1.351). Data analysis consisted of multiple regression and ANOVA to examine the impact of gender and residence during term on expectancies and alcohol consumption and will provide a detailed focus on the inter-relationships between positive expectancies, negative expectancies, frequency of experienced negative consequences and alcohol consumption patterns. Qualitative data consists of 11 transcribed interviews (m: f = 6:5) pertaining to students' subjective reasoning as to their own patterns of alcohol consumption, the role of alcohol consumption in the student experience and in Irish society generally. Qualitative data analysis consists of thematic analysis and subsequent Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Thursday 7th of June afternoon session

Chair – Associate Professor Christiane Stock, University of Southern Denmark

13.30 – 14.00

Keynote address - The teenage origin of students' drinking habits

Dr Tomi Lintonen

University of Tampere

Despite legislative constraints on under-aged alcohol drinking, students enter universities with a drinking history. For some, the history may be short, but many have already formed a drinking habit before the age of eighteen. It may be beneficial to have basic knowledge on under-aged drinking when studying and working with university students.

In addition to varying national adolescent substance use monitoring systems, two Europe-wide survey series are carried out in four-year periods. The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children www.hbsc.org has monitored health behaviour patterns among 11, 13 and 15 year-old Europeans and North Americans; the latest survey was carried out in 2009/2010. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs www.espad.org collected their latest data among 15 year-olds in 2011 from 39 countries in Europe. Both sites contain links to open access publications.

For European countries, the median proportion of 11 year-olds drinking alcohol at least once a week in 2009/2010 was 2% for girls and 4% for boys. At the age of 13, the European median was 7% and at 15, 22%. In terms of alcohol-related harm, the drinking pattern is more relevant than drinking per se. Drinking small quantities in e.g. a family dinner setting is quite different from drinking large quantities without adult presence and supervision. The percentage of 11 year-olds that report having been drunk at least twice in their lifetime is 1% for girls and 2% for boys. At 13 year of age, the European median is 9% and at 15, 33%.

Adolescent drinking patterns in Europe are everything but uniform, although they seem to have been converging. Whereas less than 10% of Finnish boys aged 15 drinks once a week or more often, the proportion is 40% or more in the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Croatia and Greece. In Portugal, Italy, Greece, Norway, Iceland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, 5% to 9% percent of 15 year-old boys report having been drunk at age 13 or younger. At the other end of the spectrum, the corresponding proportion is above 25% in all the Baltic countries and Romania. Girls have previously consumed less alcohol but gender differences have been diminishing in most of Europe. Time-trends in the beginning of the 21st century have been mixed with drinking becoming more popular in low prevalence countries and diminishing in countries previously reporting high prevalence.

Several factors have been shown to be associated with an increased risk of teen-age heavy drinking, e.g. genetic background, childhood living conditions, social environment both at home and among friends, general risk-taking etc.

Under-aged adolescents mostly drink beer. Other mild alcoholic beverages are also popular as are drinks made from liquor; wines are a marginal preference. In heavy drinking occasions, is it usual for young adolescents to drink several types of alcoholic beverages.

In a lifetime perspective, alcohol drinking and especially heavy drinking are most prevalent in young adulthood, i.e. between ages 18 and 24. Heavy drinking generally declines after young adulthood and frequency of drinking usually stabilises after the age of 30.

Adulthood is a rather stable phase of drinking pattern development.

Research has revealed diversity within this general picture: some drink very little all the way from teenage into adulthood, some drink heavily all their life while others decrease their drinking when entering university. Studies of drinking trajectories from early adolescence into adulthood show that the relative position of an individual within the cohort is rather stable. In general, alcohol drinking patterns have been shown to be rather persistent; early alcohol debut predicts increased risk for alcohol use and alcohol problems in adulthood. Furthermore, an early onset heavy drinking pattern predicts other health and social problems in adulthood.

14.00 – 14.20

Alcohol consumption in British university sports teams

Rossi, M.^{1,2}, Dempsey, R.² and McAlaney, J.²

¹University of Florence, ²University of Bradford

Background

University students experience unique social pressures to engage in heavy alcohol use. Research conducted in the USA has indicated that social pressures to drink alcohol can be particularly high amongst students who are members of university sports teams, where the consumption of alcohol can be an integral part of team membership and team identity. However there has been little research on the use of alcohol by student sport team members in the UK. This is an important issue to address as research suggests that frequent, heavy episodic alcohol consumption (e.g 'binge drinking') in young adults can have long term cognitive and neurological consequences, even if the individual drinks at a healthier level once they leave university.

Methods

A sample of 61 student athletes studying at a British university completed a survey about their own alcohol use and their perceptions of the alcohol use of fellow student athletes and non-athletes at their institution. A series of three focus groups were conducted with student athletes to investigate the relationship between athletic students' personal alcohol use behaviors and their perceptions of other students' drinking consumption, and the role of alcohol consumption in the group dynamics and group identity of their specific sports team. This was then analysed using thematic analysis under the model of profundisation approach to mixed methods research.

Results

In keeping with past social norms research it was found that students appeared to perceive their peers to drink more frequently than themselves, although they do not perceive their teammates to drink more heavily. Overall they believed themselves and their teammates to drink less heavily than a typical student, despite the fact that heavy drinking was seen to be a part of sports team

membership. Several students reported initiation rituals to teams that involved potentially hazardous levels of alcohol consumption. However whilst alcohol consumption was seen as an important part of team socialisation and membership students also acknowledged that there were several reasons why team members may chose not to drink and stated these reasons could be valid. They also highlighted several other factors which influenced the alcohol consumption of the team, including the influence of the team captain and the stereotypes associated with the sport.

