

Poster presentation

Young people and binge drinking

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Background

Underage drinking contributes to the 3 leading causes of death (unintentional injury, homicide, and suicide) among persons aged 12 to 20 years. Most adverse health effects from underage drinking stem from acute intoxication resulting from binge drinking. Although binge drinking, typically defined as consuming 5 drinks on an occasion, is a common pattern of alcohol consumption among youth, few age-specific innovations have been implemented towards prevention, early intervention, and regulation of availability.

Binge drinking is the most common pattern of alcohol consumption among high school youth who drink alcohol and is strongly associated with a wide range of other health risk behaviors. Effective intervention strategies (eg, enforcement of the minimum legal drinking age, screening and brief intervention, and increasing alcohol taxes) should be implemented to prevent underage alcohol consumption and adverse health and social consequences resulting from this behavior. It is recommended that sensible drinking messages should emphasize the need to reduce binge drinking as well as to moderate overall weekly consumption and should be supported by policies to create environments that support sensible alcohol use. Views of youth organizations across Europe about alcohol policy measures are discussed.