



*Smoking, alcohol and illegal drug use among
school-aged adolescents:
level of consumption and trends in Ukraine*

*report based on data collection within the framework of
international project “European School Survey Project on
Alcohol and Other Drugs – ESPAD”*

This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the NGO "Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Oleksandr Yaremko" and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Prepared and published with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Ukraine

Kyiv 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Presented report is prepared within the international research project "European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs – ESPAD", in which Ukraine participates since 1995 with the technical support of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The survey is conducted every four years. Ukraine is represented in all the waves of the survey – 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015. The target group of the international survey ESPAD are students of particular birth year, who will turn 16 or are 16 years old during the survey year. In 2015, the target group were students born in 1999.

The data not only focuses on the latest results of the sixth wave of the students' survey, but also analyzes trends of tobacco, alcohol and drugs use since 1995.

The 2015 study in Ukraine was conducted in 449 schools, representing the age group of adolescents aged 15-17 years enrolled in secondary schools (grades 9-11), vocational schools (1-2 study year after basic secondary education) and higher educational institutions of I-II levels of accreditation (1-2 study year after basic secondary education).

The obtained data will be useful for adolescents, parents, teachers, the media, NGOs and all those who address problems of the younger generation and take care of their health.

The main objective of the student survey is to measure the prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drugs use, track trends, determine factors of different behavioural patterns and study the connection of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs use with the features of the social environment (parental and peer influence).

The behavioural study among students is conducted through a survey in schools and other educational institutions. Selected research strategies are cost-effective (students self-complete questionnaires in the classroom), as of implementation – students are easily accessible part of the population. In addition, the age group of 15-17 year-olds are at the stage of trial and the initiation to smoking, alcohol and drugs use, which is the researchers' focus and it allows to gather a fairly reliable information on the first engagement and its determining factors.

Public opinion polls are virtually the only source of aforementioned information because no statistical indicators reflect the behaviors of any groups, and do not allow measurement of the distribution of harmful habits, and quantitative characteristics of tobacco, alcohol and other psychoactive substances use.

Data collected after certain time intervals, creates a broad and multi-level information base for subsequent analysis, defines features for specific subgroups of adolescents, and factors that influence the relationship between different habits.

The authors would like to thank the staff of UISR after Oleksandr Yaremenko: Lidiya Romanovska, Yuliya Arabska, Yevgeniya Kulchitska, who effectively organized and performed the research project. The authors note that the study implementation in Ukraine was made possible only through the collaboration of the wide range of people, such as the local team leaders, local interviewers, staff of departments of education and science.

Research conducted in 2015 was supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Department of ensuring activities of the Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Children's Rights.

Also, we would like to express gratitude to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction for the technical support of the project in Ukraine.

Special thanks goes to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Ukraine, which supported the preparation of the report and its publication. Sincere gratitudes personally to Olena Sakovych (UNICEF Ukraine) and Giovanna Barberis (UNICEF Ukraine) as well as to the employees of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine – Svitlana Fitsaylo and Yuriy Kononenko for their support in the implementation of the study.

The results provide significant amount of content information and reasonable grounds for the development and implementation of practical measures at the national level and at the level of particular regions and schools.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The research methodology is based on the international study protocol of «The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs – ESPAD»¹, which makes it possible to compare behavioral orientations of young people from various European countries.

The research toolkit uses questions, suggested by international study protocol, including mandatory items and questions for all participating countries, optional (additional) items with specific questions, as well as national questions.

Study target groups

School-aged children. The object of the study in 1995 were students of birth year of 1979, so at the time of the study (spring 1995) the respondents were 15-16 years old. The total number of respondents was 6680 people (3081 boys and 3599 girls).

The study of 2015 (the target groups of the international study were adolescents born in 1999) in Ukraine covered students of 1998–2000 birth years, so they were aged 15–17 years at the time of the study. Total amount of surveyed respondents was 5478 (2765 girls and 2713 boys).

The data of 1995 revealed that Ukrainian adolescents involve in smoking and alcohol use at early age, and another important fact revealed in 1995 was that after turning 15-16 years, a number of students change their educational establishment and social environment as well, which leads the change in behavior. Therefore, in subsequent waves of the survey, it was decided to additionally include in the Ukrainian national sample somewhat younger and older age groups.

In 1999 the students born in 1983 were included in the European survey. In Ukraine during this wave the respondents were born between 1981 and 1985, so they were aged 13 to 17 years. The total number of respondents – 10 386 (4837 boys and 5549 girls).

In 2003 the object of the study were students born in 1987. In Ukraine the sample population included students born in 1985-1989. The total number of students surveyed was 5795 respondents (2656 boys and 3139 girls).

In 2007 the target group of the international research were youngsters born in 1991. In Ukraine the questionnaire was conducted with adolescents born in 1990-1992. A total of 5122 respondents (2354 boys and 2768 girls).

In 2011 the target group was students born in 1995. In Ukraine students born in 1994-1996 were surveyed – a total of 7512 respondents (3355 boys and 4157 girls).

Class teachers/groups supervisors. During the 2015 wave, as a part of the research project, class teachers/groups supervisors were included in the sample survey. In the absence of the class teacher/group supervisor other members of the teaching staff answered the questionnaire. The total amount of 449 class managers/groups supervisors were interviewed.

¹ The ESPAD Handbook. Coordination: Björn Hibell and Ulf Guttormsson, CAN, Sweden. Більш детально див.: www.espad.org

The data collection tools

School-aged youth. The questionnaire of each survey wave is agreed among researchers of all countries participating in the project, it consists of thematic sections, contains mandatory questions and specific ones that each country can include. In addition, the research group of each country has the opportunity to include a small number of national items.

With the purpose of adapting the tools to national settings during the preparation for the field phase the piloting of questions among the representatives of target age groups was carried out. Piloting was performed using self-administrated questionnaires with follow-up focus group interviews involving 8 to 12 representatives of the target group. During these interviews the questionnaire was discussed in details.

Class teachers/group supervisors. The questionnaire for interviewing representatives of the educational institutions was designed to understand the process of health promotion in educational institutions and environment where Ukrainian youth is studying.

Sampling procedure

During the study of 2015 the stratified disproportional (according to size of a strata) sampling with systematic random selection was used. Stratification was done by the type of school.

During the first step the collection of the statistical information and calculation of the number of classes for the sample), the following activities were conducted:

- All educational institutions were conventionally divided into three types: secondary schools, vocational schools and higher educational institutions. Additionally, all secondary schools were classified as urban or rural.

- For the practical reasons, according to country specific characteristics all schools were stratified into 4 groups based on the type of school:

- 1) urban secondary schools;

- 2) rural secondary schools;

- 3) vocational schools, which have 1st year based on the basic secondary education (after 9 grades);

- 4) higher educational institutions of I-II accreditation level, which have 1st year based on the basic secondary education (after 9 grades).

- For each of the four groups, a list of educational institutions was compiled by region (i.e. covering all 25 administrative units (24 oblasts and Kiev city as ordered by governmental statistics), rayons (regions within oblasts) and type of settlement within rayons. Information about the number of target classes/groups was estimated according to the average number of students in class/group.

- Six lists of the classes/groups were organised:

- all 9th grade classes of the secondary schools, urban;

- all 9th grade classes of the secondary schools, rural;

- all 10th grade classes of the secondary schools, urban;

- all 10th grade classes of the secondary schools, rural;

- all 1st grade groups of the vocational schools (after 9 school grades);

- all 1st grade groups of the high schools I-II level accreditation (after 9 school grades).

Based on this information, the number of classes from each list were calculated for the sample.

Also, an extra sample for 17-year old students was calculated for the national purposes: among 11th grades of secondary school, 2nd year of vocational school and 2nd year of higher educational institution (I-II level of accreditation).

During the second step the selection of the classes/groups took place.

The selection of sample units (class/group) was done separately for each one of the six lists within the randomize method depending on the class/group size.

The researchers used questionnaire survey as the *polling method of students* in classes / study groups by administering formalized questionnaires to each respondent for individual filling in the classroom. The respondents inserted completed forms in individual envelopes.

Individual interviews using formalized questionnaires were used to *survey the administrators of educational establishments*.

Ethical considerations

To facilitate the study, the researchers obtained a Letter of Support from the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine for oblast departments of education. The professional ethics committee of the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU) issued favourable conclusion confirming that the research methodology ensures necessary level of anonymity and confidentiality of data; the text of questionnaire is correct in terms of style and formulation, and ensures observance of human dignity and ethical standards in line with SAU Ethical Principles of Social Research involving Children and Adolescents, as well as provisions of the Helsinki Declaration, the European Convention on Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant laws of Ukraine. The study also obtained a certificate CE #2640150 from the Ukrainian Scientific and Methodological Centre for Practical Psychology and Social Work at the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences granting permission to conduct the survey in educational establishments of Ukraine pursuant to the Provisions on expertise of psychological and sociological tools.

Data collection procedure

Field stage of the study was carried out by the members of permanent interviewer network run by the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Olexander Yaremenko. Interviewers in all oblasts were briefed on the specifics of survey to ensure adequate sampling and observe the research methodology.

Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of students' responses was one of essential components of the research methodology requirements. Administrators of participating educational establishments were also notified that confidentiality principles also apply to their respective schools.

Prior to the survey the interviewers held preliminary meetings (or telephone conversations) with school administrations in order: to inform about the main goal of the

study, emphasizing the importance of ethical principles of social research involving children and adolescents, and anonymity of obtained data; to explain why and how this particular school was selected for the survey (computer-based method of random numbers); to describe the research procedure; to notify the class teacher/group supervisor about potential refusals (if certain students in the class or group cannot participate in the survey due to religious beliefs or worldview attitudes, they are free to withdraw from the survey); to obtain consent from the headmaster to interview (either with him/her or with one of his/her deputies – school administrators); to secure consent of the head of educational establishment to conduct the survey in a specific class or study group (as highlighted in the letter); to decide that a teacher only introduces an interviewer and leaves the classroom until the survey is over; and to agree on the date and time of the survey. Interviewer-led surveys make it possible to “remove” teachers or school administrators from the classroom during polling. Therefore, each interviewer arrived to the participating school on previously agreed day and time, briefed the students, and administered blank questionnaire forms and individual envelopes where students had to put their filled questionnaires. After completion of the survey each student handed his or her sealed envelope over to the interviewer, or inserted it in the large folder for the entire class. Students filled their questionnaires in classrooms in the presence of interviewers, who, if necessary, would consult students or explain unclear questions, words, notions and the like. The mandate of interviewers and necessary comments to specific questions in the form were set forth in relevant Guidelines for Interviewers. Following the survey in each class or study group an interviewer filled a reporting form for this class (separate document) and attached it to the class folder. All these folders were handed to the regional supervisor, who sent them to the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Oleksander Yaremenko in Kyiv. UISR specialists were responsible for further data handling, which included coding, converting the data to digital form and statistical processing.