Discussion

The processes underlying sports team alcohol consumption appear to be different from those found in previous research in the USA, with alcohol consumption perhaps having a lesser role in the formation of team identity. Nevertheless several potential dangerous drinking practices were identified in teams which could be a cause for concern. Further research is needed on student sport team alcohol consumption in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

14.20 – 14.40

Self-regulation skills, alcohol use and polydrug use among university students

Sebena, R.¹, Mikolajczyk, R.². and Olga Orosova¹.

¹PJ Safarik University in Kosice, ²Bremen Institute for Epidemiology and Prevention Research

Background:

We aimed to investigate the relationship between self-regulation skills, alcohol use and polydrug use among university students.

Methods:

University freshmen from Slovakia(n=814) completed the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire, AUDIT and answered the question: "How often in the last month have you used the following drugs?" with a list of eight drugs. Linear regression was performed to assess the relationship between self-regulation, alcohol use and the polydrug use (sum score of eight drug items).

Findings:

We found no gender difference in the association between self-regulation and polydrug use and between alcohol use and polydrug use. Alcohol use was positively associated with polydrug use($p<0.001$). The lower level of self-regulation was associated with polydrug use($p<0.01$). Gender was not associated with polydrug use.

Discussion:

We confirmed that problems with self-regulation and alcohol use might lead to increased polydrug use.

14.40 – 15.00

Are university students at risk of developing alcohol problems more likely to report risky sexual behaviour?

Kalina, O. Salonna, F. , Gajdosova, B. and Orosova, O.

PJ Safarik University in Kosice

Background

Studies on sexual behaviour from Central and Eastern Europe are scarce. The lack of information on sexual behaviour is most salient regarding late adolescence and young adulthood, when young people start to live without direct parental supervision. Sexual behavior that increases the risk for HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases appears to be common among college students. Recent published survey found that only about 4 in 10 students always use a condom during vaginal sex, and even fewer during anal sex. Among students with sexual experience, almost 9% reported having four or more sex partners within the last school year. Other studies suggest that an average college student has two new sexual partners per year. Alcohol use has been also found to be a very common behaviour among college students. Although most students are light-to-moderate drinkers, many engage in heavy, problematic levels of consumption. This may decrease the likelihood of condom use and increase the likelihood of having multiple, casual partners. The aim of this study is to explore the relationships between problem alcohol drinking and sexual risk behaviour of university students in Slovakia.

Sample and methods

A study sample of 541 first year university students (444 girls, mean 19,9; SD 1.9) from the Slovak part of SLiCE study (Student Life Cohort in Europe) was asked to complete questionnaire on health related behaviour including alcohol use and sexual behaviour.

To identify the preliminary signs of hazardous drinking, mild dependence or alcohol problems the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) was used. The test contains 10 multiple choice questions on quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption, drinking behavior and alcohol-related problems. The answers are scored on a point system; a score of more than eight indicates an alcohol problem. Sexual behaviour was measured by set of four separate questions concerning: sexual experience, number of sexual partners, duration of relationship and condom use. Relationships among problem alcohol use and sexual behaviour were explored using binary logistic regression (SPSS 15).

Results

More than 25% of the students showed signs of problem alcohol use. Almost 70% of students were sexually experienced and from those 26% reported 2 and more sexual partners; 46% reported a short lasting or not in relationship and 28% did not use condom consistently during first sex with a new partner. Moreover young people with signs of alcohol problems were more likely to report higher number of sexual partners, inconsistent condom use and shorter relationships than those without problem alcohol use.

Conclusion

The results from our study confirm the previous findings concerning significant relationship between alcohol use and sexual behaviour. Such associations are even more important in the context of increasing rates of alcohol use in Slovakia. Although we did not test the causal relationship we propose that alcohol use is the significant trigger of sexual risk behaviour among young people. Therefore future studies may focus on the proposition that an intervention to reduce alcohol use among college students will also reduce their sexual risk behaviour.

Acknowledgement

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15.20 – 15.40

Co-occurrence of alcohol misuse and disordered eating in young adults in higher education

Sherlock, R., Bewick, B.M., West, R. and Hill, A. J.

Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds

Background: High levels of alcohol misuse and disordered eating are apparent in University students, a section of young adults recognised to be particularly vulnerable to psychological disorder. Clinically, both are considered to be functional in helping manage emotions.

Objective: To investigate the co-occurrence of these problems in female and male students and whether co-occurrence is associated with greater distress, impulsivity, or help-seeking.

Methods: An online Student Health Behaviours Survey included questions on alcohol use (AUDIT and previous week's consumption), disordered eating (items from the EDE-Q), negative consequences, impulsivity, well-being, and help-seeking. During a 4 week period 1745 students (1205 female, 540 male, mean age=22.1yrs) attending a single UK institution completed the survey. Data from 1577 were included in the analysis. Participants were from all University faculties and broadly representative of the University population.

Results: More men than women misused alcohol and more women than men had disordered eating. Women with some feature of disordered eating (e.g. shape/weight overconcern, binge eating) had 41-149% greater risk of misusing alcohol than those without disordered eating. Only an association between binge eating and harmful AUDIT scores was found for men. Co-occurrence of alcohol misuse and disordered eating did not have additive effects on psychological distress. However, when compared with those with one individual problem, women with co-occurring problems did show differences in negative consequences, impulsivity, and likelihood of help-seeking. Overall, help-seeking via University services was rare (especially for alcohol misuse), despite high levels of psychological distress.

