



Short Communication

Types of polydrug use among Spanish adolescents

Sílvia Font-Mayolas^{a,*}, Maria Eugènia Gras^a, Natàlia Cebrián^a, Anna Salamó^a,
Montserrat Planes^a, Mark J.M. Sullman^b

^a University of Girona, Catalonia, Spain

^b Cranfield University, United Kingdom

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ 13.9% of the Spanish adolescents surveyed reported polydrug use.
- ▶ More females than males were polydrug users
- ▶ 14–15 years old was the most critical age range for beginning polydrug use.
- ▶ Polydrug users were categorised into: type A 27.9%, type B 67.8% and type C 3.4%.
- ▶ Interventions need to be early and to take a multisubstance perspective.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Substance use
Polydrug use
Adolescents
Spain

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examined the types of polydrug use among Spanish adolescents.

Method: 1501 high school students (50.6% female) aged 12 to 17 years old (mean age = 14.03, SD = 1.28), from public schools in the city of Girona (Catalonia, Spain), completed the survey.

Results: In the previous six months 20.9% of the Spanish adolescents used alcohol, 18.8% tobacco, 10.5% cannabis and 0.7% cocaine. Specifically, 28.6% of the sample (n = 429; 29% males and 28.2% females) used at least one drug and 13.9% reported polydrug use (n = 208; 12.6% males and 15.1% females). The present research also found that the most critical ages for starting polydrug use were 14 and 15 years old. More than one quarter (27.9%) of the adolescent polydrug users were type A (tobacco and alcohol), 67.8% were type B (cannabis together with tobacco and/or alcohol) and 3.4% were type C (cannabis together with tobacco and/or alcohol, and cocaine).

Conclusions: These results suggest that Spanish adolescents, particularly males, commence polydrug use at an earlier age than other European adolescents. Early preventative strategies and a multisubstance perspective are greatly needed in Spain to avoid the initiation of polydrug use or to prevent progress onto heavier drugs.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

In Europe today polydrug use (the use of at least two different psychoactive substances) is the norm and is responsible for most of the addiction problems. Cumulative multiple drug use is associated with greater likelihood of addiction, poorer physical health and other social and mental health problems (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2011; Trenz et al., 2012).

Polydrug use among adolescents could be considered as an indirect indicator of early initiation (EMCDDA, 2009) since early drug initiation during adolescence has been associated with higher probability of drug use later in life (Von Sydow, Lieb, Pfister, Hofler, & Wittchen,

2002). The Gateway Hypothesis suggests that early users of cigarettes or alcohol are more likely to use cannabis at a later date and to then progress onto illegal drugs, compared to those who did not smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol as adolescents (Kandel, 1980).

According to the European School survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) in 2003, last month prevalence of drug use among students (15–16 year old) was dominated by the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, with cannabis in the third place (EMCDDA, 2009). Around 30% of the students reported having consumed two or more substances in the last month and they could be classified into the following three types:

Type A: alcohol and tobacco (73%)

Type B: cannabis together with alcohol and/or tobacco (20%)

Type C: cannabis together with alcohol and/or tobacco and at least one of the following: ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamines, LSD or heroin (3.5%).

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology, University of Girona, Sant Domènec square, 9, 17077 Girona, Catalonia, Spain. Tel.: +34 972 41 83 53; fax: +34 972 41 83 01.

E-mail address: silvia.font@udg.edu (S. Font-Mayolas).

This survey also identified a number of gender differences in the patterns of polydrug use. For instance, among those reporting type A polydrug use females slightly outnumber males, while males were overrepresented among those reporting type C polydrug use. Moreover many adolescent polysubstance users reported using multiple substances at the same time (Brière, Fallu, Descheneaux, & Janosz, 2011). There are several reasons for mixing different drugs, such as: to have cumulative or complementary effects, to offset the negative effects of another drug, and to replace one drug with another due to changes in price, availability, legality or fashion (Ives & Ghelani, 2006; The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, 2009).

Although mixture modelling, combining both latent class and latent trait models, has advantages over traditional modelling focused on dimensional or categorical latent structure (Kuo, Aggen, Prescott, Kendler, & Neale, 2008; Muthen & Asparouhov, 2006), the EMCDDA polydrug classification is a first classification step that could help to understand multiple drug use.

Unfortunately Spain was not included in the ESPAD survey, so there is currently no comparable data about the types of polydrug use among Spanish adolescents. Nevertheless, a recent national survey on the use of drugs found that 96.2% of Spanish smokers (between 14 and 18 years old) had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, 64.7% cannabis and 8.2% cocaine. Of this same sample, 47.6% of the alcohol users also reported consuming tobacco, 39.9% cannabis and 4.7% cocaine. Furthermore, 79.7% of the cannabis users also reported consuming tobacco, 98.8% alcohol and 11.3% cocaine. Finally, 86.4% of cocaine users also reported consuming tobacco, 99.4% alcohol and 95.1% cannabis (Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Politics, 2009).