Data processing

Manual method was used for data entry. The process of coding was carried out in two stages:

- 1) Coding the common envelopes and classroom reports
- 2) Questionnaire coding

The first consisted of binding codes to the data taken from the common envelopes of the grade/group, that is:

- ordinal number of an envelope;
- oblast of survey;
- place (city, settlement, village) where the educational institution is located;
- type of educational institution;
- audience: grade/group/department.

At the first stage of coding the classroom reports are also checked and coded.

The data for student's availability was also checked: number of students not being present should be equal to the sum in the line “reasons for absence”. As well as number of being available (total number of girls and boys being present) should correspond with the

number of questionnaires being filled in and notified on a common (large) envelope and number of small envelopes with questionnaires being filled in.

At the first stage the remarks by the interviewers for the atmosphere in the audience during the survey: students' behaviours, their comments, remarks, etc. are coded.

At this stage the coders are preparing the questionnaires for another stage of coding, as well as opening envelopes and taking out questionnaires filled in by the respondents. Each questionnaire that is taken out from the common envelope of a certain grade/group is given the ordinal number; three codes are placed on the front page: (1) ordinal number of the main envelope, (2) code of the oblast, (3) code of the educational institution. That would be the end of the first stage of coding.

Second stage - immediate questionnaire coding is carried out with the open code list, which is complemented accordingly to the respondents' answers on the opened and semi-closed questions of the questionnaire. Also at this stage the questionnaires screening takes place.

The next stage of data processing is putting the coded questionnaires into PC, performed by the program SPSS.

RESULTS

The main objective of the project "European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs" – ESPAD is to collect comparative data about the use of different substances among 15-16 year old students in European countries; to monitor trends both within and between countries.

Prior to the survey the study team has received endorsement of the committee on professional ethics of the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU) stating that the technology research provides the necessary level of anonymity and confidentiality of the information received, the text of the questionnaire (in content and language style) is correct, ensures respect for human dignity, moral and ethical standards in accordance with the approved standards for ethical research among children and adolescents, the principles of the Helsinki Declaration of human rights, the European Convention on human rights, the UN Convention on the rights of the child and the relevant laws of Ukraine.

Additional instruments' expertise was received by the Ukrainian scientific-methodical center of practical psychology and social work of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine (CE certificate number 2640150).

The survey was conducted in 449 schools among students of 9-11 grades of secondary schools, 1 and 2 study years of vocational schools and higher educational institutions of the I-II levels of accreditation (based on 9 years of secondary schools). School survey was implemented by self-administrative questionnaire formalized by a group survey in classrooms. Each student filled out the questionnaire anonymously, and then put the filled form in a individual envelope. During the survey, teachers, classroom managers/curators have left the classrooms.

The fieldwork was carried out by research interviewers of the permanent network of UISR after Oleksandr Yaremenko. Overall, in 2015, 3215 boys and 3459 girls in 449 schools located in 25 administrative-territorial units of Ukraine were interviewed. Students enrolled in educational institutions of the regional centers (oblast centers) are of 29.8%, 43.5% are representatives of other cities and towns, 26.6% - are representatives of rural areas.

The student's approachability level, compared with the total number of students enrolled in selected classes is 79.3% (78.3% - among boys, and 80,2% - among girls).

The data is analysed by age, gender, type of institution and, in some cases, the locality type. The basic analysis is done of all respondents age cohorts, that among young people aged 15-17 who are studying. The trend data analysis is presented in the target age group of international research – among boys and girls born in 1999, so that at the time of the survey they have turned 15-16 years of age.

Smoking

Every fifth respondent believes that he/she has easy access to cigarettes. The boy and girls often believe that they will not have any obstacles if they want to get cigarettes (28.2% and 17.8% respectively) (see Figure 1).

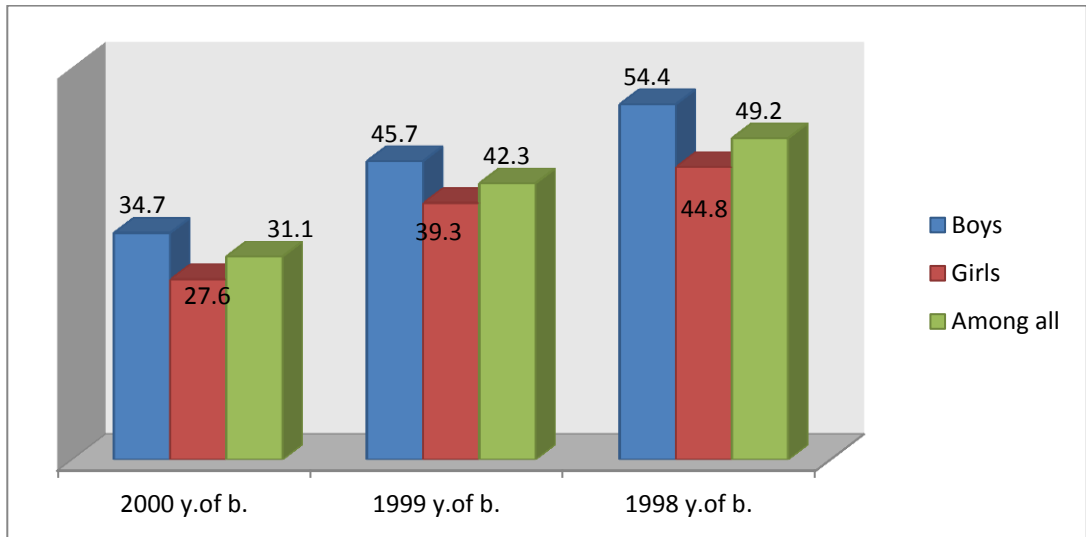


Figure 1. The level of access to cigarettes among youth (distribution of answers "very easy" and "rather easy") by age and gender, %

Since 1999, the rate of access to tobacco products fell by almost half – from 74.7% to 42.3% (see Figure 2).

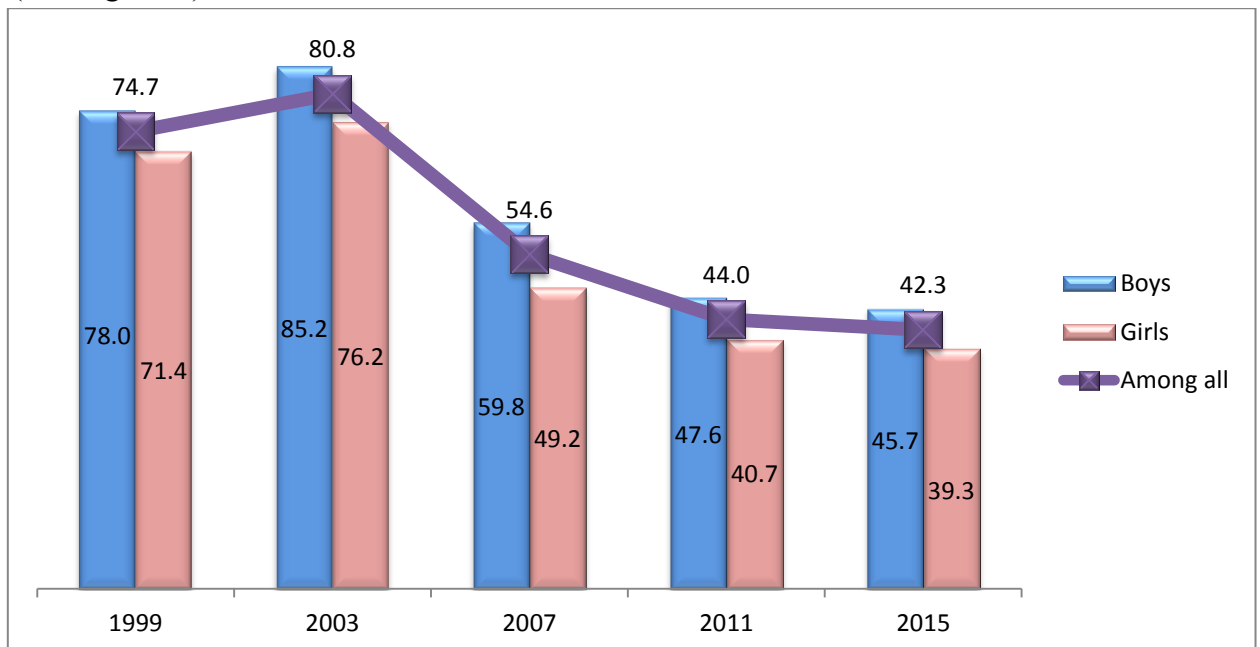


Figure 2. The level of access to cigarettes among youth (distribution of answers "very easy" and "rather easy") dynamics, %

More than half of students reported the experience of smoking – 52.3%. The proportion of boys who smoked at least one time in their lifetime is significantly greater than the proportion of girls, and is 61.3% among boys and 44.3% among girls (see Figure 3).

