

The Use of Alcohol among Secondary School Students on Graduation Tours

Uporaba alkohola med udeleženci maturantskih izletov

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Abstract

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The article presents the results of a research paper on the use of alcohol and other drugs on graduation tours. The main purpose of the research paper was to determine the prevalence and the rules of the use of alcohol and other drugs among the participants of graduation tours. We were interested in what the peculiarities of the use of alcohol during a graduation tour were and to what kind of risks the young are exposed on tours due to the use of alcohol. The results are compared in a few items to other local surveys on the use of alcohol and other drugs among secondary school students. The presented results of the research paper indicate the possibilities and limitations of preventive work in the area of reducing the damages due to alcohol among adolescents. The article also briefly presents an evaluation of the Choose Yourself preventive project.

Key words: alcohol, damage reduction, adolescents, graduation tours, prevention.

Povzetek

V članku so predstavljeni rezultati raziskovalne naloge o uporabi alkohola in ostalih drog na maturantskih izletih. Glavni namen raziskovalne naloge je bil ugotoviti prevalenco in zakonitosti uporabe alkohola in drugih drog med udeleženci maturantskih izletov. Zanimalo nas je, kakšne so posebnosti uporabe alkohola med maturantskim izletom in kakšnim tveganjem so mladi na izletih zaradi uporabe alkohola izpostavljeni. Rezultati so v nekaj točkah primerjani z drugimi domačimi raziskavami o uporabi alkohola in drugih drog med srednješolci. Iz predstavljenih rezultatov raziskovalne naloge so nakazane možnosti in omejitve pri preventivnem delu na področju zmanjševanja škode zaradi alkohola med mladostniki. V članku je na kratko predstavljena tudi evalvacija preventivnega projekta Izberi sam.

Ključne besede: alkohol, zmanjševanje škode, mladostniki, maturantski izleti, preventiva.

Introduction

A few years ago a group of students in their second year of studying social pedagogy came to me with the idea of a preventive project in the area of alcohol. They said that they had noticed an increase in the use of alcohol among the youth and that it is a genuine problem and that together they would like to do something and make a difference. I was enthusiastic about the idea and asked them how they planned on doing this. They said that a great problem of the young is drinking during the weekend and that instead of drunkenness on Friday night they would like to offer the young a chance for a quality spending of free time. They suggested playing basketball and bowling on Friday nights as an alternative to drinking. As is the case with the start of any good project we first asked a target group about this. We formed focus groups with young secondary school students and inquired about a name for the project and whether they would be willing to participate

in such activities. They replied that they would like to have a good time without us and that we should leave them alone. The replies were certainly not encouraging and did not point to a joint playing of basketball and bowling. In the focus groups it turned out that only the abstinents would join us, who, according to their statements, have nowhere to party, because they do not drink alcohol. What has been said would surely present an opportunity for another project focused on providing entertainment for abstinents, however, after a thorough deliberation we have decided to build on the experiences from harm reduction and thus direct ourselves towards a reduction of the series of harmful consequences that can accompany the use of alcohol.

We planned an informative part of the campaign, which was directed towards the main problems that the young (according to the results of past surveys) could be exposed to due to the use of alcohol. The leaflets presented information on the risks connected with driving under the influence of alcohol, sexual relations under the influence of alcohol, mixing drugs with alcohol and general information connected with the use of alcohol. Together in three years on the Choose Yourself project we have distributed 30,000 leaflets on graduation tours and have included more than 1300 students in workshops at secondary schools.

Since until now no survey has been carried out in Slovenia that would measure the use and characteristics of the use of alcohol on graduation tours, we at the DrogArt Association have in 2007 planned a survey within the Choose Yourself project with which we wished to gain insight into the use of alcohol and illegal drugs among Slovenian secondary school students before and on graduation tours.

A review of the past surveys has shown that in Slovenia data on the prevalence of the use of alcohol and illegal drugs among secondary school students is available since 1992. The largest portion of the survey (Stergar, 1995; Stergar, 1999; Stergar, 2001; Hibell et al., 2004; Jerman, 2007) was carried out on a population of adolescents in the first years of secondary school; the survey was performed according to ESPAD¹ methodology on a national level from 1995 to

¹ ESPAD – *European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Drugs*. The survey was supported by the Pompidou Group, the Council of Europe and the Swedish Ministry of Family Affairs; the questionnaire was developed by the Pompidou Group (PG).