Conclusions: The presence of either alcohol misuse or disordered eating increased risk of the other, but only in women. Psychological distress was high in those with disordered eating but was not

further increased by presence of alcohol misuse. Further research is recommended regarding access to services, potential impact on academic outcomes, and developing interventions.

15.40 – 16.00

Van der Heijde, C.¹, Vonk, P.¹ and Meijman, F.J.^{1,2}

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People with disabilities belong to a group with an elevated risk for substance abuse problems (roughly 5 times as much as the normal population, (West, 2005). Not many studies have captured substance use in students in tertiary education with disabilities. In this study we examine the prevalence and severity of smoking, alcohol use and drugs use in students with disabilities and student without disabilities in The Netherlands, and the effect of the nature of the handicap (physical and/or mental). Furthermore we took into account the substance abuse profiles of specific handicaps. Additionally, the amount of hinder that students experience from their handicap and the relationship with substance abuse was studied.

Methods

The study was undertaken as part of the project Stoplights: The Student Health Check, a self-regulation instrument for the promotion of student health, including a personalized feedback tool. Significant differences between students with and without disabilities for the prevalence of smoking, alcohol use and drugs use were tested using Cramers' V; Significant differences between students with and without disabilities for the smoking, alcohol and drugs dependence for users were tested with ANOVA's. The relationship of experienced hinder from the disability with dependence was tested for with regression analyses (controlled for age, gender and study phase).

Results

The first round of the project Stoplights (January - July 2011) yielded 3982 respondents from various study programs and phases. The male –female proportion was 30%-70%, the average age was 22.8 (SD=4.28) and 17% reported disabilities.

The results of this first assessment indicate significant differences in the prevalence of smoking and alcohol use between students without and with reported disabilities. Students with disabilities reported more nonsmokers (73 % against 68 %) and less frequent alcohol use (14% of students without disabilities report to use alcohol often to very often against 9 % in students with disabilities). When looking for significant effects for smoking, and alcohol or drugs dependence we found a trend towards drug dependence [F(1, 668)=3.46; p=,063] and a significant effect towards smoking dependence [F(1, 1034)=7.43; p=,007] for students with disabilities. Furthermore, we found a significant relationship between the amount of hinder experienced and smoking dependence for students with disabilities [F(1, 1034)=7.43; p=,000].

Conclusions

Students with disabilities overall report less use of substances than students without disabilities, although if students with disabilities use, the risk for dependence seems to be higher. (smoking, drugs). Experienced hinder from disabilities might relate to more severe dependence (regarding smoking in this sample). For students with disabilities it is important to pay extra attention to the danger of dependence for the relatively small group that uses. West & Graham (2005) already pointed out the need of targeted efforts as regards students with disabilities.

16.00 – 16.20

Exploring the alcohol use of students in Wales : a socio-environmental context perspective

Williams, A., Moore, G. Moore, L., and Murphy, S.

Cardiff University

Student alcohol consumption is a significant source of concern in many parts of the developed world. Many factors, which can be experienced before university, formed by university social and environmental contexts or fashioned by cultural, national, geographical or temporal forces, have been found to shape student drinking behaviours

Student drinking levels have, to date, proved highly resistant to intervention efforts. However use of social norms based approaches has shown promise especially in the USA. Use of social norms interventions within the UK has so far been limited, with the small number of studies to date suffering substantial methodological limitations, whilst social norms interventions have typically been examined as a stand-alone intervention, separable from the contexts in which they are intended to influence behaviour. This leaves significant questions about the capacity of a social norms approach in isolation to combat the wide range of influences stemming from different societal levels on student drinking attitudes and behaviours.

An exploratory trial, funded by Alcohol Research UK in 2011, is examining the value of a social marketing-led social norms-based intervention across four universities in Wales alongside an alcohol harm reduction toolkit, which provides universities with support and guidance in reviewing organisational policies and practices relating to alcohol and implementing evidence-informed changes. Embedded in this trial is a process evaluation that seeks to appraise the acceptability and implementation of the study materials and the hypothesised process of change including awareness, receptivity and normative changes. Part of the purpose of the process evaluation is to explore the role and context of alcohol use in the lives of students in Wales. Data is being collected through focus group interviews with students from all year groups in each participating university, and through observations of student residential halls, university campuses and university neighbourhood settings.

Knowledge that drinking is influenced by factors from multiple socio-ecological levels, and lack of a model to guide research in this area led Ward (2011) to develop a socio–environmental context model that integrates the social norms approach with environmental influences and alcohol use. Ward’s aim is to facilitate better understanding not only of how the environment can affect alcohol

use, but also how environments can act as platforms on which social norms are created and reinforced.

This presentation will describe Ward's model and set the available study data from the focus groups and observations within its constructs. The aim is to reflect on whether using the socio-ecological model as a framework for exploring student alcohol use in Wales has led to a better understanding of how and why factors from different societal levels can affect student alcohol related social norms, attitudes and behaviours.

Friday 8th of June morning session

Chair – Professor Guido Van Hal, University of Antwerp

10.05 – 10.25

Substance and alcohol use, internet addiction, mental stress and sleeping disorders among university students. A survey in Algeria, France and Hungary

Ladner, J.¹., Boussouf, N.²., Luckas, A.³., Varga, B.⁴., Tavolacci, M.P.¹, Déchelotte, P.¹

¹Rouen University Hospital, Rouen, France; ²Batna University Hospital, Bata, Algeria; ³Faculty of Health Care, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary; ⁴Faculty of Economics, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary

Objectives: To study the prevalence and risk factors associated addictions, Internet addiction, mental stress and sleeping disorders in students in higher education in three countries (Algeria, France and Hungary).