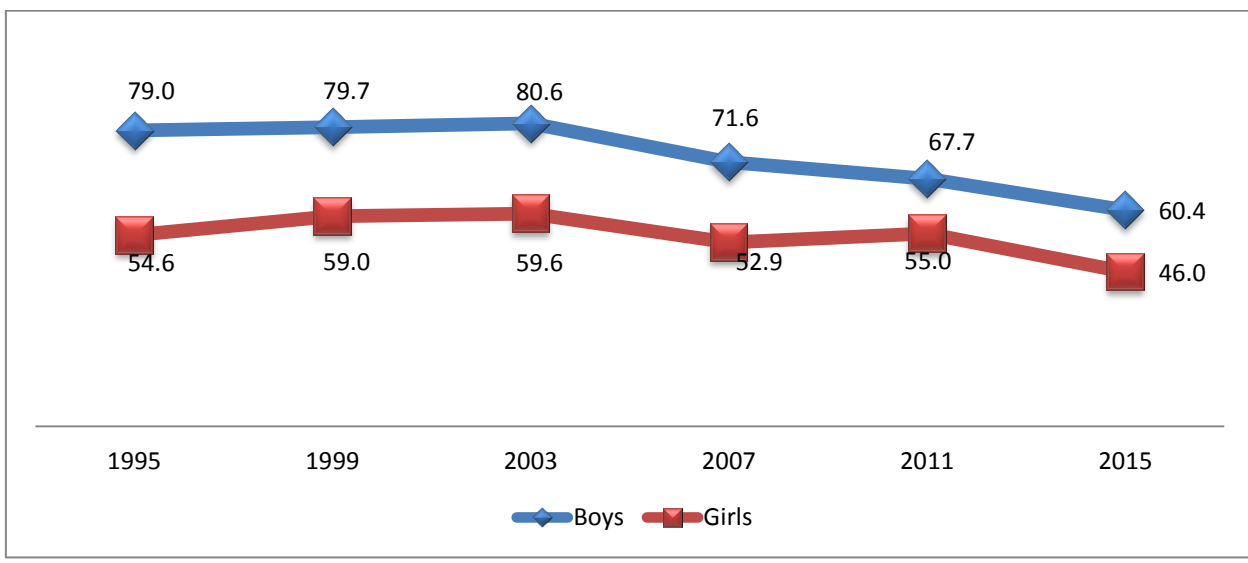


Figure 3. The proportion of young people who smoked at least 1 time during lifetime, % dynamics

The cases of smoking during the past 30 days were reported by 19.1% of respondents.

Daily smokers are 12.2% of students (18.1% among boys and 6.7% among girls) and about half (6.3%) of them noted that they smoke 6 or more cigarettes daily.

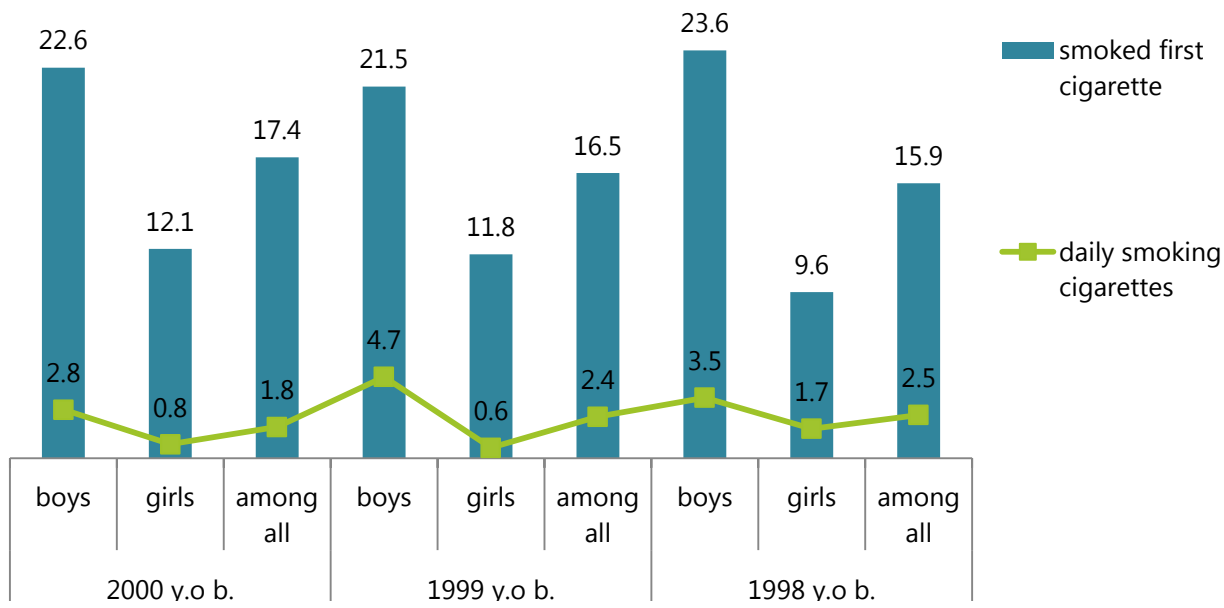


Figure 4. First attempt and the formation of habits at the age of 11 years and younger, %, by age and gender

By the time of being 13 years of age, 29.9% of students had smoking experience, and 5.1% of respondents formed the habit of daily smoking. By the time of reaching 15 years of age – half of the students had smoking experience (49.1%), and 12.9% of the respondents formed the habit of daily smoking (see Figure 4).

School-aged children are not fully aware of the health risks that smokers are exposed to. Only 18.4% of respondents indicated high risk with smoking cigarettes. Even with smoking one or more packs a day 4.8% do not see negative consequences and 7.8% see moderate health risk (see Figure 5).

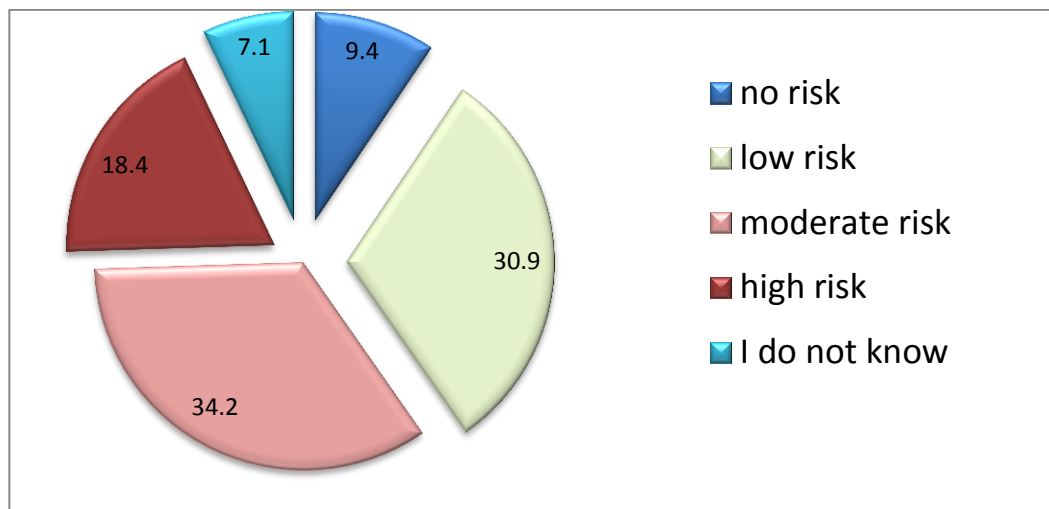


Figure 5. The perception of risk of tobacco use, %

Alcohol consumption

More than a third of 15-year-old students reported that it was "easy" or "very easy" to purchase alcoholic beverages. Among respondents of the age 16 years, the number of those who mentioned that it was "easy" or "very easy" to purchase alcohol is 43.4%, and among 17-year olds this number is 51.7% (see Figure 6).

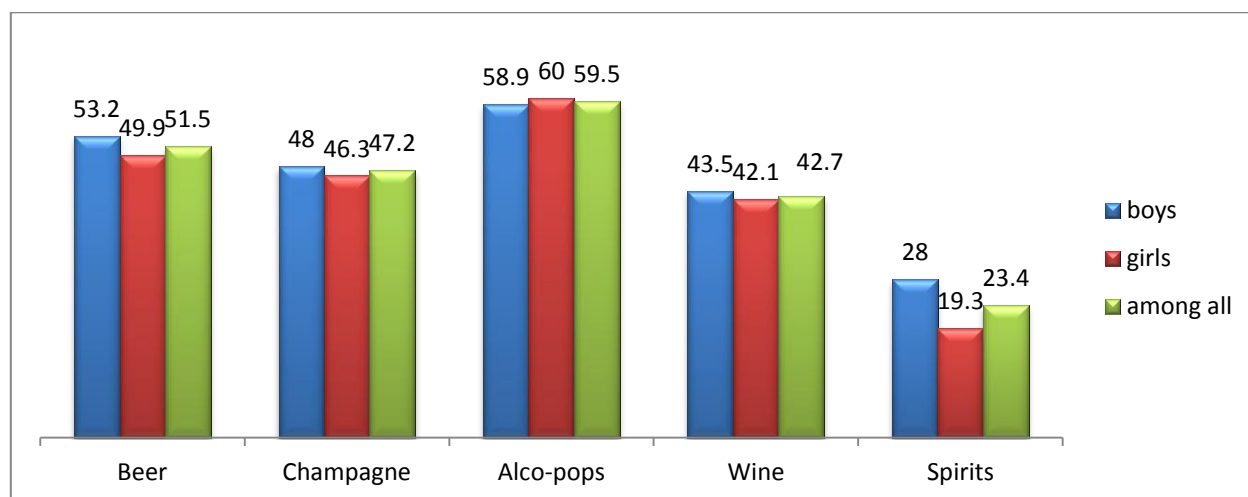


Figure 6. The level of access to alcoholic beverages among youth (sum of answers "very easy" and "rather easy"), % by age and gender

In the largest access are alco-pops (as reported 59.5% of the students), and beer (51.5%). The data shows a decrease in the accessibility of all alcoholic beverages. During the whole time of observation boys more often noted that it is easier for them to get alcoholic drinks than girls. With the exception of alco-pops, which girls noted to be more available than boys in the latter two waves of the study (2011 and 2015) (see Figure 7).