2007 (1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007²). In the area of the Municipality of Ljubljana the survey was carried out with ESPAD methodology or with ESPAD-comparable methodology on secondary school students in the first, third and final year of schooling. In 1995, 1999 and 2003 (Ibid.) the survey was carried out on a sample from the first years of the secondary schools in Ljubljana, and in 2002 on a sample from the final years (third and fourth year).

There were only two local surveys that had measured the prevalence of the use of alcohol and other drugs on older secondary school students (first and fourth year). The first, from 1992, was the secondary school research paper by Bulič and Vesel (1992; in Dekleva, 1998), whose emphasis lay on sex. The survey comprised a sample of 1248 Ljubljana secondary school students (a stratified typical sample). The second survey (Dekleva & Sande, 2003) was carried out according to an ESPAD-comparable methodology in 2002 on students of the final (third and fourth) years of Ljubljana secondary schools. This was the first survey that had studied the changes in the use of alcohol and illegal drugs on a representative sample of secondary school students between the first and final years of schooling (the research was carried out on the same generation, but not on the same population) and the prevalence of the use of alcohol and illegal drugs at the end of secondary school.

The main findings of the survey regarding the use of alcohol among the **third** years of Ljubljana secondary schools were (Ibid.):

- So far 95.6 % of the respondents have tried alcohol. In the past year 90.3 % of the respondents have drunk alcoholic beverages, and in the last month before the survey 72.5 %. The differences between the genders were statistically important; in all the three comparisons more boys drank alcoholic beverages and also drank them more often than the girls.
- Students that had already been intoxicated before the third year of secondary school amounted to 80.0 %. In the past year 68.6 % were intoxicated and in the last month 43.5 % of the respondents. In all three comparisons the differences between the genders were statistically important; more boys were intoxicated than girls.

² At the time of the preparation of the report only the results of a part of the ESPAD 2007 survey were available for the area of the Municipality of Ljubljana.

- In the last month before the survey 49.5 % of the respondents drank five or more alcoholic beverages in a row (of which 19.3 % more boys than girls). The differences between the genders as regards the five or more alcoholic beverages consumed in a row were statistically important.
- The largest number of respondents of both genders tried alcoholic beverages at the age of 12 or less. The largest number of respondents of both genders tried spirituous beverages at the age of 15.
- The most common difficulty that had occurred to the respondents due to drinking alcohol was damage to objects or clothes (36.8 %). 20.5 % of the respondents had driven a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, while 16.3 % had already had trouble with the police. As a result of drinking alcohol 11.4 % of the respondents had unprotected sexual relations, and 8.0 % of the respondents had unwanted sexual relations.

The main findings of the comparison between the **first** and **fourth** years or between the survey ESPAD 99 (Stergar, 1999) and ESPAD 02 (Dekleva & Sande, 2003) regarding the use of alcohol were as follows:

- Students in the fourth year tried alcoholic beverages in a slightly higher percentage (4.4 %) than in the first year.
- The share of students who tried alcoholic beverages 40 or more times has increased by 30.7 %.
- The percentage of students who had already been intoxicated or who had been intoxicated for 40 or more times has increased by 18 %.
- The percentage of students who had been intoxicated in the last month before the survey has increased by 11 in the fourth year. The percentage of students who had been intoxicated in the past month for 40 or more times has remained unchanged.
- Before the conclusion of secondary school students believe in an almost twice as high percentage than that in the first year that they will drink alcoholic beverages at the age of 25.

The findings of the survey ESPAD 02 (Ibid.) show that the use of alcohol among the final years of the secondary schools in Ljubljana is relatively high. In the case of third year students

the prevalence of use amounted to 95.6 %, while already 80 % of the respondents have been intoxicated. In the case of fourth year students the prevalence of the use of alcohol amounted to 96.5 %, while as much as 83.5 % of the respondents have been intoxicated. Likewise, the numbers of intoxicated students in the past month were relatively high, with 47.3 % among the fourth years and 43.5 % of intoxicated students in the third year. Also common were difficulties occurring due to the drinking of alcohol. Their frequency has increased substantially in the fourth year; most common were damages to objects and clothes (44.0 %), quarrels or arguments (35.0 %) and the loss of money or valuables (25.4 %). Common were difficulties with parents, accidents and fights (around 20 %). Surprising was the frequency of unprotected sexual relations (15.2 %) and unwanted sexual experiences (10.9 %).

