

# The use of alcohol and drugs by contemporary school pupils on the verge of adolescence: the Polish experience

Katarzyna Pawełek,

Department of Resocialization, Faculty of Education Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland; pawelek\_katarzyna@wp.pl

## INTRODUCTION

The presentation was conducted on the following risk behaviors: contact with stimulants – drinking alcohol and taking drugs among Poznań school pupils as part of the programme entitled School Free from Drugs and Violence.

The research was carried out in two stages: 2008-2013 and 2014-2016 (Pawełek 2016). The pilot study was conducted in 2007.

The third stage is scheduled for the last quarter of 2019.

## AIM OF THE PROJECT

The Programme of Counteracting and Restriction of Drug Addiction as well as the Demoralization and Juvenile Delinquency School Free from Drugs and the Violence is implemented on the area of secondary schools in Poznań from 2007.

The aim of the program was an introduction and realization of uniform forms of the cooperation of the school communities (schools, parents and pupils), police and the municipal guard in the scope of counteracting addictions and other risky behaviours.

## RESEARCH

Researches conducted by the Department of Resocialization of the Faculty of Educational Studies Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań were an integral part of the Programme School Free from Drugs and Violence.

The research aimed at determining the state of security of the junior highschools was carried out in **two stages**.

**In the first phase of study**, 2008-2013, the investigation concentrated on determining the frequency of incidence of risk behaviors of junior highschool students. The main focus was on the following behaviors: **contact with stimulants** (cigarettes, **alcohol, drugs**), physical and verbal aggression, sexual behaviors, thefts, vandalism, behaviors classified as “different” (that is violating norms of conduct superimposed by the adult world and watching someone else suffer).

In the years 2008-2013 1285 students at the age of 12 – 13 were studied.

Research was carried out by the self-report method.

Analysing appearing of each risk behaviours three levels of the frequency were taken into consideration (within the last year and at any time until now):

- Incidental level, when the given behaviours had place 1-2 times.
- Average level, when the given behaviours had place 3-5 times.
- High level, when the given behaviour had place 6-10 and more times.

**In the second stage**, 2014-2016, it became crucial to stipulate the conditions for risk behaviors for the youth inside and outside of school environment. Information on the dangers which students can face at school and its surroundings, which also pose a threat to their development, may be used to determine the scale of dangerous behaviors and situations and plan preventive action adequate to the needs of school environments. The focus was on three areas: firstly, on the sense of security of students at school and its surrounding; secondly, on the educational environment of school in the awareness of students; thirdly on risk behaviors in the awareness of students (eg. **alcohol, drugs**).

According to distinct research areas the author's tool was devised – a questionnaire form “Safety at school and outside it”; 329 students were studied.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Findings are demonstrating particular **areas of risks** – with reference to the contact with intoxicants area of risk is a relatively large group of pupils have behind initiation into alcohol and drugs. The most popular intoxicants- irrespective of the levels of frequency (incidental, average, high level) – are: alcohol- beer and wine; intoxicants (glues and solvents) – alarming behaviours are, admittedly few on each of frequency levels, cases of taking intoxicants

- The initiated research constituted a response to the postulate of symptomatic prevention, which aims at early detection of budding stages of social maladjustment or factors increasing the probability of their occurrence (Pytka 1993, p. 570). Implementing early assessment creates an opportunity to detect not only budding stages of reprehensible behaviour unregistered by the institutions of formal social control (ie. by the police), but also to make early intervention.

- **Note:** in 2008-2016 research was conducted in junior high schools. In 2017, the reform of education entered into force, under which junior high schools were liquidated, an eight-year elementary school was established and in its seventh grades (equivalent to the 1st grade of junior high school); the third edition of research will be inaugurated in 2019.