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted in students in university campuses in Batna (B, Algeria), Miskolc (M, Hungary) and Rouen (R, France) in 2010 and 2011. The students completed an anonymous self-questionnaire. The questionnaire collected a large sample of data, including the age, gender, alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking, cannabis consumption (experimentation), practice of sport, perceived mental stress using the Cohen stress scale (on a total of 40), risk of cyber addiction using the Internet Stress Scale (Orman test) and sleeping disorders.

Results: A total of 1,917 students were included: 345 in B, 275 in M and 1,287 in R. The mean age was 21.2 years (SD=3.1) in B and R and 21.6 (SD=4.2) in M; the sex ratio M:F was 0.20 in B, 0.14 in M and 0.60 in R. In B, 4.1% of students were smokers, 21.5% in M and 22.5% in R ($p<10^{-4}$). 2.3% in B, 15.4% in M and 41.4% in R experimented cannabis ($p<10^{-4}$). In the last 12 months, 80.4% in M, 81.2% of students were drunk at least one time in R ($p=0.34$). Respectively in B, M and R, the mean stress level was 18.9 (SD=3.6), 21.9 (SD=5.0) and 15.9 (SD=3.1) ($p<10^{-4}$). Respectively in B, M and R, 22.9% of students, 10.5% and 29.0% presented a high risk of cyberaddiction ($p<10^{-4}$). In B, 33.1% of students, 61.4% in M and 34.7% in R reported sleeping disorders in the previous month ($p<10^{-4}$). In B, 4.7%, 4.4% in M and 7.3% of students in R reported a consumption of hypnotic drugs in the previous month ($p=0.03$).

Conclusion: In addition, alcohol consumption, smoking and cannabis use, which were common in the three university student populations, new behaviours risk as mental stress, cyberaddiction and sleeping disorders, appear problematic. These findings stress the need to investigate health risks and behaviours and to initiate specific prevention interventions in student populations using integrated approaches. There is an urgent need for public health practitioners working on these challenges in the three university campuses.

10.25 – 10.45

Parental proximity and changes in beer drinking between academic year and vacation periods

Rosiers, J.¹, Maes, L.³, Hublet, A.³, Van Damme, J.³, Vriesacker, B.², Van Hal, G.²

¹Association for Alcohol and other Drug problems (VAD) ², University of Antwerp, ³University of Ghent

Background: The aim of this study was to assess the relationship between parental proximity and changes in alcohol use between academy year and vacation periods. Based on scientific literature findings we hypothesize that commuter students perceive more parental monitoring than residential students. A better insight in the relationship between parental proximity and alcohol use may lead to better parent-oriented approaches in alcohol prevention towards college and university students.

Methods: This study is based on data from a 2009 cross-sectional survey of 3.539 students enrolled in the University and Colleges Associations in Ghent and Antwerp. 54,8% of the students were female. 96,4% were aged 18-25 years. Concerning their living status during the week, a slight majority were commuter students (52,8%), still living in their parents' house. Consequently, 47,2% were residential students, living in private or student accommodations, mostly in the urban University or College area. Statistical hypothesis tests and were used to assess the relations between parental proximity indicators and beer consumption.

Results: 81,8% of the students drank beer in the previous year. Frequent beer use, defined as drinking more than once a week, was more common in vacation periods (47,9%) than during the academy year (41,7%). Residential students reported more frequent beer use than commuter students during the academy year (48,5% vs. 35,0%; $\chi^2(1)=52.045$; $p<0.001$). During vacation periods this difference in frequent beer drinking was less pronounced: 50,0% vs. 45,8% ($\chi^2(1)=5.026$; $p=0.025$). Wilcoxon signed ranks test results indicated for commuter students that the frequency of their beer drinking is higher in vacation periods than in academy year ($Z=-15.335$; $p<0,001$), whereas for residential students no differences were shown between both periods ($Z=-.937$; $p=0,349$).

Further results to demonstrate the influence of parental proximity on changing beer consumption will be presented in the ESSUS 2012 presentation.

Conclusion and discussion: Parental proximity, linked to the living status of the student, seems to have a protective influence on frequent beer use among students. To strengthen this protective factor, the role of parental monitoring and guidance should be more emphasized, even towards young adults more and more moving on towards their independence. Besides the more common user-oriented and peer-oriented alcohol prevention approaches towards students, there lies a great potential in parent-oriented prevention. Some suggestions will be presented.

10.45 – 11.05

Slovak university students perception of alcohol policy on their campuses.

Authors

Salonna, F.¹, Sedlák Vendelová, N.¹, Vriesacker, B.², Van Hal, G.²

¹PJ Safarik University in Kosice, ²University of Antwerp

OBJECTIVES

Although there are formal alcohol policies at universities in Slovakia, they are mostly non-systematic and often not implemented in practice. The objective of this study was to explore student attitudes towards alcohol policy on their campus.

METHODS

Eight focus group discussions were conducted during 2011 among university students from six different faculties in two universities in Košice, Slovakia (64 participants of which 38 were female). None of the students were abstinent and fewer than 15% were problem drinkers (according to CAGE). The key questions were (1) "Is there a policy concerning alcohol on your campus and what are the consequences hereof?", and (2) "How should an on campus alcohol policy be developed and what should be the content?"

RESULTS

The students knew little, if any, rules concerning alcohol. Nevertheless, students expected the university to take an active role in alcohol policy and most of them would accept a certain level of regulation related to the prevention of excessive drinking. Student participation was considered important in policy development and implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings suggest that students are not essentially against an alcohol policy which even integrates certain alcohol regulation on campus. Even though, prevention policy which actively involves students' participation was emphasized as optimal.