The data of the ESPAD 02 survey has been presented in more detail because this is the only survey in our area with which we can in the continuation conditionally compare our MOND 07 survey on the use of alcohol among the participants of graduation tours. The comparison is merely conditional and orientational, since only the age or school year of the participants was the same, while the place and the procedure of the sampling differed. The ESPAD 02 survey was representative with a similar number, since the sampling was random, while our sample was based on self-selection.

Purpose

In the MOND 07 research paper we were interested in what the rules of the use of alcohol (and of certain illegal drugs) were among the participants of the graduation tours and what the peculiarities of the use of alcohol on graduation tours were, and to what risks in connection with the use of alcohol the young on the graduation tours are exposed. Are graduation tours truly characterised by debauched drinking and how do they differ from the use of alcohol during the year? On the basis of the results we were hoping to perhaps indicate a few possibilities for preventive operation.

Method

For the needs of the survey we have formed a sample ourselves, comprised by young people from different Slovenian regions that had attended graduation tours in 2007 with the Mondial Travel agency. The sample was based on self-selection and is, despite a large number, nonrepresentative, since random sampling had not been used and the sampling took place only in one (albeit the largest) specialised travel agency.

The data was collected with the use of a questionnaire, which had been created especially for the purpose of this survey. In order to enable at least a partial comparability of the results with the results obtained with ESPAD methodology, an ESPAD-comparable methodology was used (used in a survey on the use of alcohol and illegal drugs among Ljubljana secondary school students in 1998 and 2002). We have added specific questions regarding the use of alcohol on graduation tours, intoxication and seeking help.

The distribution of the questionnaires took place on the buses when the students were returning from the tour. The guide handed out the questionnaires, which in cooperation with the agency also contained a coupon for a prize game (the main prize was a New Year's trip for two), in which you could only participate if you also returned a filled out questionnaire. Thus we received the questionnaires, without the coupons (on which the young had written their personal information), for further processing. The distribution of the questionnaires took place from May to July 2007 on three graduation tours. The total number of distributed questionnaires equaled 5,100 (1,500/2,000/1,600). The return of the questionnaires was not obligatory (an informal environment) and we can therefore presume that we had reached a segment of the population more motivated for replying or for winning one of the prizes. In the 2006/2007 school year, according to data from the Ministry of Education and Sport, in all Slovenian regions 22,597 students were enrolled in the third years of secondary schools, and 20,237 students in the fourth years (the total data for three-year technical schools and gymnasiums). According to the data from the Mondial Travel agency annually between 12,000

and 13,000 students opt for a graduation tour, and 5,000 of them travels with their agency per year (around 40 %). They are mostly students of four-year and five-year programmes. We have received 1,742 filled out questionnaires. Upon review we have eliminated 64 questionnaires (missing answers, incompletely filled out questionnaires). For further processing we were left with 1,678 questionnaires.

Then we began checking the reliability and validity of the acquired data. The results (as regards the reliability and validity) are comparable to the results of the ESPAD 2002 (Dekleva & Sande, 2003) and ESPAD 2007 survey (Jerman, 2007).

Thus after checking the reliability and validity, and making corrections due to inappropriate age and missing gender information, we eliminated 48 questionnaires. In such a manner we finally formed a sample of 1,630 participants of graduation tours. The final sample formed therefore included students of Slovenian secondary schools of the age from 17 to 19. The sample was very balanced as regards gender and contained 49 % of boys and 51 % of girls. A majority of the respondents (average age of 17.5) attended the tour in the third year of schooling, and the rest (19 years of age) attended the tour in the fourth year.

Results

In the following the results are briefly presented and divided into different areas. The first part presents the findings on the use of alcohol, intoxication and a risky use of alcohol. The second part gives the main findings on the prevalence of the use of illegal drugs, and the third part on the awareness of the preventive programme Choose Yourself.