## OUTCOMES: SELECTED ASPECTS

Chart 1 Drinking beer in general 2008-2013

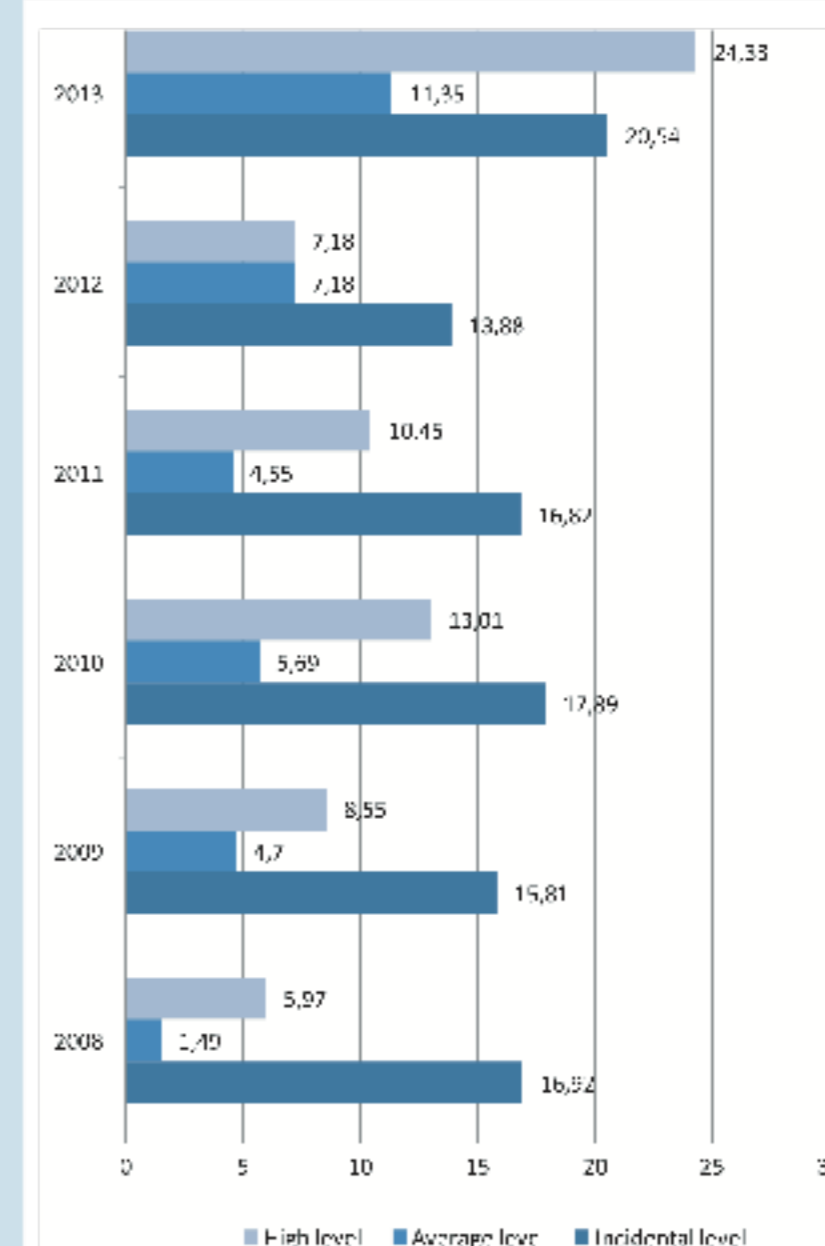


Chart 2 Drinking wine in general 2008-2013

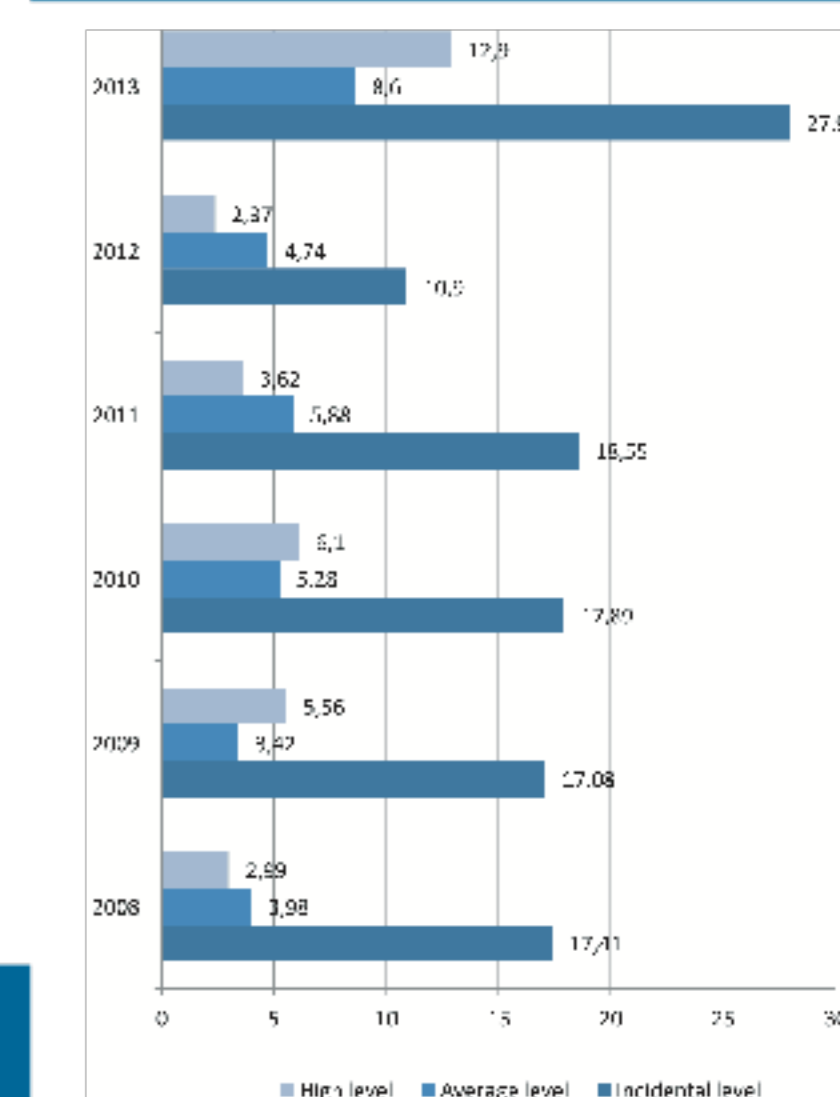


Chart 3 Using glue and solvents in general 2008-2013

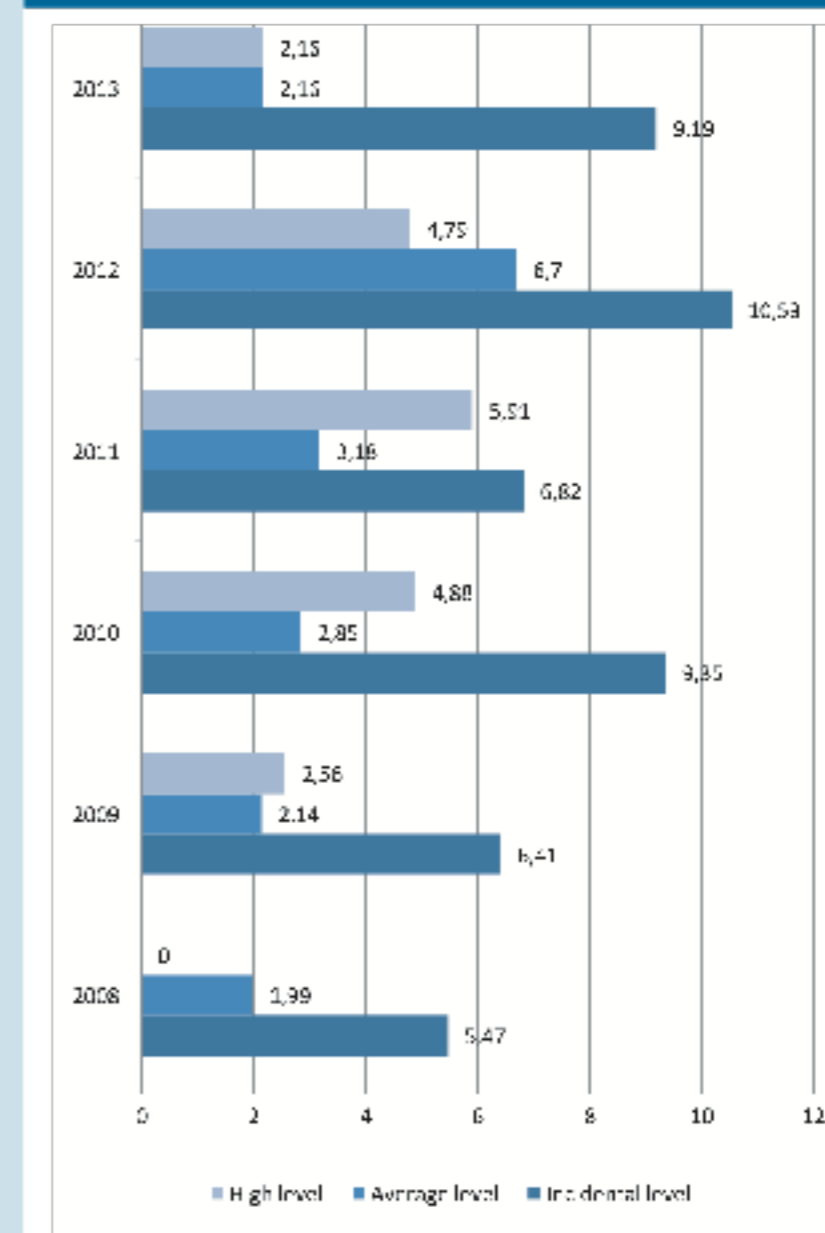


