

Aim

To identify profiles of 18 years old Portuguese youngsters, according with patterns of licit and illicit psychoactive products use

Method

TYPE OF STUDY: Census POPULATION: Portuguese nationals that turn 18 years old in 2017 (N=137 625)

INSTRUMENT: Self report anonymous questionnaire filled on a tablet

MEASUREMENTS: Self-reported lifetime, last 12 months and last 30 days frequency of tobacco, alcohol, non-prescribed tranquilizers/sedatives, NPS (synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, plants/others) and illicit drugs use (cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines/methamphetamines (including ecstasy), hallucinogens and heroin/other opiates); last 12 months binge drinking frequency (male: 6 or more alcoholic drinks; female: 5 or more alcoholic drinks, in the same occasion) and drunkenness (stumble, talking with difficulty, vomiting, not remembering later what happened). The frequency scale used was: 0/1-2/3-5/6-9/10-19/20-39/40 occasions or more. Polydrug use in the last 12 months (at least one of the following associations of products in the same occasion (yes/no): alcohol and energy drinks; alcohol and cannabis; alcohol and cocaine; alcohol, cannabis and cocaine; different cannabis derivatives; alcohol and tranquilizers/sedatives; other); experience of alcohol/illicit drugs use in the last 12 months related problems (for alcohol and illicit substances separately, at least one of the following problems (yes/no): school/work productivity; health, that requires medical assistance; behaviors at home; financial; violent/disorderly behavior; unprotected sex; emotional distress); sociodemography (gender

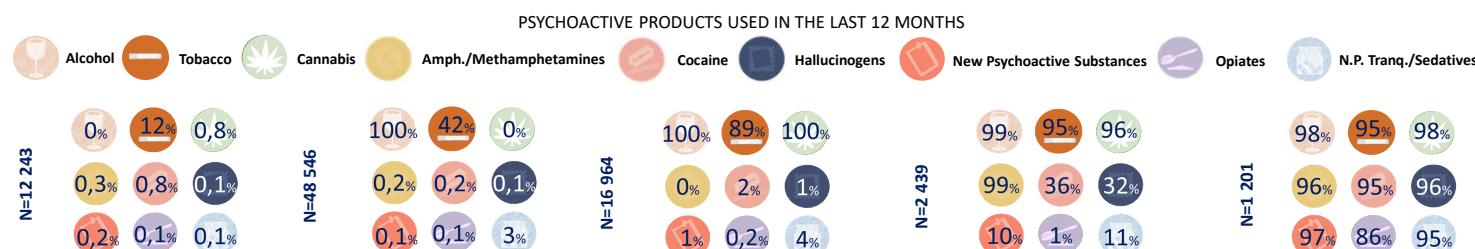
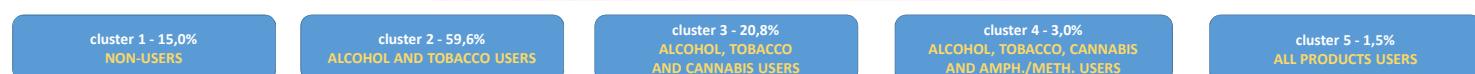
(male/female), education level, from oneself and parents (6th grade or less/ 7th /8th /9th / 10th / 11th / 12th grades/technological course after 12th grade/higher education); employment (student/working-student-employed/unemployed)).

DATA COLLECTION: occurred in the National Defence Day Dissemination Centres across Portugal, between January and November 2017 in the rooms used to do the divulgation activities programmed for the day. All Portuguese citizens are legally required to participate in the National Defence Day in the year that they turn 18 years old.

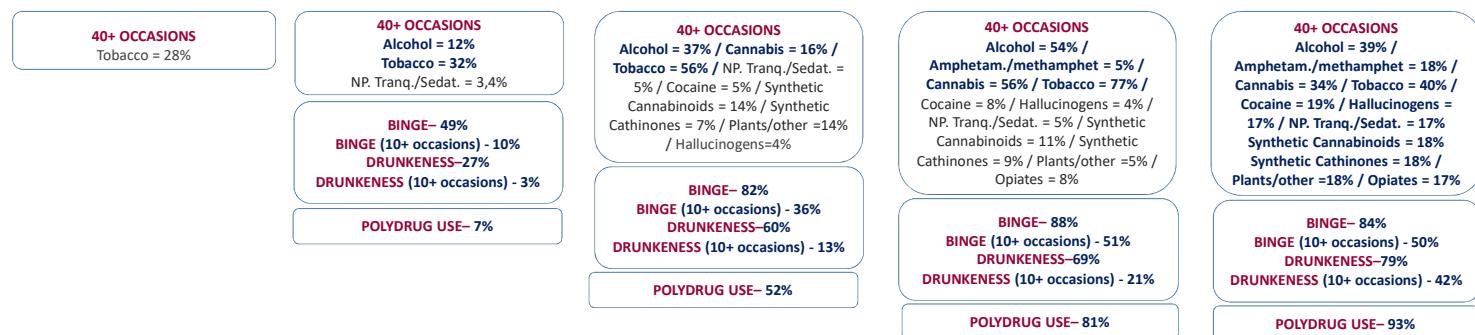
SAMPLE: The participation in the study was not mandatory. 82 854 accepted to participate: 51% male; 62% in the 10th-12th grade/22% in higher education; 73% students/9% working-students/7% unemployed/11% employed. As family background, 14% have a father with higher education and 20% a mother.