Main findings regarding the use of alcohol

The use of alcohol among the participants of the graduation tours was measured with questions on the use in their life (until now), the past months and the past week (graduation tour) before the survey, and with questions on intoxication, the use of alcohol in the future, and questions on the problems associated with the use of alcohol.

The main findings of the survey **regarding the prevalence** of the use of alcohol were the following:

- At least once in their lives 98.9 % of the respondents tasted alcohol; 98.4 % of them in the past year, and 96.4 % in the past month and week. In all four comparisons the differences between the genders are statistically important ($p = 0.001$); boys use alcohol more often than girls.
- According to the frequency of drinking the students of gymnasium and four-year technical programmes statistically importantly ($p = 0.05$) differ in the use in the past year and past month. In both comparisons alcohol was used more often by students of the gymnasium programmes.
- On the graduation tour alcohol was drunk every day by 53.1 % of the girls and by 72.4 % of the boys.
- On the graduation tour, in comparison with the last month before the survey, the number of abstinent (3.6 %) remains the same, while in comparison with the last year and month the students who use alcohol have increased the frequency of drinking.
- A majority (66.5 %) of the respondents believe that they will drink alcoholic beverages at the age of 25.

The main findings of the survey **regarding intoxication** were:

- Until now 93.2 % of the respondents have been intoxicated in their lives, 88.7 % in the past year, and 82.5 % in the last month before the survey.
- On the graduation tour 83.2 % of the respondents were intoxicated. The differences between the genders were statistically important; most often (6–9-times) there were twice as many boys intoxicated than girls.
- In the last month before the graduation tour three quarters of the respondents (76.4 %) drank five or more alcoholic beverages in a row. The differences between the genders are statistically important; the boys drank five or more alcoholic beverages in a row more often.
- On the graduation tour 83.9 % of the respondents used five or more alcoholic beverages in a row on one or more occasions; 17.2 % did so ten or more times.
- The girls remained more moderate on the graduation tour, since

the number of boys who used five or more drinks had increased more; likewise the number of those who did so on more occasions.

- On the graduation tour 36.4 % of the respondents got too drunk (so that they were nauseous, vomited or cannot remember what happened). Once again the boys were less moderate, since slightly less than half of them were highly intoxicated, and slightly less than a third of the girls.
- On the graduation tour 21.0 % of the respondents were so intoxicated that others had to help them (of which 22.2 % of boys and 19.8 % of girls).

Main findings regarding difficulties due to drinking alcohol

With two group of questions we asked the respondents what sort of difficulties they had encountered due to the use of alcohol in their lives until now and on the graduation tour. The most common difficulty that had occurred to the respondents was, both in the ESPAD 02 LJ survey and in the ESPAD 07 LJ one, damage to objects and clothes (51.6 %). The percentage is substantially higher than with the first years (ESPAD 07 LJ – 14.1 %) and third years (ESPAD 02 LJ – 36.8 %). This was followed by quarrels or arguments (46.5 %) and accident or injury (30.7 %).

Similarly, the lowest percentages are found in the case of difficulties in the relationships with teachers or places. In 2002 we were surprised by the high percentage of secondary school students who had unprotected sexual relations due to the use of alcohol (11.4 %) or an unwanted sexual experience (8.0 %). The results of our survey show similar, only slightly higher results. 10.2 % of the respondents had unprotected sexual relations, and 9.4 % an unwanted sexual experience. Due to drinking alcohol 8.7 % of the girls and 11.7 % of the boys had unprotected sexual relations, while 7.3 % of the girls and 11.7 % of the boys had an unwanted sexual experience. In the case of the unwanted sexual relations there were statistically important differences between the genders ($p = 0.001$).

Main findings regarding the use of other drugs

The questionnaire also included several questions on the use of other drugs, the use of which was also being checked in other local and foreign surveys on a similar population. The results regarding the use of drugs in our sample were as follows.

- Among the other drugs, about which we inquired in our questionnaire, the respondents most often tried marihuana (46.6 %), poppers (20.9 %), sedatives (8.1 %), amphetamines (6.8 %) and ecstasy (4.9 %). Other drugs (heroin, LSD, GHB) were used by less than 1 % of the respondents.
- Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents had used marihuana 6 or more times, while it had been used 40 or more times by 10.6 % of the respondents. Marihuana was used by more boys than girls, and until now the boys also used it on more occasions. The differences between the genders are statistically important.
- Ecstasy was used by 5.3 % of the boys and 4.9 % of the girls; as regards the use in their lives until now there are no statistically important differences between the genders.