11.25 – 11.45

Social motives for drinking in students should not be neglected in intervention development

Van Damme, J.¹, Maes, L.¹, Clays, E.¹, Rosier, J.², Van Hal, G.³, Hublet, A.¹

¹University of Ghent, ²Association for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems, Belgium, ³University of Antwerp

Introduction: The persistent high prevalence of heavy drinking and alcohol related problems in student populations indicates the lack of interventions or the lack of effectiveness of current programs. The development of new preventive programs is needed. Recently drinking motivation got a lot of attention as an important but neglected determinant of drinking behavior in

interventions. Drinking motivations functions as gateway between drinking behavior and more distal factors. Four types were identified: social motives, enhancement motives, coping motives and conformity motives. Heavy drinking and alcohol related problems are related with enhancement and coping motives but in most cases not with conformity motives or a negative relationship was found. For social motives this relation is less clear. The aim of this study was to get more insight in the role of drinking motivations, especially social motives, in heavy drinking in a student population.

Methods: Participants were 16,953 university and college students participating anonymously in an online cross-sectional survey about substance use. Logistic regression analyses were performed to test the relation between drinking motives and problematic alcohol use, defined as: 'more than weekly'-drinking, 'at least monthly binge drinking' and hazardous drinking. Scoring 8/40 or more on the AUDIT is defined as at risk for hazardous drinking. Analyses were controlled for gender, a known moderator for substance use in students, and data was weighted by gender and institution.

Results: 54.6% was female, the average age was 20.7 (SD= 2.6) years, 24.6% reported at least monthly bingeing, 48.9% was drinking more than weekly and 36.7% was at risk for alcohol related problems according to the AUDIT. Social motives and enhancement motives were the most reported motives (resp.89.7%; 76.9%), followed by coping and conformity motives (resp.29.5%; 15.0%). Male students perform more ($p<0.001$) in problematic drinking and are more ($p<0.001$) at risk for problems than female students. They also drink more ($p<0.001$) for social, enhancement and conformity motives. No difference was found for coping motives. Following associations between motives and problematic drinking indicators were found: students drinking for enhancement, coping and social motives had a higher chance to drink weekly or more, to binge at least monthly and to be at risk for alcohol related problems. The opposite was found for students drinking for conformity motives.

Discussion: Prevalence of 'more than weekly'-drinking and being at risk for problematic drinking was lower than in other studies in student populations. This might be explained by different drinking cultures and drinking legislation between countries. Prevalence for bingeing is comparable to other studies. Although a similar order of motives was found as in other studies, in contrast to some other studies, our study revealed relations between all problematic drinking indicators and all motives, including social motives. This might indicate that social drinking motives have different functions in heavy drinking in different cultures/sub-populations and countries. This finding is relevant for the development of preventive interventions.

11.45 – 12.05

A social norms approach to correct student misperceptions of substance use: What the flock?

Savva, G.¹, Edlin, B.¹, Knighton, T.² and Bewick, B.M.³

¹Magpie Creative Communications Ltd trading as 'Magpie', ²Leeds University Student Union, ³Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Leeds

Introduction: Evidence suggests university students overestimate use of alcohol and other drugs in the student population. The Social Norms Approach posits that correcting these misperceptions will influence subsequent behaviour choices (e.g. reduce the prevalence of drug use within the student community).

Aim: The current project aimed to create a substance use intervention campaign that could be delivered across all three universities in Leeds that students would engage with.

Method: Intervention development was lead by Magpie (a creative agency). The creation of the social norms campaign included conducting focus groups with the target audience (students attending university in Leeds). Campaign messages were based on research conducted by Montana et al. (2009). An advisory group (including academics, student support services providers and student union executive members) provided guidance on the implementation of the social norms approach and the local context. Level of engagement was evaluated primarily by monitoring website activity.

Results: This activity resulted in a primarily digital campaign that centred on unveiling www.whattheflock.org.uk. A strong brand identity was created– this contributed to creation of a bold, memorable brand that was used digitally, in print, and in a guerrilla way. In total 17,000 students visited the website within the three week teaser and launcher period. Campaign activity was picked up by The Guardian, student bloggers, Leeds Student paper, and Creative Review. Students who completed the online perception quiz (n=3296 students visited the website on launch day) received automated feedback on the accuracy of their responses.

Conclusion: This pilot work illustrates that it is feasible to create an innovative social norms campaign that can be delivered to multiple communities simultaneously on limited resource. Conducting campaign activity both on- and off-campus and ensuring students contributed to campaign deliverables were key to ensuring successful student engagement. Subsequent work will seek to evaluate behaviour change as well as intervention engagement.

Funding: The Leeds Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Group supported this project with funds from NHS Leeds. This work follows on from the Leeds Student Mental Health Needs Assessment. We thank all members of the Leeds Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Substance Use working group for their efforts in helping the project come to fruition.

12.05 – 12.25

Social Norms Approach in 6th Form/FE Colleges

Wilburn, N., Wilburn, C.

NWA Social & Market Research

Following from successful Social Norms projects in Stockton on Tees Secondary Schools during 2009/2011 NWA has been commissioned to undertake a further programme of work in Stockton on Tees with 1st year students in the FE sector.