The primary purpose of the present study was to describe patterns in substance and polydrug use among Spanish adolescents. More specifically this research examined drug and polydrug use by age and gender in the whole sample, as well as among drug users. Based on previous literature, it was hypothesised that the prevalence of drug use in Spanish adolescents would be dominated by tobacco and alcohol, and that polydrug use would be identified in around 30% of the sample. A secondary purpose of the study was to use the EMCDDA (2009) polydrug classification types in Spanish adolescents for the first time in order to facilitate a comparison with the ESPAD survey countries. Again, based upon previous research it was hypothesised that most polydrug users would be classified as type A (alcohol and tobacco), with a very small number classified as type C (cannabis together with alcohol and/or tobacco and cocaine). Examining the prevalence and types of polydrug use can guide the development of interventions to avoid polydrug initiation or maintenance among current adolescent substance users in Spain.

2. Method

2.1. Procedure

The research protocol was firstly approved by the Education Department of the Catalan government. Following approval from the Catalan government, the research was explained to the principals of all high schools in Girona and permission to conduct the research was sought. All of the principals agreed to take part. The research was then described to the teachers involved who in turn explained the research to the parents of all children and asked permission for their child/children's participation. As well as the aims of the research and what participation would involve, the parents were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that their child/children's responses would be completely confidential and anonymous. Despite participation being completely voluntary, all parents agreed to their children taking part in the study and so all children who were in class on the day of data collection were surveyed. All participants completed all questionnaires in hardcopy, following an explanation of the

project from the research assistants. Participants were also directly assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Data collection took place in 2007 and was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology (SEJ2007-60814/PSIC).

2.2. Participants

Spain has compulsory schooling until 16 years old. This cross-sectional study surveyed 1501 high school students (50.6% female), aged 12 to 17 years old (mean age = 14.03, SD = 1.28), from all the public high schools in the city of Girona (Catalonia, Spain). All the students who were in the classroom the day of the survey agreed to participate.

2.3. Measures

A questionnaire was used to measure demographic information (e.g., age, gender), substance use and polydrug use. More specifically, all participants were asked whether they had used tobacco, alcohol, cannabis or cocaine in the previous six months. Subjects with a positive response to the above questions were classified as the substance use group. Those who had used two or more substances were assigned to the polydrug users group (EMCDDA, 2009).

2.4. Statistical analysis

The proportion of adolescent tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and cocaine users was calculated by age. The proportion of adolescents who had used two or more substances was calculated also by age, in the whole sample and also solely among drug users. The proportion of adolescents for each polydrug classification type (A, B and C) was also calculated. All data analyses were conducted using SPSS 19.

3. Results

3.1. Prevalence of substance use and polydrug use

Over a fifth (20.9%) of the Spanish adolescents reported having used alcohol in the previous six months, 18.8% tobacco, 10.5% cannabis and 0.7% cocaine. Table 1 shows percentage of drug users by gender, age and type of drug. Use of tobacco (Boys: $X^2_{(5)} = 43.1$; $p < .05$; Girls: $X^2_{(5)} = 61.4$; $p < .05$), alcohol (Boys: $X^2_{(5)} = 98.8$; $p < .05$; Girls: $X^2_{(5)} = 70.7$; $p < .05$), and cannabis (Boys: $X^2_{(5)} = 45.9$; $p < .05$; Girls: $X^2_{(5)} = 31.7$; $p < .05$) tends to increase with age in both boys and girls. The small percentage of cocaine users does not let us compute chi-square test to analyse the relationship between use of this drug and age. Only in tobacco use that significant differences between boys and girls were found, being girls who used this drug more

Table 1
Percentage of drug users by age, gender, and type of drug.

Age	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
<i>Tobacco</i>							
Boys	2.2	5.8	17.6	23.7	27.6	23.1	16.3
Girls	3.9	8.0	16.9	32.1	33.6	40.0	21.1
<i>Alcohol</i>							
Boys	3.3	4.5	17.7	36.0	41.8	46.2	21.7
Girls	6.5	5.3	16.1	26.4	39.6	45.0	20.1
<i>Cannabis</i>							
Boys	1.1	1.3	10.2	18.4	20.6	23.1	11.0
Girls	2.6	2.7	7.8	13.3	18.7	25.1	9.8
<i>Cocaine</i>							
Boys	0	0	1.6	1.5	0	0	.8
Girls	0	2.0	0	.5	0	0	.5

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10443357>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10443357>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)