The results once again point to a stable level of the prevalence of the use of marihuana among students in the final years of Slovenian (or Ljubljana) secondary schools (third and fourth years), which was one of the findings of the ESPAD 02 LJ survey (Dekleva & Sande, 2003). A review of the period from 1992 onwards naturally involves research carried out on different populations and samples, which is therefore only partially comparable. In Slovenia, together with the present survey, in the period from 1992 to 2007 only three surveys were carried out on students of third and fourth years. The first was the secondary school research paper by Bulič and Vesel from 1992 (Ibid.), and the other was a survey according to an ESPAD-comparable methodology (ESPAD 02 LJ) from 2002, carried out on students of Ljubljana secondary schools (third and fourth years). Taking into consideration the limitations in the comparability of the results, an evaluation can be obtained that the life prevalence of the use of marihuana among Slovenian (and Ljubljana) secondary school students of the final years is not changing. The prevalence of the use of marihuana among students of the 4th years of Ljubljana secondary schools amounted in 1992 to 46.9 %, in 2002 to 46.6

% among the third years, and 50.3 % among the fourth years, and in 2007 to 46.6 % among the participants of graduation tours in a comparable age bracket.

Comparison between different surveys

At the beginning of the article the Slovenian surveys on the use of alcohol and drugs, with which we wished to compare our data, were presented. In Table 1 the results of the prevalence of the use of alcohol from our survey are compared with three local surveys that measured the use of alcohol and illegal drugs on the secondary school student population. The results are not directly comparable, since the past surveys of the ESPAD methodology or of a comparable methodology were carried out on a population of the first years of Ljubljana or Slovenian secondary schools. The results of our survey are perhaps the most comparable with a survey of an ESPAD comparable methodology from 2002 (Dekleva and Sande, 2003) since it deals with a similar age group (third and fourth years). Despite this, one survey deals with Ljubljana secondary school students and the other with Slovenian ones. When comparing it needs to be taken into consideration that all three surveys that are being compared with our sample gained results with a chance selection, while ours was based on self-selection (see chapter Method). Any comparison or commentary therefore serves only for orientation.

Taking into account the above written limitations, it is clear from the results shown in Table 1 that the prevalence of the use of alcohol in the case of students who were schooled in Ljubljana (ESPAD 07 LJ) is higher than the prevalence measured on a sample of students from the entire country (ESPAD 03 SLO). Our data (MOND 07) indicates that the prevalence of the use of alcohol among Slovenian students is higher than the prevalence in the case of Ljubljana students of a comparable age (however, it must be taken into consideration that the surveys are five years apart, which may be the cause of the increased prevalence). The use of alcohol in the last month is understandably high in our survey, since the students were interviewed after the graduation tour. It is surprising that the prevalence of the use in their lives so far and in the past year is in our survey basically the same. According to the data from the surveys so far the prevalence in the past years was always lower than the life prevalence.

Table 1: The use of alcohol – comparison between different surveys. The ESPAD 07 LJ (Jerman, 2007) survey was carried out on a sample of the first years of Ljubljana secondary schools, and the ESPAD 03 SLO (Hibell et al, 2004) survey on the first years of Slovenian secondary schools. The ESPAD 02 LJ (Dekleva and Sande, 2003) and MOND 07 SLO surveys are more comparable to each other as regards the age of the participants, taking into account that one was carried out on a sample of Ljubljana secondary school students and one on a sample of Slovenian ones.

Survey \ Use of alcohol	In one's life %	In the last year %	In the last month %
ESPAD 07 LJ (1st year)	94.0	86.9	64.5
ESPAD 02 LJ (3rd year)	95.6	90.3	72.5
ESPAD 02 LJ (4th year)	96.5	/	71.7
ESPAD 03 SLO (1st year)	91.7	83.1	59.9
MOND 07 SLO (3rd and 4th year)	98.6	98.4	96.4

Main findings regarding the awareness of the Choose Yourself preventive programme

22.5 % of the respondents were familiar with the holder of the project (DrogArt Association), while 16.6 % of the respondents were familiar with the Choose Yourself project ($n = 1,615-1,611$). On the tour 39.1 % of the respondents received preventive material ($n = 1,585$). Of those who had answered the question 48.5 % followed the instructions³ of the preventive material ($n = 738$). More than half (65.4 %) of the respondents who answered this question liked this approach or manner of giving information ($n = 837$). In the case of the last two questions it must be acknowledged that only roughly half of all of the respondents answered them. More than half of the respondents who answered these two questions was satisfied with the design (61.7 %) and content (62.7 %) ($n = 735-732$).

