



Availability of addictive substances among 9th grade students of Tartu

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: As the autonomy of decisions increase during adolescence period, the 15-years-olds have willingness to experiment and take high-risk decisions influencing their health. The aim was to establish availability and consumption habits of addictive substances (alcohol, tobacco products, and illegal narcotics) among the 9th grade students of Tartu.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Anonymous questionnaire was conducted among 394 pupils from eight schools (80.1% of total sample size). Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation to find links between alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use was applied. Comparisons between groups for numerical values were made with t-test or Mann-Whitney test, non-numerical data were analyzed using χ^2 test; p value of <0.05 was considered as significant.

Findings: Alcohol, tobacco and narcotics had been tried respectively by 76.4%, 39.9% and 15.7% of participants. Other soft alcohol drinks were consumed more than wine ($p<0.001$) and strong alcohol ($p = 0.046$), and strong alcohol was consumed more than beer ($p=0.002$). As median amount of alcohol and quartiles was zero, we can conclude that less than one quarter of students consume alcohol. Alcohol is mostly obtained from parents and friends; tobacco products from friends and acquaintances and illegal drugs from friends.

The reasons for alcohol and narcotics consuming are curiosity and having fun; tobacco was used at parties mostly. The use of tobacco correlates with consumption of alcohol ($r=0.43$; $p<0.001$) as well as with use of narcotic substances ($r=0.4$; $p<0.001$). The use of narcotics also correlates with alcohol consumption ($r=0.24$; $p<0.001$). The availability of alcohol is considered easy by 63.9% of pupils, while 51.5% and 27.7% for tobacco and narcotic drugs. Respectively, 14.9%, 26.9% and 26.6% of pupils noted that if availability of these substances would become more difficult, consumption would decrease.

Conclusion & Significance: Though several pupils have experienced the usage of illegal addictive substances the consumption is not frequent.

BIOGRAPHY

Ülle Parm is currently the Associate Prof at Tartu Health Care College; Research Fellow in Medical Microbiology at University of Tartu Institute of Biomedicine and Translational Medicine and Board member of the Estonian Society of Infection Control. She has instructed more than 100 students' final thesis and has been the head of several research projects. The field of research has been different: development of neonatal microbiota; vaccination status and problems in Estonia; influence of vegetarian diet and coffee consumption to body composition, bone mineral density and metabolic syndrome; Lyme borreliosis in Estonia; occupation health by example of police workers and firefighters, and so.

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[2nd World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit](#) | Paris, France | February 19-20, 2020

Citation: Ülle Parm, Availability of addictive substances among 9th grade students of Tartu, *Primary Healthcare* 2020, Paris. February 19-20, 2020, PP. 25