

## Myths, drug consumption and sport practice in adolescents: A research-action

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### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND:** Evidence-based practice is fundamental to prevent drug consumption in adolescents. Literature highlights the possible positive impact of myth and belief reduction intervention, namely those associated with the rate of social acceptability and prevalence of consumption, as well those related with the effects and consequences of substances<sup>[1,2]</sup>. In addition there are myths that establish a relation between consumption and sport practice, the last being a protective factor. **OBJECTIVES:** evaluate the impact of an intervention about drugs and sport practice myths within adolescents from the Centre of Portugal; compare myths and the intervention impact in extracurricular physical activities/sports practitioner and non-practitioner adolescents. **METHODS:** it has been developed a quantitative research-action, with 172 adolescents, aged between 13 and 18 ( $M=14.72 \pm 1.17$ ), 59.8% males and 64.1% of extracurricular physical activities/sports practitioners. Adolescents engaged in a myths and beliefs training program consisted in fortnightly 6 sessions of 60 minutes. They filled, before and after intervention, a 16 items *ad-hoc* questionnaire about myths associated with drug consumption and 7 statements about sport practice. **RESULTS:** An enhancement ( $p=.000$ ) was verified in the knowledge levels about drug consumption ( $M=3.48 \pm .64$  vs  $M=4.06 \pm .73$ ) and of sport practice ( $M=3.64 \pm .41$  vs  $M=3.88 \pm .53$ ). There was a decrease in all drug consumption items, except on the idea that in fun groups it's cool to smoke tobacco and consume cannabis, as well as in the belief that drugs increase creativity being used by artists. Also the use of recreational drugs, in sport context, is not considered doping, since it does not lead to enhancement in physical performance. The extracurricular physical activities/sports practitioners have shown better results before and after intervention ( $p=.041$  and  $p=.032$ , respectively), but only in drug consumption myths. **CONCLUSIONS:** This intervention was effective, although some drug consumption beliefs, including its relation with sport practice, has to be

reinforced since this may represent a consumption risk. Moreover, they are critical adolescence development tasks, namely the integration in peer groups and definition of professional profiles. It is also important to explore the impact of extracurricular physical activities/sports practice, since the practitioners revealed higher levels of drugs knowledge and sport practice is a protective factor<sup>[3]</sup>.

**Keywords:** *myths, drug consumption, physical activities/sports practice, adolescents*

**References:**

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