The Social Norms approach to reducing risk taking behaviour works on the assumption that the greatest influence on young people's behaviour is the behaviour of their peer group, or more specifically what they think is the 'normal' behaviour of their peer group. These peer perceptions are very often skewed towards the negative, with young people wrongly assuming that the majority of their peers smoke, drink alcohol, use illegal drugs, have unprotected sexual intercourse etc and therefore leave young people feeling pressured to engage in these behaviours themselves, to fit in

and conform to this misrepresented 'norm'. There are a number of reasons why these misperceptions occur; the greater salience of negative behaviours, the tendency for young people to exaggerate their own involvement in negative behaviours, and also the unwillingness of those young people who are not involved to admit this openly. Social Norms Interventions build on this theory, by attempting to redress the balance of these misperceptions by some honest and factual information feedback to young people regarding how many of them do not engage in risk taking behaviour.

Current work in colleges started with an anonymous survey of students asking questions on smoking, abuse of alcohol, drugs and risk taking sexual behaviour. Positive behaviours were drawn out of this data and formed the basis of the social norms interventions individualised to each college site. A second survey is planned for May/June to test for change in opinion.

The students in schools had considerable input in the development of materials to feedback positive messages assisted by a marketing company. These consisted of a wide range of materials including posters, floor stickers, computer graphics, highlighting the positive aspects of young people's behaviour. For the FE sector in the current project, materials are in the process of being produced by the students themselves. Of specific interest are the role plays currently being filmed by students.

Therefore should we fortunate enough to be selected to present to conference we would wish to present the methodology used, the challenges this presented, the outcomes of the initial, and if available, the outcomes from the follow up survey. In addition we would be inviting the students themselves to present their interventions explaining their choices and how they feel these have impacted on their peer group. Participants in the films are student who responded to the survey with the script and filming developed and undertaken as part of course work. We believe this will add immense value and interest to the presentation giving the participant perspective to the delivery of social norms interventions.

12.25 – 12.45

Video showcase by students from Stockton Riverside College and Egglecliffe School – Katy Harrison Taylor, Francesca Hodgson and Tiegan Millward,

Friday 8th of June afternoon session

Chair – Dr Bridgette Bewick, University of Leeds

13.30 – 14.00

Keynote address – Social norms and student substance use interventions in the USA

Dr Jennifer Bauerle

National Social Norms Institute, University of Virginia

To view the slides for this presentation please visit the conference website (www.essus.org) after the event.

14.00 – 14.20

Riding along with a drunk driver: a social norms campaign in Antwerp students

Vriesacker, B., Stoop, H., Van Hal, G.

University of Antwerp

Introduction. ‘Tackle weekend accidents by means of control’ is an action which started in 1994 in the province of Antwerp, Belgium. In Dutch, the acronym reads as WODCA. The aim of the action is to reduce the many weekend traffic accidents. The strategy consists of three parts: 1. Intensive control, 2. Sensitization campaigns and 3. Traffic education initiatives. Usually, actions are directed towards the drivers. However, the most recent WODCA-campaign in 2011 was focused on young passengers who drive along with a (drunk) driver. This topic had emerged from an earlier limited study in the same target group of Antwerp university and college students. Based on the data collected within the present study, it was tried to create and implement a social norms intervention.

Methods. By means of a web survey focused on adolescents, a questionnaire was launched on attitudes, behaviour and perceptions concerning transport and alcohol. Besides of some background variables such as age and family situation, questions on the means of transport, going out, budget for going out, drunkenness, drink-driving and riding along with a (drunk) driver were asked. The theoretical framework used is the Social Norms Approach.

Results. In total, 1,279 adolescents, of which 1,140 college and university students (88.8%) and 94 high school students (7.3%) between 15 and 25 years of age (mean 20.1; median 21.0), filled out the web questionnaire. The female/male ratio was 69.3/30.7. The majority does not ride along with a driver who is under the influence, even when their friends do so (85.5%). Female passengers choose more than their male counterparts for a safe solution when their driver is under the influence ($p < 0.001$). Almost all respondents (93.8%) think that drink-driving is unacceptable. One out of five reports that he or she rides along with a car as main means of transport. One out of nine respondents had negative experiences in the last year due to driving along with a driver under the influence. However, there is much misperception on riding along in students. Two out of three respondents overestimate the percentage of their peer adolescents that has driven along with an intoxicated driver during the weekend in the last month.

Discussion. The Antwerp data collected on the theme of riding along with a driver under the influence, seemed to lend itself very well to build a prevention campaign based on the social norms approach. Both the descriptive and injunctive norms were very high. These results were used to create posters, coasters and a Facebook profile. During the alcohol testing in car drivers, sober drivers and passengers riding along with a sober driver, received a little candle with a prevention message. This feasibility study showed that it is possible to create a social norms approach based prevention campaign directed to a target group that is not so often addressed: passengers riding along with a driver under the influence. Mostly, campaigns are focused on the drivers themselves. A next step will be to evaluate the campaign by means of focus group discussions.

Acknowledgements: the Province of Antwerp funded this study.

14.20 – 14.40

Students' perceptions of substance use amongst their peers

Montana, C., Harrison, W.J., West R. M., Gilthorpe, M.S., Bewick, B.M.

Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Leeds

Aim

The aim of the present paper was to investigate the relationship between student's perceptions of substance use amongst friends and students at their university, and their own reported use.

Method

A sample of 4309 university students took part in the study between February and March 2009. Measures included: basic demographic information; The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)¹ that provides information on current use of nine substances (alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines, inhalants, sedatives, hallucinogens, opioids); The Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation ten item measure (CORE-10)² a measure of psychological distress; a brief knowledge assessment requiring yes/no responses to facts about drugs that are carried in public health messages and; perception of proportion of (1) friends and (2) students at their university using each of the nine substances.

