

ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE RISKS OF TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

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ABSTRACT

My study presents the theme of perceptions of adolescents regarding tobacco and alcohol use in Romania. I analyze the phenomenon nationally and internationally. The hypothesis of this study are related to the knowledge of the risks associated with consumption, combating stereotypes and myths associated with consumption and the degree of information on diseases that can occur as a result of consumption. The research is quantitative. The instrument used is the questionnaire. The results show that young people are generally informed about the risks of tobacco and alcohol consumption, choosing to consume due to peer pressure. The existence of preconceived ideas in society is notable, such as the association of parties and important events with alcohol consumption, with teenagers being the victims of these preconceived ideas. In addition, the responses reveal violations of legal provisions prohibiting the sale of products containing tobacco and alcohol to minors, and tobacco use is 'overlooked' in schools. Perceptions on tobacco and alcohol consumption are generally correct. However, the existence of distorted perceptions is noted: some adolescents believe that they will gain weight if they stop smoking, consider that smoking and drinking alcohol are helpful in managing stressful situations, most do not recognize the influence of the media on alcohol consumption, most say that there are no adverse effects after drinking alcohol, that they can make their own decisions after drinking alcohol, that they can quit drinking alcohol at any time and that they are able to resist friends' request to drink alcohol.

Keywords: alcohol consumption, tobacco consumption, teenagers, preconceived ideas

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco and alcohol consumption has become a major problem in contemporary society, especially among adolescents.

The particularly serious consequences of tobacco and alcohol consumption, which are, in fact, recreational drugs, greatly affect Romanian society, generating high social costs and much suffering at both the individual and collective levels. I chose this theme to highlight adolescents' perceptions of the risks they expose themselves to by consuming tobacco and alcohol. I intended to explore the determining influences for tobacco and alcohol consumption, their opinions towards tobacco and alcohol, towards the myths associated with this consumption. I also tried to identify the vulnerabilities of society that expose adolescents to this risky behavior.

During the adolescence period, there are problems related to emotional separation from parents. A series of adjustments are necessary [3]. During this period, individuals are meant to establish their own identity and integrate into society. Teenagers need to have their merits recognized, they need confirmation from their parents or peers [1]. Building