³ On a five-level scale of following the instructions, where the lowest value was »I did not follow them at all« and the highest »I followed them a great deal«. In all of the analyses the combined categories 4 and 5 (the highest values) were deemed as a positive answer (I liked it, I am satisfied). In the case of the answer to this question we must be aware that only half of the respondents answered it. The number in the case of the answer to the last question is probably smaller because not all of them had received the informative material and thus could not give their opinions on it.

By taking a look at a cross comparison between following the instructions and the characteristics of drinking alcohol on the graduation tour it can be concluded that those respondents who had followed the instructions of the preventive material on the graduation tour more are less often intoxicated ($p = 0.001$), drank five or more alcoholic beverages in a row less often ($p = 0.05$) and were too drunk less often (nausea, vomiting) ($p = 0.005$). Greater following of the instructions is thus statistically importantly connected with a less risky use of alcohol. The results may indicate the effectiveness of the preventive material or the persuasion of the already persuaded (meaning those who would otherwise also be more careful). In the case of following instructions it must be understood that some people are more inclined to consider key information or are already informed of something and this only additionally confirms their belief. When comparing the comparison of the intoxication in the last year before the graduation tour ($p = 0.001$) and the frequency of drinking five or more alcoholic beverages in the month before the tour ($p = 0.005$), we likewise obtain statistically important connections between following instructions and a less risky use of alcohol. Apparently those who follow instructions more are generally more careful and use alcohol in a less risky way. This finding can be linked to Parker's, Aldridge's and Measham's (1998) thesis on the constant redefining of the status of the user (also of the cautious user) and abstinent. To an individual who is more cautious information on the risks may once again justify his or her cautiousness and serve as a confirmation of his or her right decision. The fact that almost half of the respondents who had received the informative material followed the instructions on the cards means that such informing can be useful.

Conclusions

With regard to the set purposes of the survey we were interested in the use of alcohol among the participants of the graduation tours, the rules of its use and the resulting problems. For the first time after 2002 we were interested in the use of alcohol and other drugs among older students (third and fourth years) of Slovenian secondary schools and the specifics of the use of alcohol on graduation tours.

Until now the information on the proverbially excessive behaviour of Slovenian secondary school graduates was available in the media

and through the oral tradition of former secondary school graduates who remembered the tour mostly due to the enormous quantities of consumed alcohol and irresponsible behaviour.

Our survey also did not provide an exact answer to what goes on and how much alcohol is consumed on graduation tours, however, a few conclusions can be drawn and with a more detailed and improved questionnaire the situation can be checked on the basis of the results of this survey on the coming generations of secondary school graduates. It is certain that considering the manner of the sampling we have received a rather large number of returned questionnaires and that the young can with proper motivation (the accompanying prize game) in a sufficiently large number reply to a less demanding questionnaire (8 pages together with a prize game). The answers regarding reliability and validity were within the limits we have so far been used to in Slovenia in the case of the research of the prevalence of the use of drugs and alcohol in the surveys according to ESPAD methodology and the comparable methodology, which is not a bad result for a questionnaire whose distribution took place on a graduation tour without any specially qualified interviewers.

The main findings of the survey connected with the use of alcohol on graduation tours were:

- that the already high prevalence of the use of alcohol is not increased on graduation tours but remains roughly at the level of the last year and month before the survey. Thus alcohol is very popular before and after the tour. On the tour 53.1 % of the girls and 72.4 % of the boys drank alcohol every day;
- that on every day of the graduation tour almost a third of the respondents was intoxicated, and a total of 83.2 % of the respondents were intoxicated on the tour;
- that on the tour 83.9 % of the respondents drank five or more alcoholic beverages in a row;
- that the most common difficulty that had occurred to the respondents on the graduation tour was the damage to objects or clothes (17.4 %); 3.1 % of the students had unprotected sexual relations and 2.2 % of the students an unwanted sexual experience;
- slightly over a third of the participants became too intoxicated on the graduation tour (so that they were nauseous or that they vomited), while 21 % had to be helped by others due to intoxication.

