

Me & the Others – Elicitation research for the construction of a prevention program of alcohol-related problems

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National Situation

The General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviors and Dependencies- SICAD is the Portuguese structure in charge of planning and monitoring programs of reduction of use of psychoactive substances, prevention of addictive behaviors and reducing dependencies.

In 2013 a National Plan to Reduce the Addictions and the Addict Behavior was adopted. The main goals of this National Plan follow the EU Alcohol Strategy. The strategy adopted is based on a integrated model of intervention witch includes a referral network, an Operation Plan for Integrated Responses (PORI) and an National Alcohol and Health Forum , which overall objective is to provide a common platform for different sectors of the society, that pledge to step up actions to reduce alcohol related harm notably in their areas of intervention. In 2015, 81 projects where implemented that cover all the national territory addressing different targets, such as children and youth, road accidents, workplace, investigation, treatment and rehabilitation.

The 2012 National survey on alcohol and drugs declared consumption, reveal that the prevalence as drop for all substances. Never the less, the indicators for the binge drinking and for drunkenness raised.

	Lifespand	Last Year	Last Month
2001	75.6%	65.9%	59.1%
2007	79.1.1%	70.6%	59.6%
2012	74%	61.7%	50.8%

Balsa, C. (2013) Fac. de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Prevalence of drunkenness in young people from15 to18 years old

	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years
2007	16,8 %	26 %	30,6 %	39,1 %
2011	19,3 %	31,2 %	37,7 %	44,1%

Prevalence of binge drinking in young people from15 to18 years old

	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years
2007	21,3 %	30,7 %	39,2 %	48,6 %
2011	25,3 %	38,6 %	47,2 %	53,9 %

in: (2011) ECATD/ESPAD 2003/2007/2011, Feijão, F; Lavado, E.; Calado, V.

Instruments

An instrument was created to characterize the sample in areas such as (1) **Risk perception** - by comparison with other health problems, substance use, sexually transmitted infections and road accidents; (2) **Previous experience** in prevention projects; (3) **Knowledge** on the subject (4) Assignment **Motivations** for alcohol consumption (5) **Attitudes** and (6) **Behavior** on alcohol consumption (7) Perceived **Self-efficacy** in relation to alcohol problems and (8) ordination of the importance of different **Components** of prevention programs

Results

There are significant differences between the groups:

- in what concerns to the importance attributed to different types of health risk ($\chi^2(16) 40,951$; $p = .001$), greater importance is given by Parents to the risks linked to alcohol and drugs ($M=4,66$) and ($M = 4.91$) and less importance given to health problems in general ($M = 2.64$). To the contrary, Adolescents value more the risks of health problems in general then the others ($M=3,09$) and less to alcohol-related risks ($M = 3.90$); Pre-Adolescents value less drug-related risk ($M = 4.27$).
- in what concerns to the knowledge about ARP revealing a significant lower level of knowledge in Pre Adolescents and Adolescents compared with the Parents, Professionals and University Students ($\chi^2(24) 60,496$; $p = .001$)
- there is a markedly more negative attitude towards being on the effect of alcohol by the Parents as opposed to a less negative attitude on the part of University and Adolescents, with the Professionals and Pre- Adolescents to come closer to the parents position. $F(4,247)=6,115$, $p=.00$; $\eta^2=.092$
- in what concerns to the motivations for the use of alcohol, Parents, Preadolescents and Adolescents give greater importance to not to think about the problems. The Professionals and the University Students consider how to overcome inhibitions most important motivation. Preadolescents value more than other groups seeking power not appreciating as much as other demand in alcohol a facilitator for sexual contacts.
- about the appreciation of the different components of prevention programs, all Groups give more value to cognitive components related with information, debates and life stories. Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents value secondly socio normative components related with the law enforcement and social development Professionals value secondly self development components as well as components related with the creating of contexts that promote personal development.
- finally about the contents suggested by each group the University Students propose more contents related with risk behaviors opposed to Pre Adolescents and Adolescents who prefer to focus on the consequences in general; Pre Adolescents and Adolescents tend to value more consequences related to physical and mental health as opposed to the University Students who value these less $\chi^2(12)=37.84$; $p=0.000$ and Professionals tend to value more the social consequences of alcohol abuse. $\chi^2(12)=37.84$; $p=0.000$

