

Adolescent alcohol intoxication in the Netherlands. Prevalence, characteristics, treatment and the role of alcohol availability and compliance with legal age limits

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to evaluate trends in prevalence of alcohol-related hospital admittances in adolescents in the Netherlands from 2007 up to 2014. Thereby this study identified trends in gender, age, blood alcohol concentration, duration of reduced consciousness and parental permission in alcohol intoxicated adolescents. In the eight years, 4782 adolescents were reported. In total, 4351 questionnaires (91%) were returned. 88% of the adolescents were admitted because of alcohol intoxication (with reduced consciousness). Since 2007, the average age increased from 14.9 to 15.4 years, the blood alcohol concentration increased from 1.83 to 1.96 g/l while duration of reduced consciousness remained constant around 3 hours. In 2014, the minimum legal drinking age increased from 16 to 18 years;

nevertheless in 2014 a 10% increase in prevalence was seen. However, in 2014 a decreasing number of adolescents had parental permission to drink alcohol. This study confirms that the problem of alcohol-related harm in adolescents is an issue of continuing importance and it confirms ongoing need for focused pediatric care. Furthermore the association between simultaneous drug use and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in heavy adolescent alcohol drinking events was investigated. This study analyzed 3376 adolescents hospitalized because of acute alcohol intoxication between 2007 and 2014 in the Netherlands. In total, 11.1% of them had simultaneously used drugs and alcohol; of which 6.7% used cannabis and 3.3% used stimulants (ecstasy, amphetamine, cocaine and GHB). This study found BAC was lower in both groups of drug users compared with non-drug users. Both drug groups continued to be associated with lower BAC after correction for age, gender and educational level. Future research should examine the causality of the relationship between drug use and BAC.

Biography:

Joris J Van Hoof holds a PhD in Behavioural Sciences with a dissertation entitled "Sweet sixteen and never been drunk? Adolescent alcohol use, predictors and consequences" (2010). His research interests include compliance with various legislations (including legal age limits for alcohol sales). He is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Science, he was rewarded with a Talent Scheme Veni Award from the Dutch Science Foundation. He advises several national Ministries on alcohol policy and research methodology (mystery shopping) and he frequently appears in various media.