

Alcohol use Among Adolescents in Europe

Environmental Research and Preventive Actions

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Foreword

Since 2006 the European Commission launched a Communication that outlines a strategy to support member states in reducing alcohol-related harms. This strategy not only explicitly focuses on protecting young people, it also aims to develop and maintain a common evidence base at the EU level. The European Commission actively contributes to develop this evidence base, by funding research that can help attain the goals as set out by Europe's Alcohol Strategy. The report *Alcohol use Among Adolescents in Europe: Environmental Research and Preventive Actions* is one outcome of these investments and the result of three years of dedicated collaborative work of a cross-national and interdisciplinary research team.

Alcohol policy is a challenging topic for the European Union, and the health message on alcohol has never been greater than today. This health voice is of particular importance given also the rise in problematic alcohol consumption among young people (i.e. underage drinking and heavy episodic drinking) over the past years. Young people are particularly at risk of short term effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence. While several studies exist that monitor alcohol and substance use from a European perspective (e.g. ESPAD, HBSC), the pathways that lead to problematic and underage drinking are not always well understood. This research complements these studies by focusing on the risk and protective factors of alcohol use. Through objective analysis the researchers have tried to provide a comprehensive overview of risk factors in different domains and on different levels, while at the same time investigating the variation in these relationships between the different European countries.

I believe that this report provides valuable insights and is an excellent resource for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers who work on the topic of prevention of adolescent alcohol use.

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