

Is it the music? Peer substance use as a mediator of the link between music preferences and adolescent substance use.

Author(s)

Mulder J, Ter Bogt TF, Raaijmakers QA et al.

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Abstract

Both music preferences and the substance use behavior of peers are important elements in explaining adolescent substance use. The extent to which music preference and peer use overlap in explaining adolescent substance use remains to be determined. A nationally representative sample of 7324 Dutch school-going adolescents (aged 12-16) provided data on music preferences, substance use behaviors and perceived number of peers using substances. Factor analyses showed that preferences for eight music genres factored into four styles: Pop (chart music, Dutch pop), Adult (classical music, jazz), Urban (rap/hiphop, soul/R&B) and Hard (punk/hardcore, techno/hardhouse); substance use was indicated by smoking, drinking, and cannabis use. Structural equation modeling revealed that the relationship between music preference and substance use was either wholly or partially mediated by perceived peer use. Music can model substance use and fans of different types of music may select friends with use patterns that reinforce their own substance use inclinations.

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