Conclusions

The preventive process is the results of a game of influences in a specific context where different actors intersect. One, the newest are influenced by wanting to become, aware of the behaviors and beliefs of others. The autonomy achieved by the university students exerts an ambivalent role, between the freedom to take a set of behaviors and the knowledge to know the implications thereof. Finally for parents and professionals, the protective role assume different levels with the first to be more radical in the messages and attitudes and the seconds to be more understanding and comprehensive. Prevention resulting from this set of influences should be aware that each group has a different starting point who needs to be homogenized and respected so that communication can become possible. Different groups value different ways of preventing alcohol problems, even if the information seems to be common to all of them. It is important that professionals take into account the contents that the Adolescents considered most important to avoid that the implementation of the program covers mainly the contents chosen by adults.

This study contributes to the transformation of preventive intervention in an ecological approach, closer to reality it is designed to, integrating the perceptions of the different actors, framing it in function of the stages of development, the gender of recipients and the contexts in which it occurs .

Further steps

The contents collected from the different groups were qualitatively and worked together in an interactive narrative which has been validated at the initial groups. In late 2014 it began the experimental application of this ongoing narrative being the processing of data collected in the evaluation of results.

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Essential Elements of the Me & the Others Program

Me & the Other's Program was created in 2006 and aims to promote a better knowledge and utilization of resources linked to alcohol and drugs misuses (helplines, sites, treatment network, etc.). It can be consider as an universal preventive approach but it has also been used as a resource in selective approaches.

The project is based on interactive narratives each one focusing different contexts of the adolescent's reality (school, family, recreation settings, etc.), different themes (sexuality, friendship, the law, the future, the handicaps, etc.) side by side with the use of alcohol and drugs, in an integrated view. The program is presented in a electronic support.

It is conducted by a Game Master (mainly teachers, educational psychologists and social workers) trained to explore the contents of each story in a 54 hours training program. They have as support a manual that includes the rules and best practices, suggestions to explore the themes with the players, bibliography and websites for further information. The Game Masters can count also with technical support of the health prevention teams distributed by the 28 districts of Portugal.

The program is aimed for groups with no more them 30 players, from 10 to 18 years old and runs along a minimum of 7 sessions of 90' each. The narrative is projected so that everyone can read it at the same time, and the players must take decisions assuming the role of the main character. Each decision is explored by the Game Master based on the believes, knowledge and attitudes that support them. There are 9 characters (one for each narrative) that correspond to different youth cultures.

In the absence of a specific prevention program for alcohol problems, started in 2010 a process of building a narrative devoted to the subject matter involved an elicitation process involving different actors in the preventive intervention: pre adolescents, adolescents, college students, parents and professionals who work with this age group

Method - Descriptive Data

With the objective of Building a Prevention Program for Alcohol Related Problems (ARP) a study was design for gathering different perspectives of what a program should be.

Through this process, 25 sessions of Focus Groups using the Applied Method for Planning and Evaluation (Schiefer, 2007) were held in 5 regions of Portugal, covering 250 subjects, distributed evenly by 5 groups: pre adolescents, adolescents, college students, parents and professionals who work with this age group.

		Pré Adol N = 49	Adol N = 51	College students N = 50	Parents N = 49	Professionals N = 51
Gender	M	39%	39%	24%	31%	37%
	F	61%	61%	76%	69%	63%
Age Average (years)		12	17	21	45	34
Educational level	Basic Incomplet	100%			16%	
	Basic		100%		12%	
	Secondary			64%	13%	12%
	Graduation or further			36%	59%	88%

