5.S. Poster walk: Risk behaviour in adolescents and young adults

Barriers to mental health help-seeking behaviour in adolescents in Malta

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Background

Adolescents are subject to biological and psychosocial changes that make them vulnerable to mental disorders. Left untreated these may lead to adverse long-term consequences. The aim of this study was to identify and explore barriers to seeking help for mental health problems in adolescents in Malta. The relationship between depressive symptoms and help-seeking behaviour was also studied.

Methods

A mixed methods design was used. A cross-sectional school-based survey was carried out among 14-15 year olds using two-stage cluster sampling. A self-administered questionnaire comprising the Patient Health Questionnaire-9, the General Help-seeking Questionnaire and the brief version of the Barriers to Adolescents Seeking Help scale was used. The second part of the study utilised a qualitative approach and consisted of four semi-structured interviews with general practitioners.

Results

494 adolescents participated in the survey giving a response rate of 72.8%. More than half were reluctant to seek professional help for mental health problems and 73% preferred to seek help from family members. The most frequently reported barriers to seeking professional help were the need for autonomy (65%) and embarrassment (53.7%). Fears of seeking professional help increased with depressive symptom severity scores (Spearman’s correlation coefficient=0.492, p < 0.01). Poor mental health literacy and stigma in adolescents and parents, as well as factors related to mental health service provision were barriers identified by the general practitioners.

Conclusions

In the context of mental health help-seeking behaviour, professional help is unappealing to adolescents especially to those with higher depressive symptom scores. Initiatives to strengthen prevention and early intervention through multi-sectoral collaboration involving the family, schools and the health sector are necessary. Tailoring health care services to better address adolescents’ needs is a priority for public health policy.

Key messages:

- This study provides insight into the mental health help-seeking behaviour of 14 to 15 year old adolescents in Malta
- The findings have implications for interventions to facilitate mental health help-seeking amongst adolescents living in Malta

ActivE youth - active mobility of adolescents in public spaces in Vienna

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Introduction

The project investigates possibilities and opportunities of mobile devices to assess active mobility and the spatial context where the
young are physically active. To analyze the complex mobility and activity patterns of the young an interdisciplinary approach connects the perspectives of landscape and traffic planning, social science and sport sciences. For scientists as well as practitioners (urban planning, health promotion), the aim of ActivE Youth is to develop an applicable set of methods to analyze human-powered mobility and to stimulate active mobility of the young through geo-based gaming on mobile devices.

**Methods**

Before and after an intervention where different geo-based methods were experienced, mobility patterns of 35 pupils, 15 to 17 years old, out of two public schools in central and suburban Vienna were recorded by accelerometer (Actigraph GT3X+) and the smartphone-app Moves. Additional data was acquired by an analogue activity diary, an online questionnaire and feedback-workshops. The data were analyzed by a multilayered triangulation.

**Results and discussion**

The findings show, that the youngsters of both environments were more physically active and more likely to meet the WHO-recommendation for physical activity on weekdays than at the weekend. On weekdays only few youngster were cycling, most of the pupils choose to walk as active mobility. The movement patterns of active pupils show more complex active mobility patterns within the city and use more different types of open spaces (streets, squares, parks) whereas inactive pupils mostly use streets for their active mobility and are only actively mobile if necessary e.g. on their way to school.

Whereas normally higher socioeconomic status leads to higher levels of PA, especially girls in suburban Vienna benefit from a more mobility friendly environment. The results indicate that geo-based games and mobile devices are seen as possibilities and support the activation of adolescents for more PA.

**Key messages:**

- Geo-based methods activate adolescents for more PA
- Different profiles of movement patterns of the young

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**Mediators of lifetime prevalence of alcohol use and its accessibility among early adolescents**

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**Background**

Unplugged is a universal substance use prevention program for early adolescents. Its effectiveness has been confirmed in several European countries. The theoretical background of the program is based on social and cognitive skills enhancement. The aim of this contribution is to explore the effectiveness of program Unplugged participation with regard to program related variables - perceived cognitive improvement and assertiveness in relation to negative expectancies of alcohol use, 12 months after the program implementation (T2), controlling for gender and perceived negative consequences of alcohol use (T1).

**Methods**

Representative sample of 1298 elementary school pupils (Mage=11.52; SD = 0.61; 54.3% girls) indicated their lifetime prevalence of alcohol use (dichotomized: 0-not used, 1-used) as an outcome variable, accessibility of alcohol as independent variable, and expectations of the effect of alcohol use (positive, negative) and emotional regulation as mediators. Regression analyses were used and mediation effect was tested via Sobel test.

**Results**

The accessibility of alcohol was directly associated with lifetime prevalence of alcohol use for both genders (boys 95% CI = 1.23-1.47; girls 95% CI = 1.21-1.42). Mediation analyses showed that lifetime prevalence of alcohol use and accessibility of alcohol use were mediated by emotional regulation for boys (z = 2.09; p<0.001) and by positive expectations for girls (z = 2.31, p<0.001).

**Conclusions**

This study supports the importance of direct association between alcohol accessibility and lifetime prevalence of alcohol and shows on the importance of indirect effect of boys' emotional regulation and indirect effect of girls' positive expectations in this relationship.