Results

We used latent class (LC) cluster analysis to classify students into latent classes. This method investigates natural clusterings of patterns of substance use and emerging classes then contain types of students rather than all individuals. Complete case analysis corresponded to N=3652 (84.8% of total sample 4309). The model with two latent classes was chosen, containing one "low use" class (89% n=3270 and one "high use" class 11% n=382. Alcohol and tobacco were excluded from the cluster analysis as use of these substances did not differentiate classes. In the low use class, around 1% of students consumed any of the substances, with the exception of cannabis (11.5% use). In the high use class, use varied across the substances and ranged from 2.1% (opioids) to 77.5% (cannabis), showing a distinct difference in patterns of use between the classes.

Class profiles differed significantly by perceived substance use of others and by students' knowledge scores. Students in the high use class perceived a higher proportion of others to be using more than the median amount reported of most substances, and had a higher mean knowledge score.

Discussion

Students are well differentiated into the two substance use classes. Students who report high use of substances perceive a higher proportion of others to be using when compared to those students who report low use. Those with use patterns fitting the high use profile tend to know more about messages that are portrayed in public health campaigns. Having an awareness of being at risk and reporting relatively high levels of knowledge while holding perceptions about the proportion of students using substances suggests that a social norms intervention could afford opportunity to correct misperceptions and potentially change behaviour.

14.40 – 15.00

Student responses to normative feedback regarding alcohol consumption: An experimental study

Marley, S., Bekker, H.L. and Bewick, B.M.

Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Leeds.

Excessive alcohol consumption in University students in the UK has been identified by Government agencies and health care providers as significant problem. Social norms research suggests students evaluate and regulate their own alcohol consumption through social comparison with peers. However, they are prone to misperceptions, inaccurately estimating others' alcohol consumption to be higher than their own. The over estimation of normative peer alcohol consumption has been associated with higher personal alcohol consumption.

Unitcheck is an online alcohol resource available to University students in the UK (www.unitcheck.co.uk). Using a social norms approach this online alcohol intervention provides instant personalised normative feedback to students, directly comparing reported individual alcohol consumption with normative peer alcohol consumption. This comparison is designed to correct students' overestimation of normative peer drinking and encourage moderate alcohol consumption. Currently, Unitcheck feedback is labelled as comparing personal alcohol consumption to normative alcohol consumption of the typical University of Leeds student. There is a paucity of research exploring the effect of the active components of the personalised normative feedback on students' responses to the feedback.

The aim of this study was to evaluate how students reporting alcohol consumption above recommended weekly limits at the University of Leeds, respond to instant, online personalised normative feedback presented as part of a study version of Unitcheck. A between subjects experimental design employing qualitative think-aloud methodology, plus a semi-structured interview was used. Participants were 21 Undergraduate students in their first or second year of study at the University of Leeds, 67% female, mean age 19.3 years (range 18-21), mean alcohol consumption over the previous week 38.4 units (range 10-150). Participants were randomised to one of two study arms and asked to work through the Unitcheck resource whilst thinking their thoughts aloud. Study arm A (n=11) used a same-sex referent group in the personalised normative feedback for University of Leeds students. Study arm B (n=10) used typical University of Leeds

student as the normative referent group. All participants then completed a semi-structured interview assessing how believable, credible and personally relevant they found the feedback.

Preliminary findings from thematic analysis of the transcripts suggest that personalised feedback prompts participants to actively consider their personal value judgements regarding acceptable drinking behaviour. Students responded directly to the normative feedback component. Justifications of ratings of believability of normative feedback were based on personal observations of student drinking behaviour. The current manipulation focussed on gender as a salient comparison group, participants suggested year of study and age as alternative salient normative comparison groups. The presentation will consider the implications of results for our understanding of use of referent groups within normative feedback and their role within personalised web-based interventions that include information on social norms.

15.20 – 15.40

An exploratory cluster randomised trial of a university halls of residence based social norms intervention in Wales, UK

Moore, GF, Williams, A. Moore, L & Murphy S.

Cardiff Institute of Society and Health, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

The need for intervention to reduce excessive alcohol consumption amongst UK university students has received increasing attention in recent years. One intervention approach which has met with some success in the USA is the social norms approach. This approach is based on the assumption that student's perceptions of peer group norms influence behaviour, but that perceptions of social norms are often incorrect, with students typically overestimating normative alcohol consumption levels among their peers. Social norms interventions aim to correct these inaccurate perceptions, and in turn, to change behaviours. However, UK intervention studies are scarce and it is increasingly recognised that social norm interventions are likely to have limited impact unless supported by socio-ecological approaches that address the wider determinants of behaviour.

In 2011, a study was funded by Alcohol Research UK which included a survey to establish actual and perceived drinking norms. Using web-administered versions of the Daily Drinking Questionnaire and Drinking Norms Rating Form among a sample of 998 students in four Welsh universities, the survey estimated average consumption of approximately 19 units per week (15 for women; 23 for men) though perceptions that the student norm was almost double this amount. Survey findings informed the development of a social norm marketing campaign designed to correct misperceptions of normative alcohol use and reduce levels of misuse.

An exploratory trial is currently examining the acceptability, hypothesised processes of change and implementation of this campaign, alongside a university wide alcohol harm reduction toolkit in 4 Welsh universities as well as examining the feasibility of a potential large scale effectiveness trial, by providing key trial design parameters including randomisation, recruitment and retention, contamination, data collection methods, outcome measures and intra-cluster correlations. The evaluation uses cluster randomisation with halls of residence as the unit of allocation, and includes a nested mixed methods process evaluation. Four Welsh (UK) universities participated, with residence

hall managers consenting to implementation of the trial in 50 university owned campus based halls of residence. Consenting halls were randomised to either a phased multi-channel social norm marketing campaign addressing normative discrepancies (n = 25 intervention) or normal practice (n = 25 control). The primary outcome is alcohol consumption (units per week) measured using the Daily Drinking Questionnaire. Secondary outcomes assess frequency of alcohol consumption, higher risk drinking, alcohol related problems and change in perceptions of alcohol-related descriptive and injunctive norms. Data are currently being collected from all 50 halls at 4 months follow up through a cross-sectional on line and postal survey of approximately 4000 first year students.