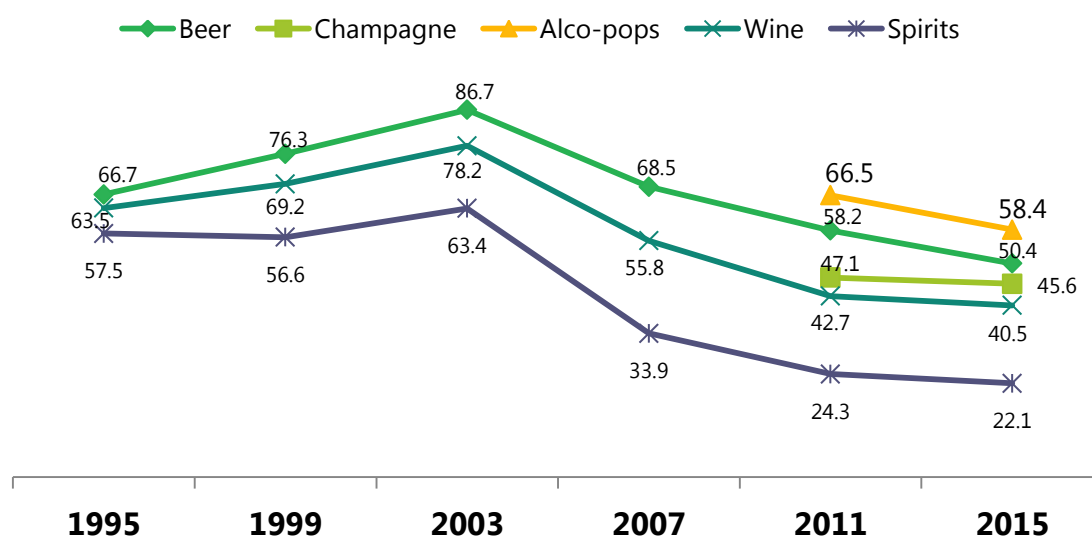


Figure 7. The proportion of young people, who indicated the availability of alcoholic beverages (sum of answers "very easy" and "rather easy") dynamics, %

In 2015, the study showed that, on average, 83.4% of students had used any alcoholic beverages at least once during their lifetime: among 15-year-olds – 78.5%; among 16 years olds – 85%, among 17 year olds – 84,6%.

From 1995 to 2007, the number of 15-16 year olds who reported drinking alcoholic beverages at least 1 time during lifetime, gradually increased, reaching 90.8%, and the results of surveys in 2011 and 2015 has recorded a trend of slow decrease of this indicator up to 84.9%. The same trend goes for the consumption of 40 and more times during lifetime (see Figure 8).

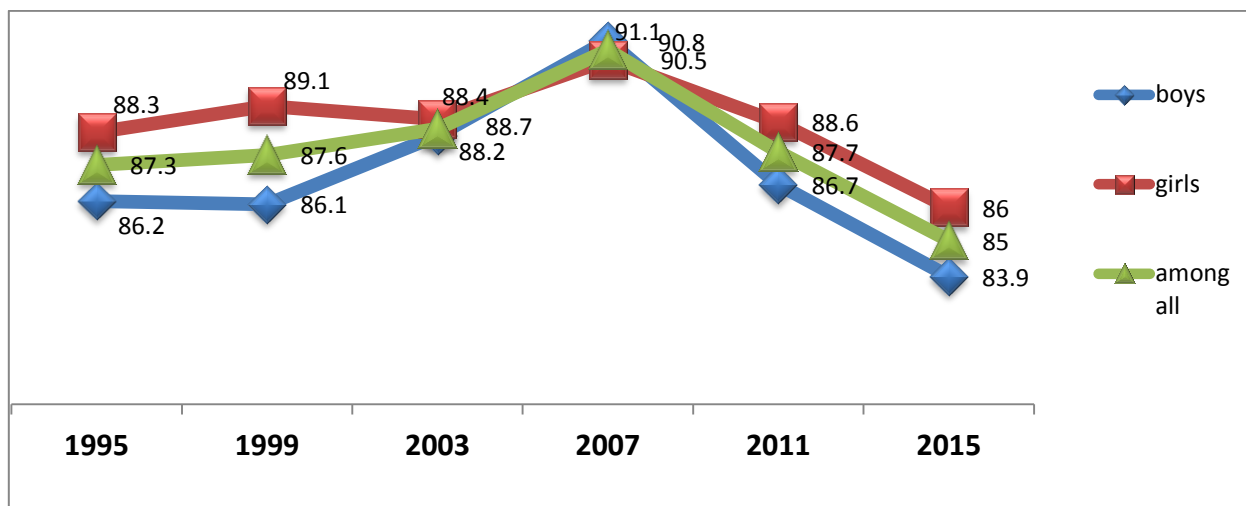


Figure 8. The proportion of young people who consumed any alcoholic beverages 40 times or more during their lifetime, % age and gender

During the past 12 months alcoholic drinks were consumed by 70% of the students (71.1% among girls; 68.7% - among boys). The difference observed in the number of times of use. Thus, a greater number of girls rather than boys (27.3% and 22.8%, respectively) reported drinking alcoholic beverages 1-2 times during the mentioned period. The regular use (40 or more times during the past 12 months, which actually means the weekly drinking) reported 6.1% of boys and 2.8% girls.

In 2015 the consumption of alcoholic beverages during the last 12 months is the lowest for the entire 20-year study period and is 70.8% among 15-16 year-olds (the target group of a particular birth year).

32.1% of 15 year-olds, 41.9% among 16-year-olds and 47.4% 17-year-olds have consumed alcohol during the past 30 days. Most often in the past month the respondents drank wine (26.6%). Among all age categories a higher percentage of boys traditionally drink beer and spirits, and girls – alco-pops, champagne and wine. From 1995 to 2007 there was a gradual increase in the number of students who consumed alcohol during the past 30 days (from 54.7% in 1995 to 59.5% in 2007). In 2011 the process of reducing this number of students to 42% in 2015 among the project target age group.

Describing recent use of alcohol 38.2% of the surveyed children indicated the beer, 21.8% - wine, 18.2% - alco-pops, 15.1% - champagne and 14.7% - spirits. Girls often mentioned

wine (34.6%), champagne (23,2%) and alco-pops (21.9%). The beer spirits were indicated twice as less by girls (15.9% and 7.4%, respectively) than by boys.

Combining alcohol with energy drinks is one of the behaviours practices by Ukrainian adolescents. On average about one third of respondents have tried this mix during their lifetime (Figure 9).

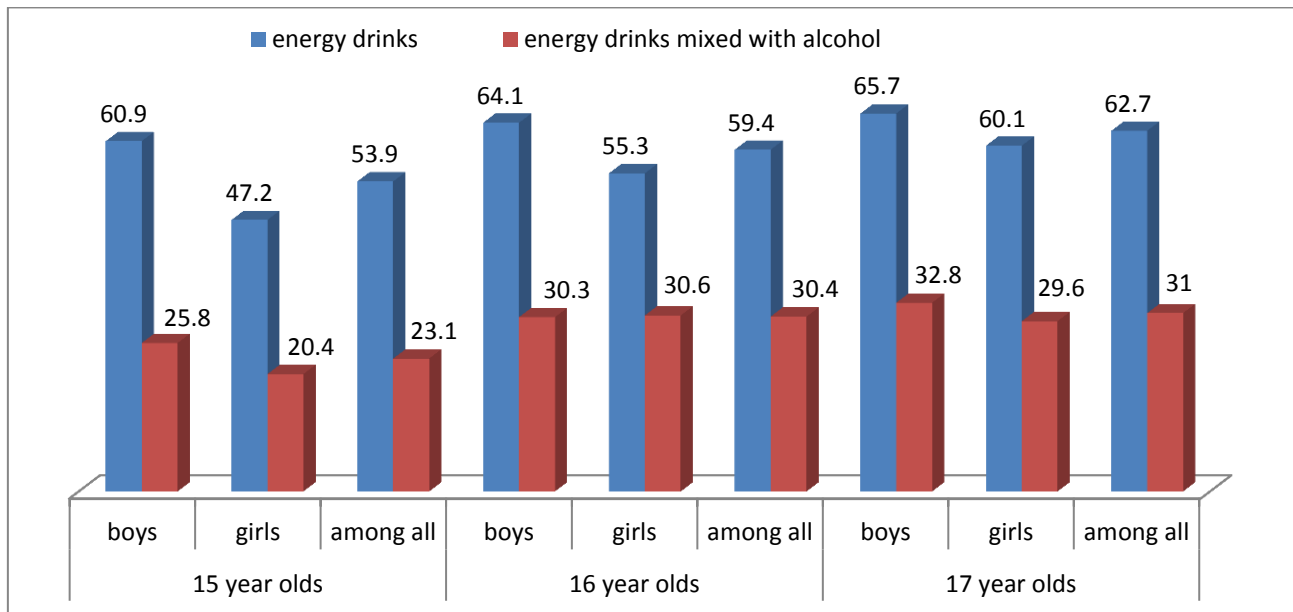


Figure 9. The level of consumption of energy drinks alone and in conjunction with alcohol,% during lifetime, % age and gender

With age the level of consumption of energy drinks in conjunction with alcohol increases. The data shows that during the last 12 months, around 17% of adolescents have used energy drinks mixed with alcohol. The most active users of the aforementioned drink mixture are 16 years olds (see Figure 10).