**Key message:**

- We stress the general importance of the role of public health policy concerning the issue of alcohol accessibility for juveniles, which is directly related to the use of alcohol
Background
Understanding the role of the family in shaping adolescent substance use behaviours has been given recently the increased attention in context of high level of alcohol consumption in the country. The study was aiming to investigate association between alcohol use and a range of familial factors in Lithuanian adolescents.

Methods
The questionnaire survey was carried out among adolescents (N = 3696) aged 13- and 15-years in Lithuania in spring 2014 in the framework of the cross-national Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study. A standard HBSC questionnaire was applied and used anonymously to obtain information about drinking of alcoholic beverages and family life (family structure, communication in the family, parental monitoring, parenting style, etc.). Logistic regression analysis was used to assess association between variables.

Results
Respondents from non-intact families were more likely to be weekly drinkers (OR = 2.13, 95% CI = 1.78-2.54) and more likely to be exposed to drunkenness (OR = 1.51, 95% CI = 1.29-1.77) compared with intact families. Among adolescents living in an intact family the following familial factors were significantly related with increased risk for regular use of alcohol or frequent drunkenness: father’s and mother’s low monitoring (OR = 1.73, 95% CI = 1.25-2.39; OR = 2.34, 95% CI = 1.70-3.21), father’s authoritarian-repressive (OR = 2.48, 95% CI = 1.43-4.29 and mother’s permissive-neglectful (OR = 5.11, 95% CI = 2.94-8.87) parenting style. Therefore, rare family time together and rare electronic media communication with parents showed an opposite effect than the research hypothesis.

Conclusions
Higher prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents of Lithuania is associated with a non-intact family structure as well as weaker parental support. Positive family life practices (parental monitoring and parental support) are critical components to be incorporated in the alcohol use prevention programs for adolescents in Lithuania.

Key messages:
- Understanding the role of the family in shaping adolescent substance use behaviours has been given recently the increased attention
- Positive family life practices (parental monitoring and parental support) are critical components to be incorporated in the alcohol use prevention programs

The relative associations of neighborhood and school social capital with adolescent alcohol use
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Background
Alcohol drinking among Japanese adolescents is still a public health concern, although it has been declining recently. Adolescent drinking might be influenced by not only individual-level factors, but also contextual-level factors. Previous studies found that social capital at neighborhood might be associated with population health. Yet, whether neighborhood social capital and school social capital can be simultaneously associated with health-risk behaviors, such as alcohol use, remains uncertain. This study examined the relative associations of neighborhood-level and school-level social capital with alcohol use among Japanese adolescents.

Methods
Self-administered anonymous questionnaires were distributed to 3,386 students (aged 15-18 years) at high schools across Okinawa, Japan in 2012. Alcohol use was measured by current drinking in the past month. Social capital was measured by cognitive components of school and neighborhood social capital. Contextual-level social capital was measured by aggregated school-level and neighborhood-level individual responses, respectively. We estimated cross-classified multi-level models to the data with students cross-nested in 30 schools and 37 neighborhoods.

Results
About 14% of the variation in drinking was attributable to differences between schools and 1% was due to differences between neighborhoods. In the cross-classified model examined school-level and neighborhood-level variances simultaneously, the variance between neighborhoods was estimated to be zero. School social capital was negatively associated with drinking, whereas neighborhood social capital was not associated with drinking.

Conclusions
The school-level associations with adolescent drinking may have greater impact than the neighborhood-level associations with that.

Key message:
- The understanding of the relative associations of different social contexts is useful to provide adolescent drinking prevention efforts

Unravelling the black box of tobacco policies at schools and their impact on adolescents’ smoking
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Background
Secondary schools increasingly attempt to avert and stop adolescents from smoking by implementing and enforcing school tobacco policies (STPs). Notwithstanding the popularity of STPs, the scientific evidence about their true impact remains largely inconclusive. This systematic realist review aimed to understand why these inconsistencies in evidence occur by identifying and refining the mechanisms that explain how and why (i.e. black box) STPs decrease or do not decrease adolescents smoking behaviour.

Methods
We performed a systematic search through academic literature between January 1991 and 2016. We identified 41 articles, reporting on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, for inclusion.

Results
Evidence showed that STPs may decrease youth smoking as these make them (i) want to avoid the sanctions associated with smoking, (ii) feel fewer social pressure to smoke, (iii) develop anti-smoking personal beliefs, and (iv) experience more control over the decision not to smoke. The impact of each mechanism, however, depends largely on the extent to which connected counter-mechanisms occur. For example, adolescents do not want to avoid the sanctions when they perceive no personal threat for the sanctions. Another example is that adolescents may not develop anti-smoking beliefs when they experience contradictions between school’s non-smoking messages and actual practice.

Conclusions
The findings demonstrate that it is crucial to monitor and act on how adolescents experience and deal with STPs in order to make STPs truly effective.

