

Traffic risk behaviours at nightlife: drinking, taking drugs, driving and use of public transport by young people

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Abstract

Road traffic crashes associated with nightlife alcohol and recreational drug use are a major health problem for young people. OBJECTIVES: This study explores use of different forms of transport to and from nightlife environments and the relationships between traffic risk behaviors, drunkenness, and drug consumption. METHODS: 1363 regular nightlife users from nine European cities in 2006 completed a self-administered and anonymous questionnaire. Sampling utilized a variation of respondent-driven sampling. RESULTS: Private car was the most frequent form of transport used when going out, especially by males and older individuals. Drug use was related to crashes and traffic risk behaviors, including having a lift from someone drunk or driving drunk or driving having taken drugs; drunkenness was related to risk behaviors but not to crashes (possibly because drunk people tend to use the private car less). Males showed higher levels of drunkenness and drug consumption, traffic risk behaviors, and traffic crashes. Age is not related to the

traffic risk behaviors, but older individuals had less crashes. CONCLUSIONS: There are serious health problems related to transport and recreational nightlife activities. It is necessary to improve later public transport services, complemented by actions that deter the use of private cars. The relationships of both drunkenness and cannabis/cocaine use with traffic risk behaviors should be addressed and programs implemented to change risk perceptions on the effects of illegal drugs on driving.

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