

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE ADOLESCENT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

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ABSTRACT:

Alcohol is currently the most widely consumed psychoactive substance in the world and Portugal is the second country where such consumption is greater, registering a large increase in consumption by young people. Currently continue still, beliefs, myths and prejudices that because they are well rooted culturally serve as good reasons for drinking. This study sought therefore to identify the myths associated by adolescents to alcohol consumption. A questionnaire was developed for this purpose (74 items, $\alpha = 0.947$) and applied to a sample of 1176 adolescents schooled between 14 and 18 years old, with a return rate of 42.6% (margin of error of 5% for a confidence level of 95%) in the district of Beja, Portugal, in 2012. The collected data were statistically analyzed using measures of association, factor analysis and linear regression. The results show that many myths are unknown among adolescents, verifying the presence of many questions, among which stands out: alcohol "warm", "thirst quenching", "gives strength", "facilitates digestion" "whet the appetite", "is a medicine", "is aphrodisiac", "facilitates social relations", among others. Age and sex are variables significantly affected the myths and objectives of alcohol consumption. These results clearly point to the need to be disassembled beliefs and wrong conceptions about the effects of alcohol consumption, particularly in the school environment, reducing the risk of the consequences and promoting adolescent health, preventing any future dependence on this psychoactive substance.

Keywords: alcohol consumption, myths, prevention, adolescence