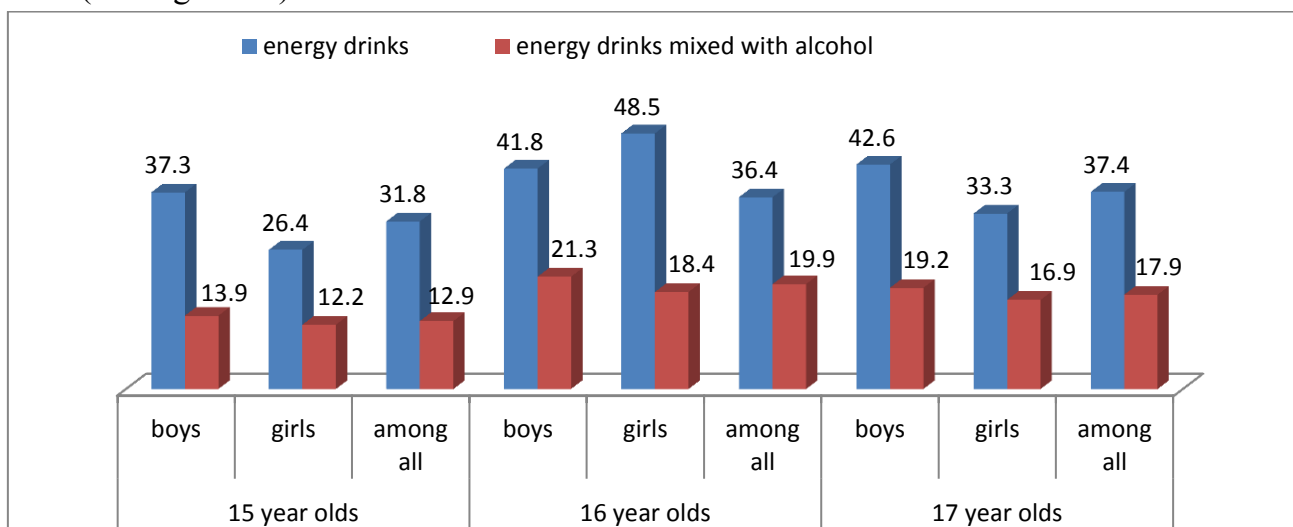


Figure 10. The level of consumption of energy drinks alone and in conjunction with alcohol,% during last 12 months, % age and gender

On average, during the last drinking episode, those who drank beer, drank 3.5 standard drinks; consumers of champagne indicated consumption of 1.6 standard drinks; drinking of alco-pops is 3.2 standard drinks; wine – 2 standard drinks; spirits 5.7 standard drinks.

On the last day of alcohol consumption the 17-year-olds consumed an average of 6 standard drinks of alcohol, which is more than the consumption level among 15-16-year-olds.

The feeling of extreme intoxication during the last day of alcohol use was noted only by 1.4% of the surveyed students, while 35% mentioned that they did not feel the intoxication.

The majority of respondents (57.2%) indicated that they were in the state of alcoholic intoxication during lifetime, however, more than one fifth indicated that they had been in this state for three or more times. During the last 12 months 25.8% of respondents were intoxicated at least 1 time, during the past 30 days – 10.3 %. According to the results of all waves of the survey the greatest experience of intoxication was indicated by the vocational schools students.

The average age of trying alcoholic beverages is 14 years old. This applies to beer, champagne, alco-pops and wine. For spirits, the average age of the first attempt is 15 years. Also, the highest proportion of students experienced drunkenness ("were drunk") for the first time at the age of 14.

Young people mostly drink alcohol at someone's home (27%) and at home (20.3%). Somewhat fewer adolescents indicated that they had consumed alcohol in the street, in a park or other open areas (16.4%). Less often young people drink alcohol in bars/pubs and restaurants (8.4% and 4.5%, respectively).

In general, students have the awareness of the risks of harming themselves because of alcohol use: 41.8% of respondents indicated a high risk to harm themselves, if one drink 1-2 servings of alcohol daily; in case of daily use of 4-5 alcohol servings the high risk was indicated by 68.6% of the respondents.

13.4% of respondents indicated that they took part in the fights caused by alcohol; 10.2% were participants of the fights; 7.8% indicated injuries or accidents; 4.1% had unprotected sex; 4% had problems with the police; 2.7% were theft victims. Nearly 2% indicated their admission/treatment by ambulance due to intoxication or injury, getting into an accident while driving, were the victims of sexual assault because of their own use of alcoholic beverages.

A slightly greater number of young people pointed to problems due to use of alcohol by other people. In particular, almost 30% indicated that they were scared of drunk people in the street; 26.2% suffered from persecution of drunk strangers; 5% of respondents were in one car with a drunk driver; 2.3% were involved in an accident due to drunk driver.

The drug use

12,1% of all respondents answered that they can easily get marijuana or hashish (cannabis). Data show that the availability of marijuana/hashish increased significantly over the period since 1995 (4.7% of respondents noted an “easy” and “rather easy” access) to 2003 (13.2%).

The relative decline of accessibility was recorded in 2007 (12.1%), in 2011 (10.3%), after which the study wave of 2015 showed an increase (see Figure 11).

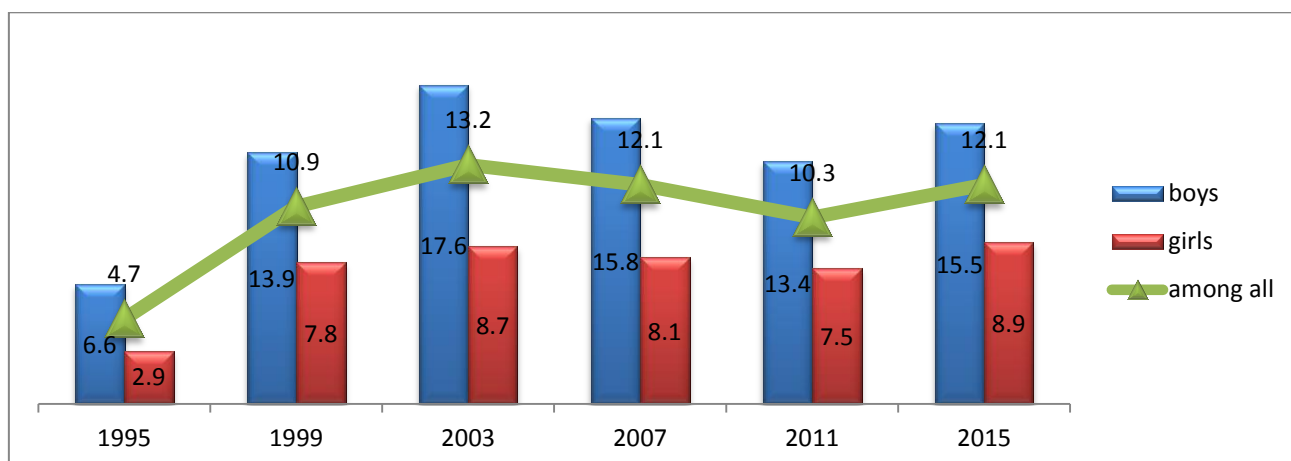


Figure 11. The level of access to marijuana among youth (sum of answers "very easy" and "rather easy"), % dynamics

Regarding the possibility to get other drugs, it should be noted that the high availability is stated with the respect to such stimulants as amphetamines and ecstasy – 3,9% of respondents, methamphetamines, cocaine and crack was mentioned by 2.7-3.2% and the most accessible, in the opinion of young people is the extract of the poppy (5.1%).

11,3% of 15-17 years old students have the experience of using any drugs (15.4% among boys and 7.9% among girls). At least once during the lifetime 10.6% of respondents (among children 14.5%, and among girls 7%) have tried marijuana or hashish (see Figure 12).

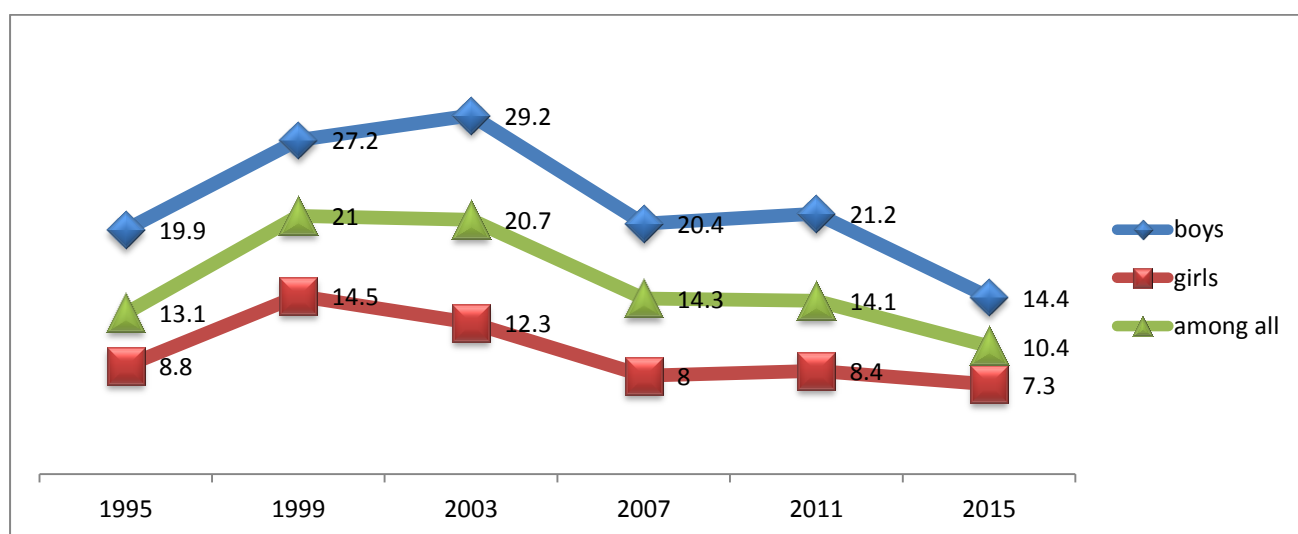


Figure 12. Dynamics of consumption of any drugs during lifetime, % by gender

Every second of those who have used marijuana or hashish, used drug 1-2 times.

Among adolescents 3.6% had used other drugs besides marijuana (4.6% among boys and 2.9% among girls).

The prevalence of marijuana or hashish use during the last 12 months among 15-17-year-olds is 3.2% (4.3% among boys and 2.2% girls).

3.2% of students (4.8% among boys and 1.5% girls) admitted using marijuana or hashish during the past 30 days.

Dynamics of drug use prevalence among the adolescents of a particular birth year, which at the time of the survey were 15-16 years of age, shows that the peak prevalence of use of marijuana or hashish during lifetime was observed in 2003 (29.2% among boys and 12% among girls, overall – 20.7%). The results of the survey in 2007 showed a significant decline – to 13.1% (18,9% among boys and 7.4% among girls). Slight decrease to 11% (among boys is 16.3%, and among girls – 6.3%) was recorded in 2011. Data of 2015 on the experience marijuana/hashish use during lifetime is close to the data of the previous wave of 2011.