In view of the main findings of our survey we can hardly be shocked by the fact that there is an increase in the use of alcohol on graduation tours, if we consider the data on the use in the past year. The use of alcohol and the frequency of intoxication is already so high during the year that on the graduation tour the situation when more of the young are intoxicated and more frequently intoxicated in a week occurs naturally. The distance from home and the supervision of the parents, a trip to another country, the accessibility of alcohol and the sense of freedom are surely factors that influence the rising number of the young drinking and becoming intoxicated more often. Similar findings would arise were we to research the characteristics of the use of alcohol and other drugs among the young or the adults during 'merry December'. These are precisely the situations which ESPAD methodology has tried to avoid until now, for research into the use of alcohol and other drugs never takes place before major holidays, during or before vacation, after concluded evaluation periods etc. Namely, these are the periods when the use of alcohol is expected to increase. Measuring the use of anything during a graduation tour is therefore a reflection of the special life situation that such a tour symbolises.

However, we cannot conclude under the pretext of a special life situation that affects the increase in the use of alcohol and intoxication. A problem on the graduation tours are, without a doubt, nearly three quarters of intoxicated and a third of highly intoxicated students. The troubles they had described as a result of this are otherwise relatively small in comparison with what they had already experienced in their lives due to alcohol, however, considering the results of the survey they are nonetheless exposed to damages to objects and clothes, quarrels, accidents and in a lesser degree unprotected or unwanted sexual relations.

The results show that the graduation tour is a time and place where it would be wise to operate systematically in a preventive way in the area of reducing the use of alcohol or reducing intoxication. This of course also means a great (perhaps even too great) preventive challenge. Operating abroad or in a place where the use of alcohol or the level of intoxication is increased, and with a relatively small chance of success.

Deriving from the results of the survey and the previous experience with the work on the Choose Yourself project a programme could be planned which would include care and informing before leaving for the tour (workshops, information, awareness of the parents),

cooperation with agencies, educating the guides and providing information in the field. Forming a working preventive programme with a presence on the graduation tour in the future still remains a great preventive challenge, since it concerns operation in an area where the risky use of alcohol is more of a rule than an exception.

Progress in the area of reducing damages or risks due to the use of alcohol can also be achieved by agencies or organisers of events. The Mondial Travel agency, with which we cooperate, is aware of the issue of alcohol and in its own way contributes to reducing the risks due to its use. An enlarged offer of the accompanying programme in the form of trips, preventing fun games with the use of alcohol, warning of the dangers on buses, educating the guides on the dangers of the use of alcohol and notifying the parents not to enable their children the use of alcohol. Surely the commercial interest of the agencies coincides with providing that there are the fewest possible difficulties and accidents due to the use of alcohol on graduation trips and it is precisely due to this that the cooperation of the agencies with non-governmental organisations is in the interest of both partners and, ultimately, of the target group. The information provided by the guides was very valuable to us in the preparation of informative material. The guides told us that often quite simple information on the cause and consequence works. If you become too drunk you will not be able to approach the girl you like, and you will not be able to do ... many things.

Even without carrying out the survey and project it is clear that in Slovenia the use of alcohol is completely normalised and accepted. Perhaps it is because we drink we also overlook the drinking of the young on the streets; perhaps it is due to national sport events with tents for incapacitated intoxicated adults that we overlook the dangers and the conducts on graduation tours. Hence the negative responses we received from the young, the parents and certain teachers, who understood the condoms enclosed with the informative material on the risks connected with sex and alcohol as a promotion of sex among the youth, are not surprising. Alcohol unfortunately remains a drug of which we know very little, although we use it a lot. Traffic accidents under the influence of alcohol are not primarily caused by young secondary school graduates. Because of the normalisation of the use it will mostly be (us) the parents who will help build the attitude of the children towards alcohol with our own example and send them off to graduation tours more competent and better equipped, since in the end the young will have to choose themselves.

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