Key message:
- It is crucial to monitor and act on how adolescents experience and deal with school tobacco policies in order to make STPs truly effective
Trends in smoking behavior in adolescents and young adults in the Netherlands
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Background
As most current smokers start smoking before their 18th birthday, adolescence is the primary target group for smoking prevention. However, recent declines in youth smoking prevalence rates, due in part to increasingly stronger youth access laws, might lead to an upward shift in the age of smoking initiation. This study aims to assess whether such a shift is occurring, through analysis of smoking initiation in four subsequent birth cohorts in The Netherlands.

Methods
This study used cross-sectional data from the National Health Survey 2010-2013 in The Netherlands. Using retrospective questions on smoking, we constructed the smoking history of four 5-year birth cohorts (1980-84 to 1995-99). Main outcome measures were smoking prevalence per age and age of smoking initiation. Differences between birth cohorts were analyzed using logistic regression.

Results
We found a decrease in smoking prevalence in subsequent cohorts from 1980-84 to 1995-99. No decline occurred between the 1985-89 and 1990-1994 cohorts. The majority of smokers initiated smoking between 12 and 16 years of age, with 16 years as the peak age of initiation. This age pattern did not change between cohorts. Age patterns were stable for both males and females, and in low and high educational groups.

Conclusions
Even though smoking prevalence rates declined over time, age of smoking initiation did not shift. This would suggest that young adolescents remain the most important target group for tobacco prevention measures.

Key messages:
• The results suggest that the decline in youth smoking prevalence of the most recent birth cohorts will translate into declining smoking prevalence rates at older ages.
• The fact that no shift in age of smoking initiation has taken place, confirm that smoking prevention measures should remain targeted at the youth below 18 years.

Bimblioteche: an early-literacy bottom-up program in the town of Chivasso
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Background
Low literacy skills link to social & health inequalities. Shared reading aloud practices are effective in increasing community literacy and shaping both strong parental relationship and neural networks in children. Early literacy programs have shown to be effective if inclusive of the whole community, providing tools for resilience. Inspired by Nati per Leggere, a joint network of librarians, teachers, parents and a local pediatrician started Bimblioteche, a program aimed at increasing early literacy in 0-5 children.

Objectives
Bimblioteche is a book loan integrated with training activities for both teachers and parents. Training focuses on: i) quality of relationship during shared reading aloud practice, ii) its frequency iii) its duration iv) how to choose a book and v) how to organize a training event for parents. It is structured in 3 cycles lasting a year each, starting from September 2016. The project settled in nurseries and kindergartens, is included into the schools’ curricula. Program evaluation use a mixed method approach. Quantitative evaluation aim at measuring changes in parents’ reading habits by means of a pre-post comparison through the BABAR tool. A qualitative description approach shade a light into subjective experiences. Process and liking evaluation are also conducted. Following a public tender, a private corporation funded the activities.

Results
the whole community was involved into shaping an inclusive evidence-based community empowerment-training program aimed to reduce social inequalities. All the 22 city schools except one joined the program, allowing the involvement of more than 1000 children. A total of 14 teachers from 5 schools have concluded the first wave of training, satisfaction rating scored the highest.

Conclusions
An evidence-based early literacy promotion program was set within the community. Bimblioteche is a multidisciplinary bottom-up community network program, enriched with a mixed method evaluative approach.

Key messages:
• An inclusive, reproducible, community–based process is tuned to improve parental shared reading aloud habits and quality
• Teachers as the main node, receiving and transmitting knowledge and skills

Intimate partner violence among Croatian university students
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Background
Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant public health problem. Globally, the prevalence of IPV among students has been estimated to range from 17 to 45% for physical assaults within last year and women are far more likely to experience sexual and physical violence than men are. The aim of this study was to examine the prevalence of IPV among Croatian university students and its interconnections with gender, faculty field of science and repetition of a year of study.

Methods
Within this cross-sectional study, a validated, anonymous questionnaire was self-administered to cross-faculty representative student sample of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia in April 2015. General demographic data, as well as data on academic features and data related to IPV among students were collected.

Results
The study sample included 880 students, the average age being 22 (range 19-54), 33.9% males and 66.1% females. 67.7% of the students reported that they had experienced IPV, specifically: 74.5% of male and 64.3% of female students, 78.8% of students within the biotechnical field of science, 83.7% of students within the biotechnical field of health sciences, 81.2% of students within the social field of science and 81.7% of students within the humanities field of science (χ2-test; p = 0.036); 73.5% of
students who repeated and 66.1% of students who did not repeat a year of study ($\chi^2$-test; $p = 0.057$).

**Conclusions**

IPV represents an important public health challenge among university students in Croatia. Students are at a formative period in their lives, especially in relation to the development of appropriate patterns of behavior with an intimate partner. For purposes of primary prevention of IPV, it is vital to increase our understanding of this challenging and complex issue because IPV during university period can establish patterns that persist over a lifetime.

**Key messages:**

- IPV is an important public health problem among university students in Croatia. It is crucial for efficient primary prevention of IPV to better understand this challenging and complex issue.
- Bearing in mind that IPV during university period can establish patterns that persist over a lifetime, it is crucial to educate students about IPV because they are in formative period of their lives.