During ESPAD, the Cannabis Abuse Screening Test (CAST) was used. The indicator is calculated based on the adolescents' answers to the following questions (see Table 1):

- ⇒ Have you smoked cannabis before midday?
- ⇒ Have you smoked cannabis when you were alone?
- ⇒ Have you had memory problems when you smoked cannabis?
- ⇒ Have friends or members of your family told you that you ought to reduce your cannabis use?
- ⇒ Have you tried to reduce or stop your cannabis use without succeeding?
- ⇒ Have you had problems because of your use of cannabis(argument, fight, accident, bad result at school, etc.)?

Each answer has a value of 0 (No) or 1 (Yes).

Interpretation:

0 – individuals have low risk of problems caused by the use of cannabis;

1 – individuals have moderate risk of problems caused by the use of cannabis;

2 or more – individuals are at high risk of problems, caused by the use of cannabis.

Table 1

CAST, by age and gender, %

	2000 birth year			1999 birth year			1998 birth year			Among all		
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>N</i>	26	13	39	90	37	127	99	41	140	215	91	306
0 out of 6	23,1	34,7	26,9	17,6	32,7	22,0	38,4	41,2	39,2	27,9	36,9	30,5
1 out of 6	17,3	45,5	26,7	24,9	28,0	25,8	18,0	18,7	18,2	20,8	26,3	22,4
2 out of 6	20,1	5,0	15,1	18,7	25,3	20,6	12,7	18,2	14,3	16,1	19,2	17,0
3 out of 6	9,8	9,9	9,9	15,9	2,1	11,9	4,5	3,7	4,3	9,9	3,9	8,1
4 out of 6	12,3	5,0	9,9	10,0	7,7	9,3	9,9	10,0	9,9	10,2	8,3	9,7
5 out of 6	4,9	0,0	3,3	7,1	0,0	5,1	12,1	3,2	9,5	9,1	1,4	6,8
6 out of 6	12,4	0,0	8,3	5,8	4,2	5,3	4,4	5,0	4,6	5,9	4,0	5,4
High risk (2+)	59,5	19,9	46,5	57,5	39,3	52,2	43,6	40,1	42,6	51,2	36,8	47,0

Trend analysis of the marijuana/hashish use during the last 12 months and the last 30 days follows the prevalence growth trend since 1995 to 2003, with a subsequent significant reduction in 2007, a slight decrease in 2011, and a slight growth in 2015.

The dynamics of the use during lifetime of other drugs except marijuana/hashish among 15-16 year old students looks somewhat different. The data shows a fairly stable level during the period of 1995-1999-2003 survey waves (2,6%, 1,8%, 2,4% respectively), with a significant increase in 2007 (5.1%), and a significant decrease in 2011 (2.7%), and new growth in 2015 (3.9%).

Virtually unchanged remains prevalence of injecting drug use among 15-16-year olds (0.6% (0.9% - among boys and 0.3% among females) during the whole period of surveys (from 1995 to 2015).

23,4% of the respondents indicated that 1-2 times in their lifetime, they had the opportunity to try marijuana or hashish, but has not used the chance to do so (19.5% women and 27.8% among boys).

During their lifetime 1.8% of the respondents have used alcohol together with pills for the purpose of intoxication. The number of boys exceeds the number of girls on average by 1.5 times in each age category.

Tranquilizers or sedatives without prescription were ever used by 1.8% of students. Hallucinogenic mushrooms were used by 1.4% of respondents (the number for boys are 2 times higher than among girls). The proportion of 15-17 year old students, who reported the use of anabolic steroids is 1.2% (1.6% among young men and 0.6% among women).

A significant proportion of 15-17 year olds students have been smoking hookah – 38,8% (boys – 43%, girls – 35,1%). Hookah smoking during the past 30 days was reported by 11.3% of respondents (13.3% of boys and 9.5% among girls).

The situation, which describes the use of electronic cigarettes, is as follows: 80,5% of students have never smoked electronic cigarettes (72,6% boys and 87.5% girls). During the past 30 days 7.7% of boys and 3.7% girls (overall 5.5%) smoked electronic cigarettes (see Figure 13).

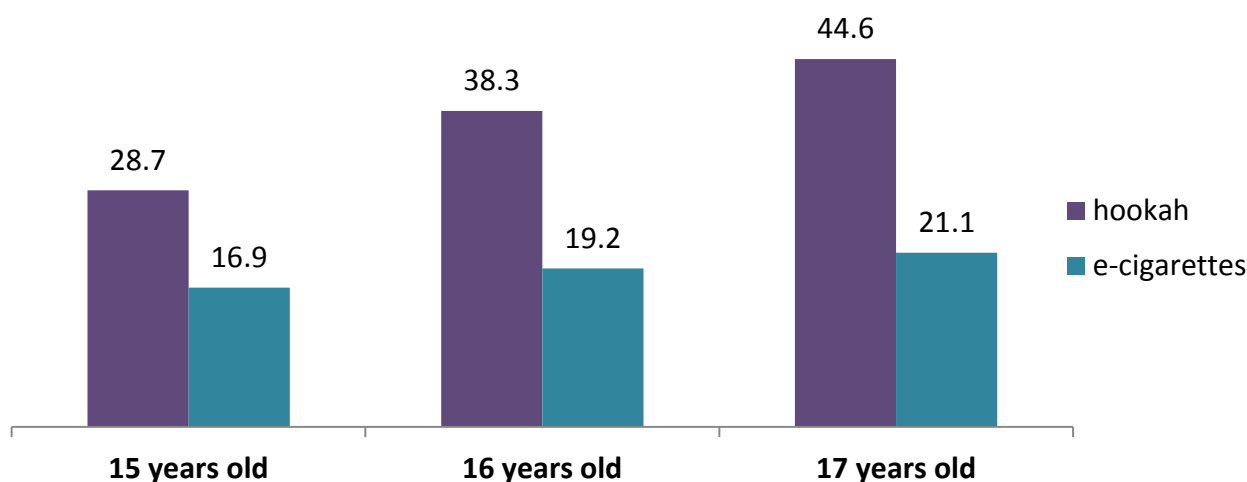


Figure 13. The experience of hookah smoking and e-cigarettes, % by age

Regarding new psychoactive substances, which can be in the form of smoking mixtures, powders, crystals, tablets, and liquids. Among those who had used such substances during the last 12 months, the highest percentage was used as smoking mixtures – 3.7% (4.6% boys and 2.8% girls). Another 5.4% of students do not know or are not sure whether they had used such substances.

Attempts for the use of opium extract, on average, occur at young age – 12.1 years. The marijuana use has the highest prevalence, but the first attempt of marijuana occurs at an older age – an average of 14.6 years (see Table 2).

Table 2.

The average age for 15-17 year olds to try different drugs, in years

Drug	Boys	Girls	Among all
Extract of opium	12,3	11,6	12,1
Inhalants (glue, aerosol)	12,4	12,7	12,5
Cocaine or crack	13,0	12,2	12,7
Ecstasy	12,7	12,8	12,7
Alcohol and pills "to get drunk"	12,7	13,6	13,1
Tranquilizers or sedatives	13,0	13,7	13,4
Amphetamine or methamphetamine	13,2	13,7	13,4
Marijuana or hashish	14,5	14,8	14,6

In greater risk to harm themselves if they smoke marijuana or hashish once or twice, believes 38.4% of respondents (35.7% of boys and 40.8% of girls).

Poly-drug use

The prevalence level analysis of the combined use of different psychoactive substances and smoking during the last 30 days, shows that the proportion of boys, who abuse different psychoactive substances is three times higher than the proportion of girls. This applies to most psychoactive substances except tranquilizers and sedatives, where the proportion of boys and girls is virtually identical.

There is a tendency for increase with age in the proportion of students with a substance abuse problem. The situation is common for guys and girls, and for smoking a lot of cigarettes during the day and repeated use of alcohol during the last 30 days.

Among those who abuse multiple substances, predominates the proportion of students who attend vocational schools – 8.9%. Slightly smaller is the proportion students enrolled in higher education institutions of I-II accreditation levels is 5.9% and the lowest share is among students of secondary schools – 2.7%.

General dynamics of the combined substance abuse among 16-year-olds shows a tendency to fall from 5.8% in 2007, to 5.5% in 2011 and to 4.4% in 2015 (see Table 3). The most common forms of combining psychoactive drugs (use during the last 30 days) are:

- 1) smoking and alcohol consumption – 7,6%;
- 2) smoking and use of other drugs except cannabis – 6,4%;

- 3) the use of cannabis and other drugs, except cannabis – 5.9% and;
- 4) smoking and use of cannabis – 5.8%.

The least common form of the combination of psychoactive substances is the use of alcohol and tranquilizers (1.9%).

Table 3

Dynamics of the use of certain substances and poly-drug use among 15-16-year-olds, %

	2007	2011	2015
Smoking <i>(Smoking 5 or more cigarettes during the past 30 days)</i>	11,7	8,7	6,6
Alcohol <i>(The alcohol use for 10 and more times during the last 30 days)</i>	8,2	7,9	3,9
Tranquilizers <i>(Tranquilizers: during the lifetime without doctor's prescription)</i>	4,1	2,2	1,7
Cannabis <i>(Cannabis: use during the past 30 days)</i>	2,5	3,0	2,5
Other drugs, except cannabis <i>(Other drugs except cannabis: use during the lifetime)</i>	4,1	4,1	3,8
2+ substances	5,8	5,5	4,4
3+ substances	1,8	1,9	1,1

Among the "poly-drug users" a large proportion of students have poor academic performance, tend to skip school days, often attend discos/parties and gamble at least 2-3 times a week (Figure 14).