DATA ANALYSIS: A cluster analysis based on last 12 months substance use was performed (1st step: hierarquical; 2nd step: k-means). 5 clusters were identified and described according to patterns of consumption, experience of problems and sociodemography.

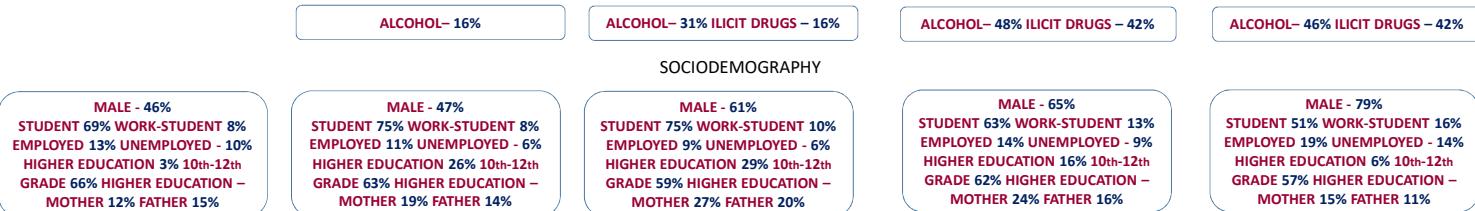
Results



CONSUMPTION PATTERNS LAST - 12 MONTHS (AMONG LAST 12 MONTHS USERS)



EXPERIENCE OF PROBLEMS RELATED WITH ALCOHOL/ILICIT DRUGS USE - LAST 12 MONTHS (AMONG LAST 12 MONTHS USERS)



Discussion and conclusions

The cluster analysis performed on the data from 82 854 Portuguese citizens led to the identification of 5 different groups of 18 years old according to the use of psychoactive products in the 12 months before the survey. The larger group (60%) corresponds to youngsters that mainly drink alcohol, half of them also smoking tobacco. The second larger group, corresponding to 21% of 18 years old, mainly uses alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. Not using psychoactive products is less common: 15% declare almost any use. On the other hand, less than 5% have a consumption profile that can be characterized by the use of illicit products other than cannabis. These groups seem to correspond to an hierarchy on intensity of consumption patterns and prevalence of experienced problems. From cluster 1 to cluster 5 there is a (non-linear) increase in the intensity of alcohol consumption and, also, an increase in the experience of problems attributed to this consumption. The intensity of cannabis use is higher in the clusters of 18 years old that also use other illicit products, especially in the cluster that mainly uses alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and amphetamines/methamphetamines (including ecstasy). On the other hand, cluster 5, characterized by the larger experience with drugs, also tends to have more intensive consumption patterns of illicit drugs different from cannabis, of NPS and, also, of non-prescribed tranquilizers/sedatives. The experience of problems attributed to the use of illicit psychoactive products is higher in the groups characterized by the consumption of a broader range of products and more intensive consumption patterns (clusters 4 and 5). Although users from cluster 5 apparently have more intensive consumption patterns, the prevalence of problems attributed to them is similar between the two groups. This can be explained by the adoption of more effective strategies to minimize the impacts of substance use on ones life and/or by attributing less the cause of their problems to consumption. Cluster 5 has a higher proportion of male elements, which is coherent with Portuguese national data on gender differences in illicit substance use, being the gender ratio higher on illicit use, especially in illicit products other than cannabis. In fact, the more male elements in the clusters the greater the consumption of psychoactive substances. The school drop out is also higher in cluster 5, which is also coherent with literature that relates deviance and educational underachievement. On the other hand, it should be noted that the group of 18 years old with higher academic attainment and from a higher academic family background corresponds to the alcohol, tobacco and cannabis users, although cannabis is used infrequently. This may be explained by the higher normalization of cannabis in comparison to other illicit products. Finally, the clusters with lower academic family background are either the one that almost doesn't use psychoactive products (1) or the one with broader experience (5). This study provided a better understanding of consumption patterns and their relation with the experience of problems but further comprehension is needed on individual, family and social factors that mediate the relations between consumption patterns and impacts in one's life.