Evidence based primary prevention: The Icelandic Model

Dr. Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir

ICSRA / Reykjavik University

- Smoke daily
- Have tried hashish

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• What did we learn?
• How were the findings used?
• What are the benefits?
Youth in Iceland:

• Theory-based, multi-level community-wide intervention;

• Empirical evidence on risk and protective factors;

• Dialogue between social scientists, policy makers and practitioners
The way it was...
The way we want it...

...but set sail based on knowledge!
The adolescent world

WHAT DID WE LEARN?
Proportion of students in 10\textsuperscript{th} grade who have become drunk 10 times or more during last 12 months (ESPAD, 1995)
Proportion of students in 10\textsuperscript{th} grade who have had accidents or injuries related to alcohol use (ESPAD, 1995)
Substance use follows cohorts

## The Icelandic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factors</th>
<th>Protective factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organized youth work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having friends who smoke, drink and use other substances</td>
<td>- Participating in sports with a team or a club</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Engaging in structured activities within youth recreational centres</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Extracurricular activities in school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Other: scout clubs, rescue squads, religious groups etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unstructured activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attending parties</td>
<td>- Support: caring and warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spending time downtown nights/weekends</td>
<td>- Monitoring: knowing with whom and where the adolescents are in the evenings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hanging out around malls/shopping centres</td>
<td>- Amount of time spent with parents</td>
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HOW WERE THE FINDINGS USED?
Several NGO’s focusing on prevention among youth were formed during the period

**Their efforts sought to:**

- Promote collaboration between parents and schools
- Encourage parents to spend more time with their adolescent children
Examples of actions

• Neighborhood level:
  • Parental watch

• City level:
  • A pre-paid leisure time card to participate in formal, structured youth activities

• National level
  • Media campaigns aimed at discouraging adolescent alcohol use and cigarette smoking, implemented by the Icelandic Public Health Institute
A highly-publicized, annual “Prevention Day” was launched in 2007 by the President of Iceland, the goals of which were to:

- increase time spent by adolescents with their parents,
- postpone the onset of alcohol use until 18 years of age, and
- increase adolescent participation in structured and organized youth activities supervised by adults.
What were the returns?
Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade who spend time (often/almost always) with their parents during weekdays

Time spent with parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My parents know where I am in the evenings (applies very or rather well to me) 9th and 10th grade

Increased parental monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of students in 9th grade that participate in sports in a sports club four times per week or more

Increased organized sports participation

2000: 23.0%, 2006: 34.0%, 2012: 42.0%

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Proportion of students in 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} grade who have been out after 10 pm (3 times or more) in the past week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Less late outside hours}
Alcohol use past 30 days (ESPAD)
Substance use has declined dramatically

15 – 16 year old who have become drunk past 30 days in some European cities 2012 – 2013
15 – 16 year old who have become drunk past 30 days in Reykjavik 2013 and 1998
Thank you

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