This presentation will reflect on challenges in the development and evaluation of social norms interventions in university settings, including challenges in measuring student alcohol consumption, establishing actual and perceived norms and achieving sufficient response rates to evaluate intervention effects.

15.40 – 16.00 R U Different? A modern and measurable approach to engaging with young people using Social Norms

Gary Lovatt

Social Sense

R U Different (www.rudifferent.co.uk) offers young people the opportunity to share their perceptions alongside their own participations in a range of risky behaviours such as alcohol, drugs, sex and relationships.

Data gathered within our project shows that young people often overestimate participations of others in such behaviours.

Therefore the key element of the R U Different project lies in using this local and statistically-backed data to promote positive behaviours as part of a controlled and sustained intervention process.

Once the Intervention is completed, reassessing these attitudes and perceptions can measurably demonstrate the degree to which young people's views on participation (including their own) have changed.

What are the unique elements of R U Different in a Social Norms context?

R U Different offers bespoke survey engine that provides instant data collection and immediate reporting across a full range of risk taking behaviours which can be used to inform the Intervention.

The programme supports participants with modern methods of engaging with Young People during the all-important Intervention stage – including the use of mobile Apps and Interactive classroom sessions - offering positive and measurable results.

Finally by creating a nationwide resource, it offers local authorities significant cost savings and the opportunity to share resources and compare results in a wider context. Instant reporting allows schools to immediately and accurately pinpoint where resources and Interventions are most required.

Who we are working with and progress to date

Working in partnership with technology partner Gencia Media Ltd, the following progress has been made.

Successful pilots among several Local Authorities in the UK

Since setting up the programme, R U Different has achieved successful pilots with the Local authorities and schools within Salford, Manchester, St Helens, Warrington and Swindon.

Schools from Doncaster, Kent and Essex are due to join the programme in September 2012.

Over 700,000 data responses gathered

Working with over 6000 pupils across 48 schools, R U Different has recorded 700,000 direct responses from pupils in relation to risk taking behaviours. In addition to reported attitudes and behaviours around tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sex, relationships, aspirations, bullying, healthy eating, mental health and internet safety, we have obtained valuable insights to perceptions of peers by friend groups, boys and girls.

Consistent recording of misperceptions of peer behaviours in almost every school

In nearly all cases, our results have shown that young people misperceive the behaviours of others in relation to their own. Some examples include:

- A recorded 88% figure of those who do not smoke compared to a perception of 50%
- A recorded 32% of people who have met a stranger following online chat versus a perception of 66%
- A recorded 10% who were drunk in the last week compared to a perceived 35%
- A recorded 96% who have never used cannabis compared to a perceived 60% who have never used
- A recorded 93% who has never had sex under the influence of alcohol, where perceptions are that participation is at least 1 in 4.

Visit www.social-sense.co.uk or www.rudifferent.co.uk

16.00 – 16.20

Development of a web-based social norms intervention for the prevention and reduction of legal and illegal drug use in European University and College students: The Social Norms Intervention for the Prevention of Polydrug Use (SNIFE) Study

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Background: Previous research investigating the role of social norms regarding alcohol and tobacco use found that incorrect perceptions about high rates of peer drug use are predictive of increased personal drug use in student populations. Correcting these misperceptions by providing feedback has been shown to be an effective intervention for reducing licit drug use in American students. However, it is unknown whether social norms play a role regarding illicit and poly-drug use and whether social norms interventions are effective in preventing and reducing drug use in European students.

Aims: To describe the development of a web-based social norms intervention aimed at reducing licit and preventing illicit drug use in students living in seven European countries. To report on recruitment procedures employed in this study and on response rates.

Methods & Results: An online questionnaire based on existing social norms surveys was adapted for the assessment of illicit and poly-drug use. Subsequently, each of the seven participating European countries recruited students per intervention and delayed intervention control groups. All participants completed the online questionnaire at baseline. The baseline data informed the development of social norms messages which will be employed in a web-based intervention. During the following five months, intervention group participants will receive individualized social norms feedback based on the expected discrepancy between perceptions of personal and peer drug use. Effects of the intervention will be measured after five months, in comparison to the control site.

Conclusions: This project is the first cross-national European collaboration to develop and evaluate a social norms intervention to prevent licit *and* illicit use among European students.

Facilities

Lunch will be served in the Small Hall in each day of the conference along with tea, coffee and bottled water and include vegetarian and halal options. In addition a shop and café are located on the bottom floor of the Atrium, which can be accessed via the walkway that connects the Small Hall to the JSB lecture theatre. Restrooms are located off the foyers adjacent to the main staircase, next to the JSB lecture theatre. The restroom for men is located on D floor and the restroom for women is located on E floor. Recycling zones are located throughout the building. Please dispose of all waste responsibly as directed on the bins.

Please note that the University operates a no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted inside University buildings.

Internet access

Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the Richmond Building via The Cloud. To access this please select 'Wi-Fi Zone – The Cloud' from the list of Wi-Fi networks. Then open the internet browser on your device and complete the one time registration process, or alternatively login if you have already registered for this service elsewhere.

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