

# Nightlife young risk behaviours in Mediterranean versus other European cities: are stereotypes true?

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## **Abstract**

Background: Mediterranean lifestyle has long been hailed as protective against certain risk behaviours and diseases. Mediterranean drinking patterns of moderate alcohol consumption as part of daily life have often been assumed to protect young people from harmful alcohol consumption, in contrast to Northern European drinking patterns. Nightlife environments are strongly related to alcohol and drugs use, and other health risk behaviours but few cross-national studies have been undertaken amongst young Europeans frequenting bars and nightclubs. This study aims to understand differences in nightlife risk taking behaviours between young nightlife users from Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean cultures, including alcohol and illicit drug use, unprotected sex, violence and driving under the influence of alcohol.<br/>Methods: A total of 1363 regular nightlife users aged 16 to 35 years were surveyed in nine European cities by means of a self-reported questionnaire. Sample selection was done through respondent driven sampling techniques.<br/>Results: after controlling for demographic variables, no differences among the Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean samples were found in current alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, or cocaine use, neither in violent behaviours, but Northern people were more likely to get drunk [adjusted odds ratio (AOR)0.53], while Mediterranean were more likely to have unprotected sex (AOR 2.01) and to drive drunken (AOR 5.86).<br/>Conclusion: Our data suggest that stereotypes are partially confirmed, and that Mediterranean lifestyle is protective for some risk behaviours (drunkenness, ecstasy and amphetamines current use), but not for all of them. Further research in depth is needed in order to clarify the relations between cultural patterns, social norms and nightlife risk behaviours assumed by the young people.

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