

PREVALENCE OF RISK BEHAVIOURS AMONG EUROPEAN YOUNG. PRELIMINARY DATA FROM AN ITALIAN SAMPLE WE-STAY PROJECT

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Introduction: Truancy negatively affects almost every aspect in the life, including physical, mental health, social and economical conditions.

Objectives: To implement and evaluate outcomes of three different kinds of intervention against truancy. A mechanistic intervention to stop truancy will be used as control.

Aims: To reduce truancy among European adolescents improving mental health in European high schools.

Methods: The WE- STAY intervention carried out in 6 different European Countries. In Italy a sample of 2265 High school students (mean age 15.6±0,6; 64,4% females) was selected. The students were randomized into one of four different intervention arms. Baseline evaluation of students' lifestyle, coping styles, at-risk truancy, self-harm behaviours and mental health issues was collected using a structured questionnaire.

Results: 6% has been absent from school for 7 days or more without a valid excuse during the past year. 55,0 % of the sample has smoked cigarettes; 7,2% drank alcohol 4 or more time during the week (13,9% male and 3,4% female). About the use of drugs, 17,4% of them used drugs at least once in a lifetime. 16% of the students started a fight at least once in a lifetime.

Conclusions: Truancy is often related to mental health problems and at-risk behaviours. The truancy has been the focus of a different policy initiatives, often ended in failure. Through the implementation of WE-STAY is possible to acquire more data on truancy prevalence and its correlated psycho-social and psychiatric aspects, as well as information on school and parents attitudes toward this phenomenon.