Chart 4 Drinking alcohol and contact with narcotics in general - 2014

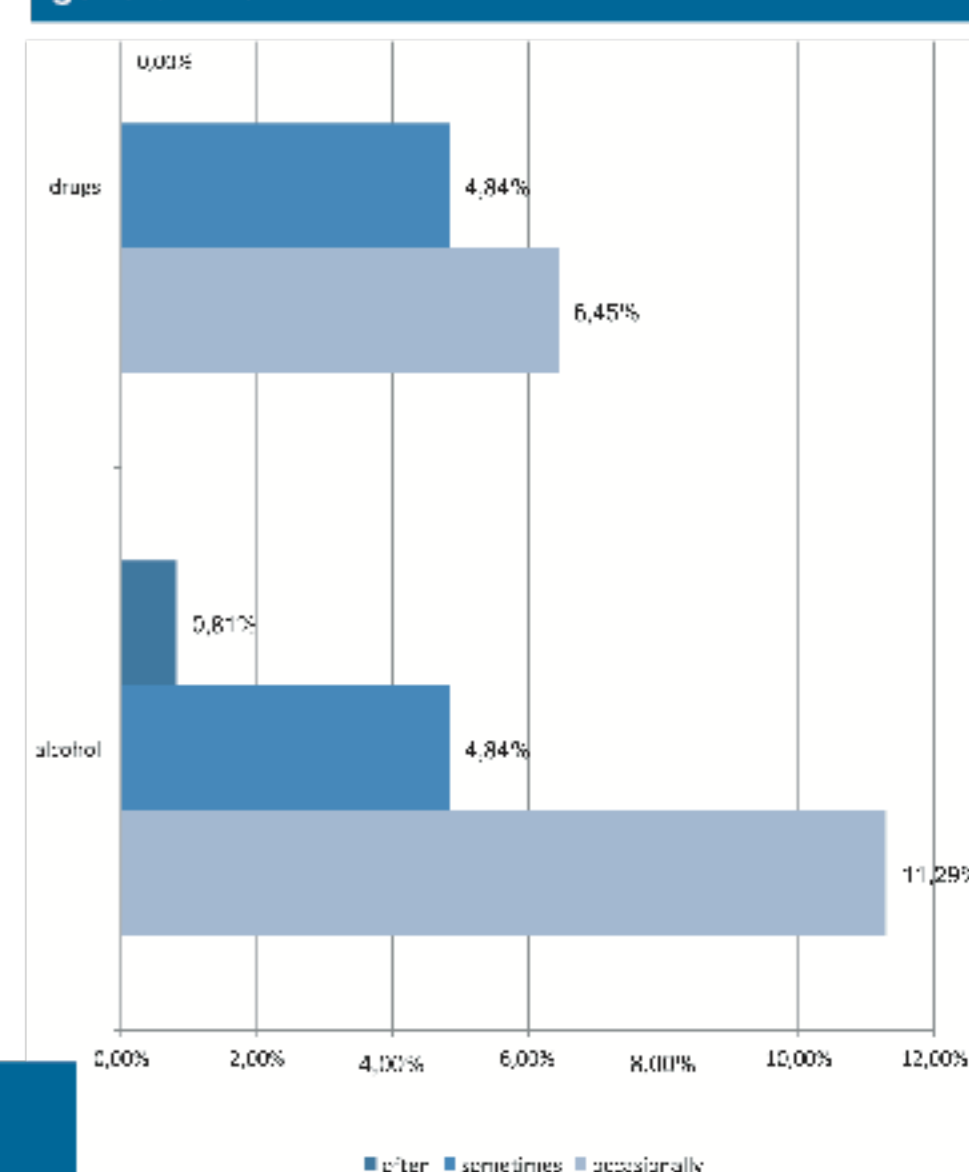


Chart 5 Drinking alcohol and contact with narcotics in general - 2015

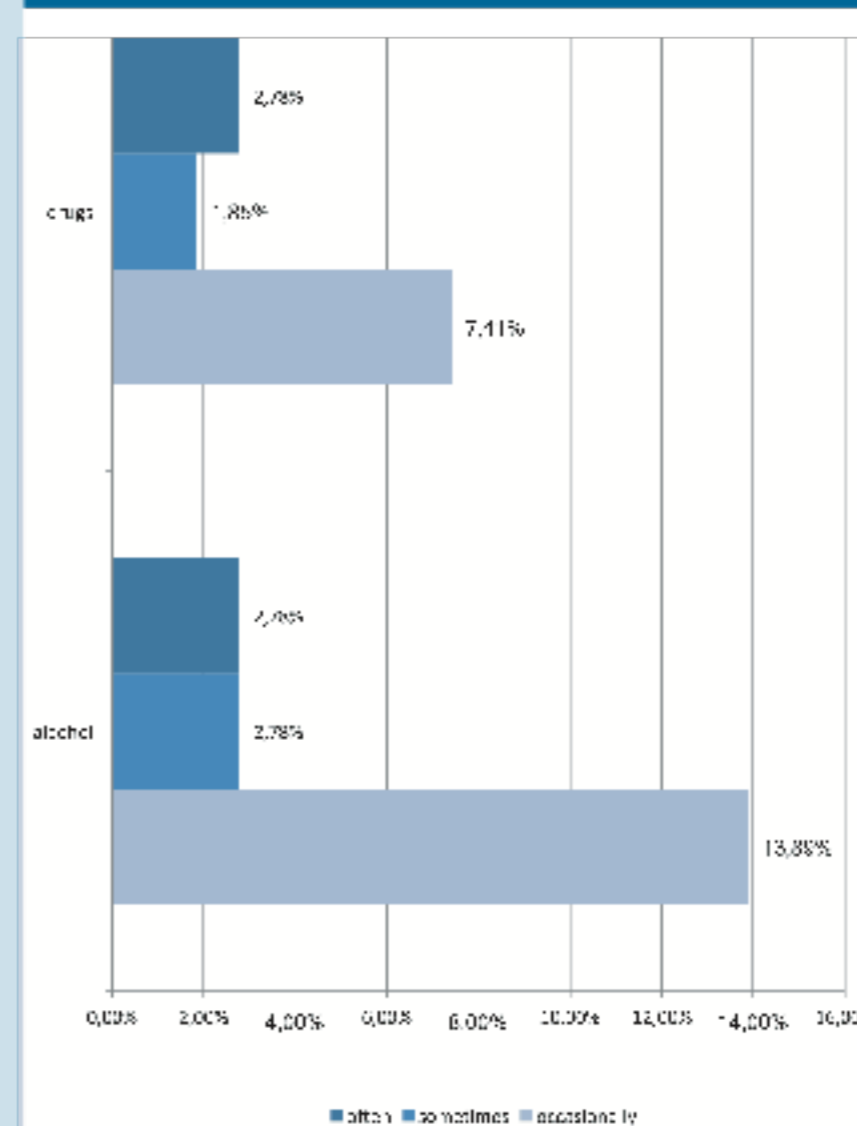
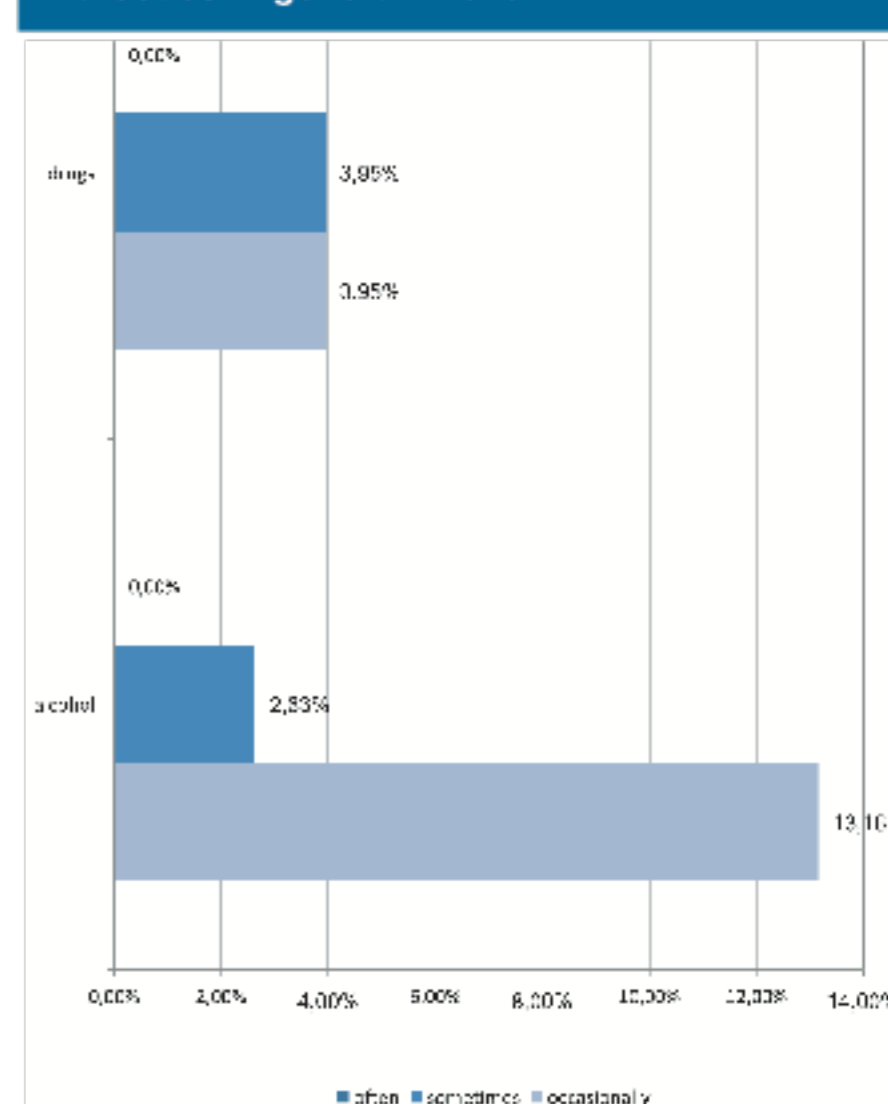


Chart 6 Drinking alcohol and contact with narcotics in general - 2016



### Conclusion

- *Reaching for alcohol and narcotics by young people ought to be seen as exceptionally threatening, both in terms of health and education. Indeed, it reflects - on the one hand - a significant inertia of the adult generation, and on the other, a large dose of a sense of impunity of the young generation. Speaking with the words of Jacek Woroniecki - „insufficiencies stemming from the scarcity of chastising, sanctioned with pedagogical liberalism (...) greatly weaken the cohesion of all social institutions” (Woroniecki 1992, p. 66).*

## REFERENCES

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2. Pytka L., Pedagogika resocjalizacyjna, [in] Encyklopedia Pedagogiczna, (ed.) W. Pomykała, Fundacja Innowacja, Warszawa 1993, p. 630-631.