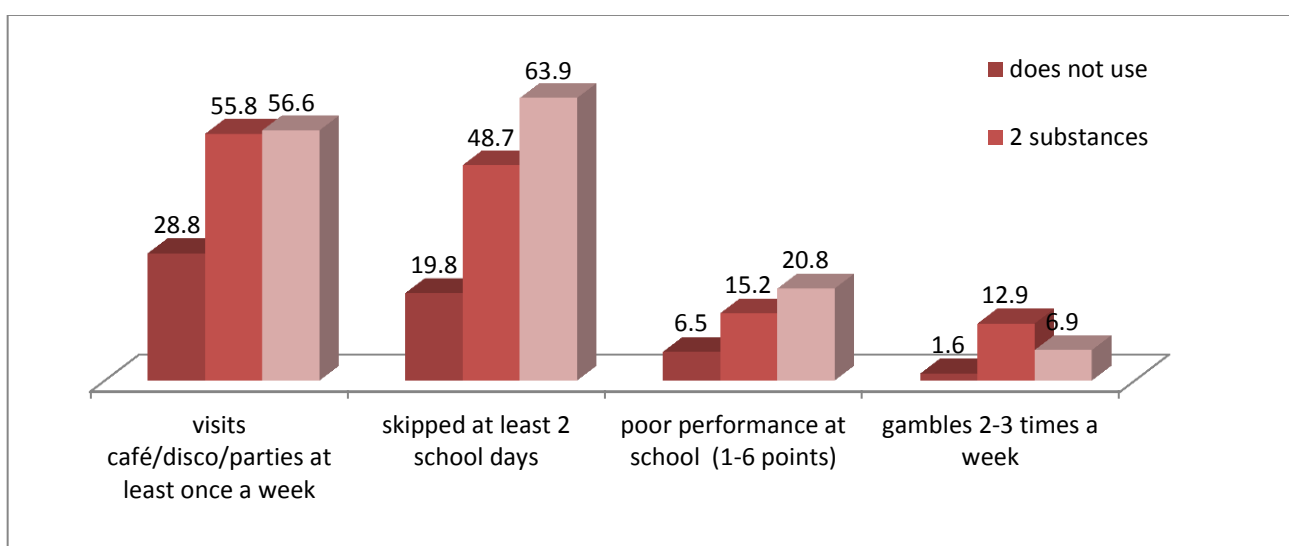


Figure 14. Behavioral practices according to the poly-drug experience, %

Description of risks of the marijuana (cannabis) use

4,8% of all respondents answered that they had used cannabis during the past year.

Most of those who used it, live in regional (oblast) centers (6,8%), which is almost 2.5 times higher than among those who live in rural area.

A significant role is played by the type of school: the percentage of those, who used cannabis over the past year among vocational school students is equal to 7.3%, among students of universities of I-II levels of accreditation – 6,6%, and among the students of secondary schools is 4%.

A significantly greater percentage of those who used cannabis is among the boys (7.2%) compared to 2.7% among girls. Thus, a significant "leap" in the use, adolescents make at the turn of 15 and 16 years. So, if among 15 years olds the proportion of those who used cannabis is 3%, among 16 years olds it is 5.1%, and among 17 years olds it is 5.5%.

8.4% of the respondents are part of the company where peers practice cannabis smoking during meetings. In most cases, this environment is for university students (12.4%) and vocational schools students (10.7%). For the those who live in rural areas, this figure stands at 6.3%, while for townspeople it is 7.8%, and for residents of the regional (oblast) centers – 10.7%.

Among those who use cannabis, more than half (about 55%) meet with the company weekly and more frequently, where cannabis use is practiced; and 21.6% respondents reported daily meetings.

Internet, computer use and gambling

Students demonstrated a very high level of Internet use – only 6.5% of respondents indicated that they did not use the Internet during a typical work days (8% among boys and 5.1% among girls) (see Table 4).

The highest activity of "Internet surfing" is on the weekend days, while the most active users of the Internet are girls. However, the data obtained in the survey indicates that during the day respondents spend a lot of time on the Internet, mainly focusing on social networks that can hold a significant amount of content, interesting for the audience.

Important place in the structure of the main Internet activities hold online games, which are more interesting for boys, while using the network to search for information keeps a secondary character. Also the trend of greater access to Internet among urban residents compared with young people living in rural areas remains unchanged.

The structure of "Internet surfing" shows the minimum participation level of respondents in the network gambling services.

Data indicates that 81% of students have Internet addiction at a moderate level, 10,6% have a strong Internet addiction. 20.4% of adolescents agreed with the statement that they spend too much time playing computer games. The number of those who recognize that their

time on computer games among the older boys (28,2%) more than twofold exceeds a similar indicator among girls (13.3%).

Table 4

**Internet use during weekdays and weekends during the last week,
% by year of birth and gender**

	2000 y.o.b.			1999 y.o.b.			1998 y.o.b.			Among all		
	Boys	Girls	Among all	Boys	Girls	Among all	Boys	Girls	Among all	Boys	Girls	Among all
Typical workday (Monday – Friday)												
None	11,1	3,7	7,4	8,5	4,5	6,4	7,7	4,2	5,8	8,8	4,2	6,4
Half an hour or less	7,0	8,1	7,6	7,6	5,7	6,6	5,7	7,4	6,7	6,7	6,9	6,8
About 1 hour	19,1	18,3	18,7	17,6	15,9	16,7	14,8	14,0	14,4	16,9	15,6	16,2
About 2–3 hours	34,8	34,9	34,8	34,8	33,6	34,2	37,9	34,5	36,0	36,0	34,2	35,0
About 4–5 hours	16,0	18,4	17,2	17,3	23,4	20,5	17,9	24,7	21,6	17,2	22,9	20,3
6 hours and more	12,0	16,7	14,3	14,1	16,9	15,6	16,0	15,2	15,5	14,4	16,1	15,3
Typical weekend day (Saturday, Sunday)												
None	9,3	4,2	6,7	7,9	4,3	6,0	7,5	4,0	5,6	8,0	4,2	6,0
Half an hour or less	5,1	5,3	5,2	4,5	5,1	4,8	5,5	5,8	5,7	5,0	5,4	5,2
About 1 hour	10,7	12,1	11,4	12,2	11,7	12,0	9,3	10,7	10,1	10,7	11,4	11,1
About 2–3 hours	26,2	29,0	27,6	24,8	24,6	24,7	24,9	25,2	25,1	25,2	25,7	25,4
About 4–5 hours	26,0	24,3	25,1	24,8	28,6	26,8	28,2	29,8	29,1	26,4	28,2	27,4
6 hours and more	22,6	25,2	23,9	25,8	25,7	25,8	24,5	24,5	24,5	24,6	25,1	24,9

Moderate dependence on online games characterizes 47,3% of respondents and another 3.4% are in a condition of strong dependence. These figures are significantly higher among boys than among girls: a moderate dependence on online games among the boys is 66.4% and among girls is 30.1%, but a strong dependence show 6.2% and 1.0% respectively.

92,3% of respondents said they did not gamble during the last 12 months. This indicator significantly varies by gender (97.1% among girls and 86.8% among boys) (see Figure 15).

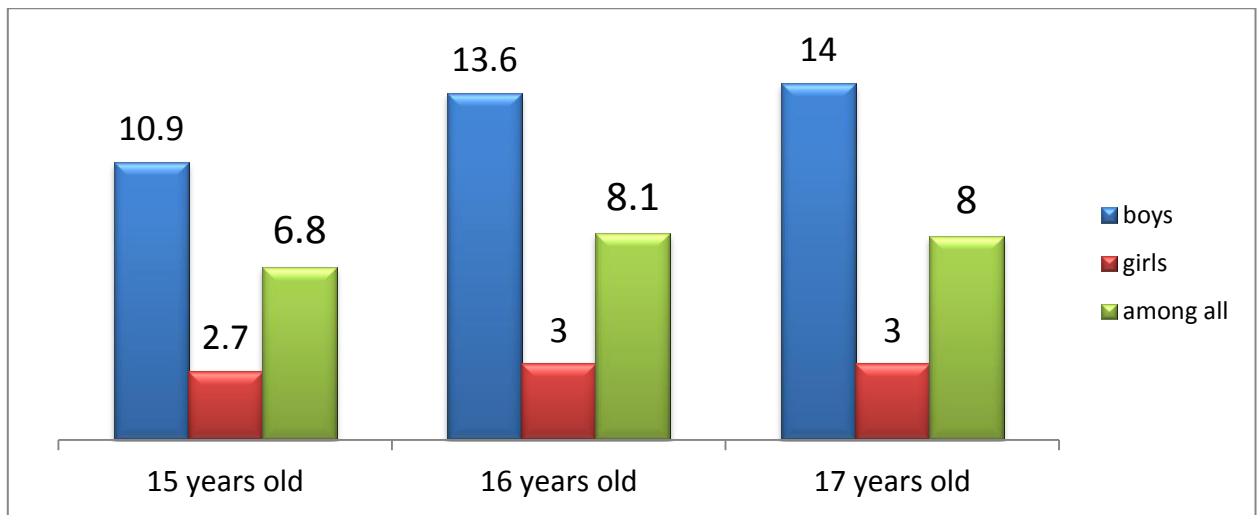


Figure 15. The proportion of adolescents, who gambled at least 1 time during the last 12 months, % by age and gender

With a frequency of two or more times per week 2.2% of interviewed adolescents gamble (among the boys this percentage is 3.9%).

Among all respondents, 4.3 percent are dependent on gambling, 1.1 percent have a problematic addiction.

Social environment as an influence factor of young people's behavioral practices.

Every fifth respondent (22.4%) indicated that parents "almost always" and "often" establish clear rules about what young people can do at home. Every fourth answered that parents "almost always" and "often" establish clear rules about what they can do outside the home (see Figure 16).

