

## Risk perception and attitudes of young people towards drug use

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### **Key words:**

substance use – risk perception – attitudes towards drug use – drug availability.

### **Abstract:**

**Background:** Several factors influence individual risk perception and attitudes of young people towards substance use. The main factors in attitudes forming include family and school environment, i.e. attitudes of the parents and peers. However, individual experience with substance use is viewed as one of the principal factors.

**Sample:** The relationship between the extent of drug use and attitudes towards drugs was analyzed on the sample of students participating at the ESPAD survey. The sample of 3 172 students was divided into four groups: non-users (41.1%), legal drugs users (regular smokers and alcohol consumers - 14.6%), experimental illicit drugs users (19.6%) and regular illicit drugs users (24.7%).

**Results:** Non-users significantly assess the risks connected to drug use as great; they more often disapprove of drug use and assess drugs as hardly available. Legal drugs users are tolerant to smoking and alcohol drinking but according to them the use of illicit drugs is of a great risk. Experimental drug users are tolerant to smoking, alcohol drinking and experiments with illicit drugs; they disapprove of regular drug use which brings great risks. Regular drug users are the most liberal and tolerant to drug use; drug use is relatively harmless and they do not disapprove of drug use. According to them illicit drugs are easily available which is in relation to high extent of drug use among their siblings and friends.