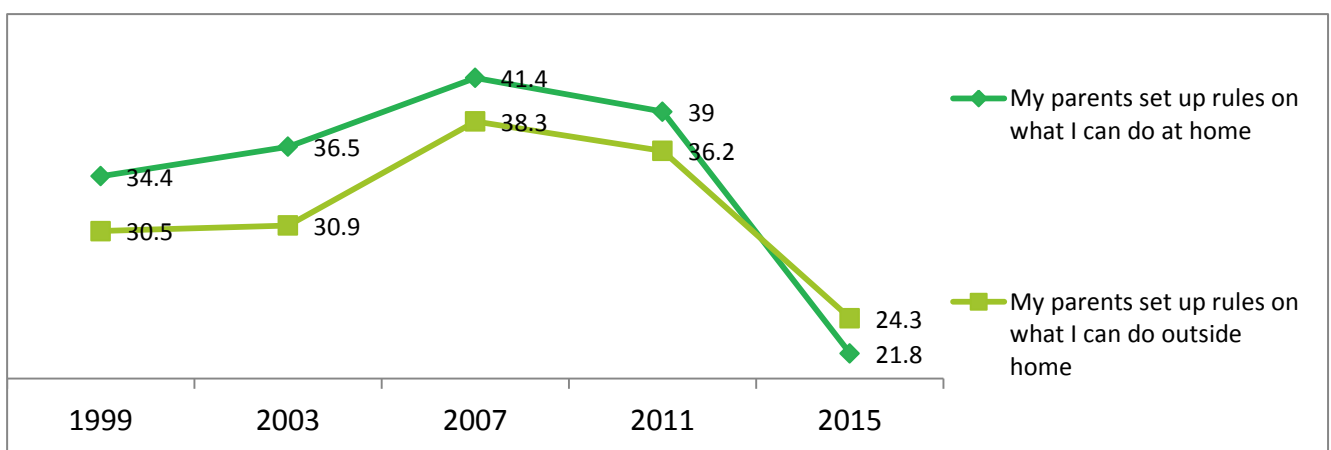


Figure 16. Dynamics of establishing rules of behavior at home and outside the home (the sum of the answers "almost always" and "often"), %

About 80% of adolescents noted that their parents "always" and "often" know where and with whom they spend time in the evenings.

More than a third of respondents (35.4%) believe that among their relatives there are those who abuse alcohol. 38,3% girls and 28.8 boys, mentioned that had problems because of alcohol abuse by the loved ones (see Figure 17).

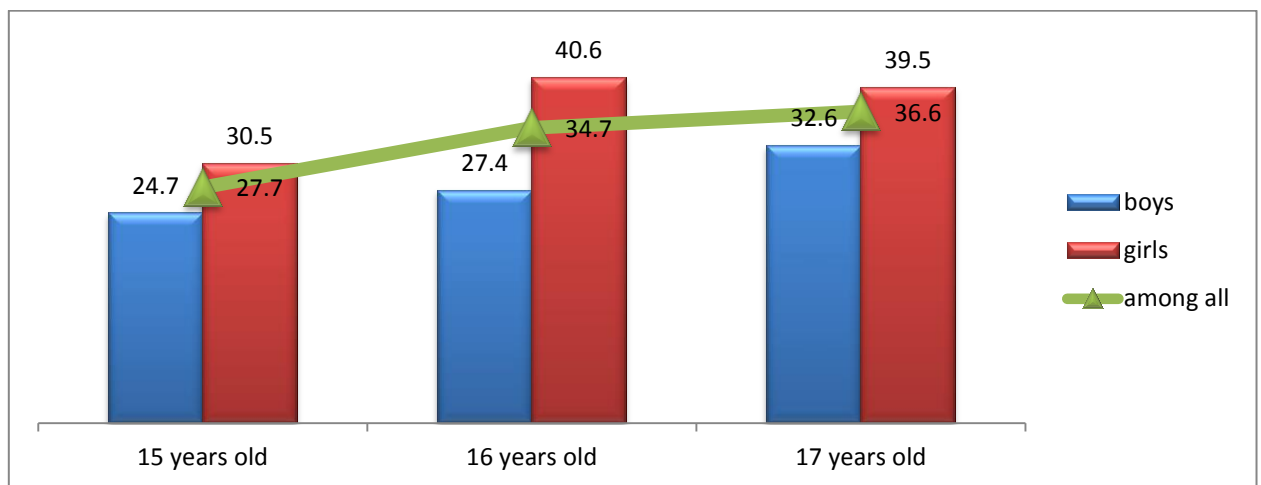


Figure 17. The proportion of young people who have had problems due to the fact that someone close to them abuses alcohol, % by age and gender

More than a third of the respondents (39.5%) claim that almost always can easily feel the warmth and care of the best friend (see Figure 18).

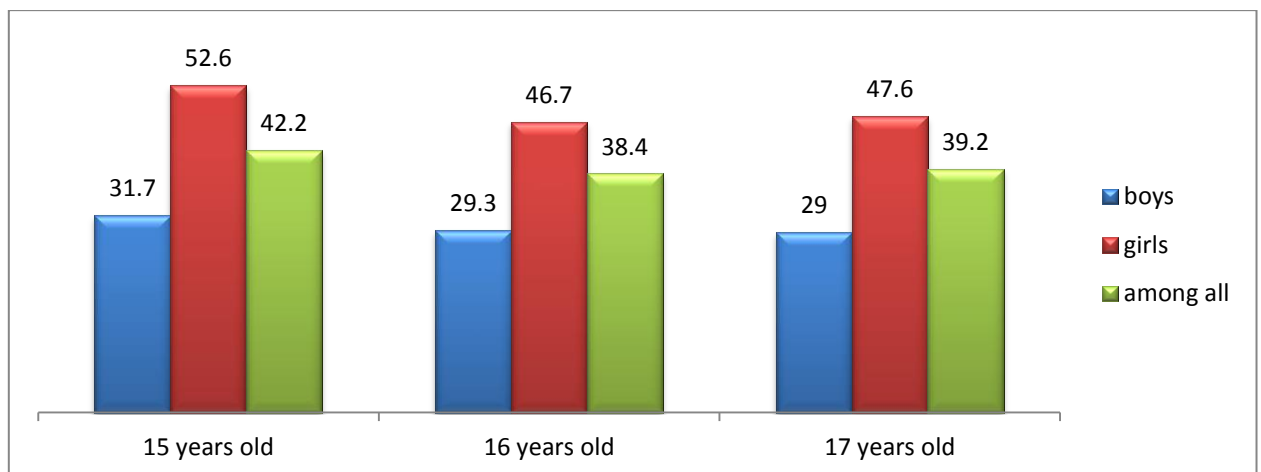


Figure 18. The proportion of young people who can easily feel the warmth and care of their best friend, % by age and gender

Almost every fifth (17.7%) and every fourth (23.6%) respondent said that most of their friends smoke cigarettes and drink alcoholic beverages.

The experience of applying for social services and medical assistance

More than a half (57.6%) of the surveyed adolescents said that they can easily seek medical care without parental supervision at any medical institution, which is available to them (e.g., school, clinic, etc) (see Figure 19).

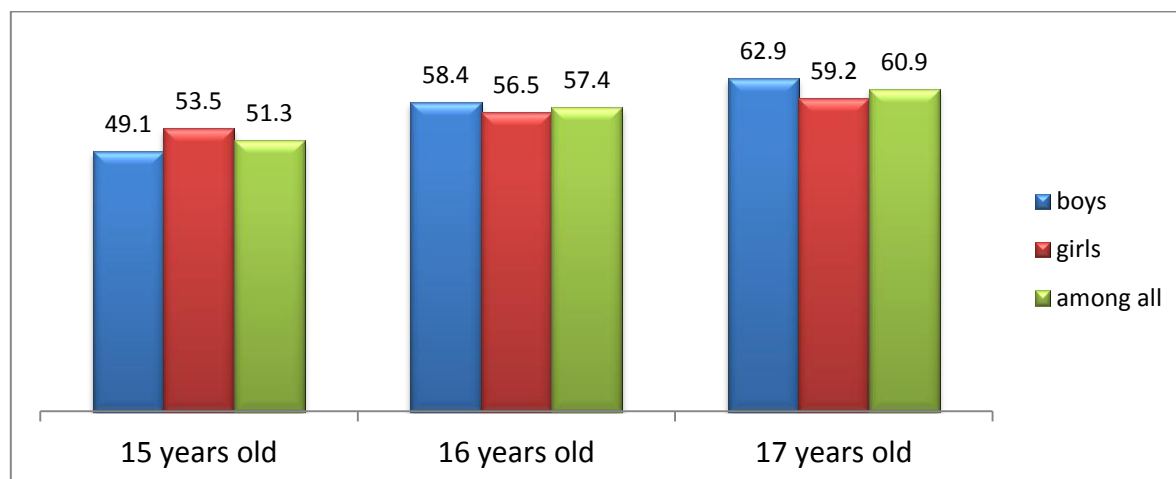


Figure 19. The percentage of young people who easily seek medical care in any medical institution without parents, % by age and gender

The majority of respondents (60,4%) know where to go if they want to take an HIV test.

Most popular organizations which are addressed by respondents to receive medical and social care during the last 12 months were: clinic/first-aid station/medical clinic according to the place of residence (28,7%), the youth-friendly clinic (27,3%); the anonymous trust cabinet (23.5%). The least popular place among respondents is the “Hot line” – only 2.4% addressed their issues there.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the successful implementation of the Strategy of drug policy for the period until 2020² and as the important steps for the prevention of risky behaviour, we suggest the following:

- the formation of a comprehensive alcohol and drug policy, aimed at identifying social and economic costs of substance use, reducing the prevalence of drug use among the general population and among young people, in particular, among school-aged children.
- on-going monitoring and evaluation of implementation of already adopted legislation, orders, regulations prohibiting smoking and drinking alcohol in public places.
- expansion of the interaction network of Youth Friendly Clinics, non-governmental organizations experts with school staff.
- formation and implementation of measures to conduct antinicotine informational and educational campaign for students, parents and professionals.
- taking into account successful implementation of the educational course “Health Basics”, continue systematic educational work with children and adolescents in the area of health promotion.
- the implementation of social programs for MARA and their immediate environment, work with families in difficult life circumstances.
- strengthening preventive education on the use of Internet resources.
- general educational establishments need to develop a strategy for cooperation with parents, to actively involve them in the school life, offer common forms of entertainment on campus, to inform about the results of the school surveys with a focus on the adolescents’ assessment of the parents’ awareness level.
- the active involvement of youth in public control over the regulations observance and implementation of programs designed to support health promotion, including a ban on the sale of alcohol to minors, their use in public places, etc.
- youth participation in the joint initiative of UNAIDS and UNICEF “All In” to ensure young people with a central role in the international movement to spread medical, political and educational activities in the area of HIV.

² On approval of the Strategy of drug policy for the period to 2020 : Order of CMU from 28.08.2013, № 735-p [Electronic resource]. – Access to: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/735-2013-%D1%80>

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