

Do parents want to change alcohol legislations to protect their children?

Background

In all the European countries age limits for selling and serving alcohol are set up. In spite of this fact, the alcohol use among adolescents in Europe is still rather high (although it is decreasing in most of the developed countries). A crucial role in the process of initiating and maintaining drinking habits play the parents of adolescents. The question is whether the parents think that their children are mature enough to drink alcohol?

Method:

- ✓ CAPI interviews (2017)
- ✓ Representative, random sample, quota based on the gender of a child
- ✓ Adolescents aged 15 and 17 (n=400) and their parents (n=400)
- ✓ Analysis: descriptive and logistic regression (separate models for parents of younger

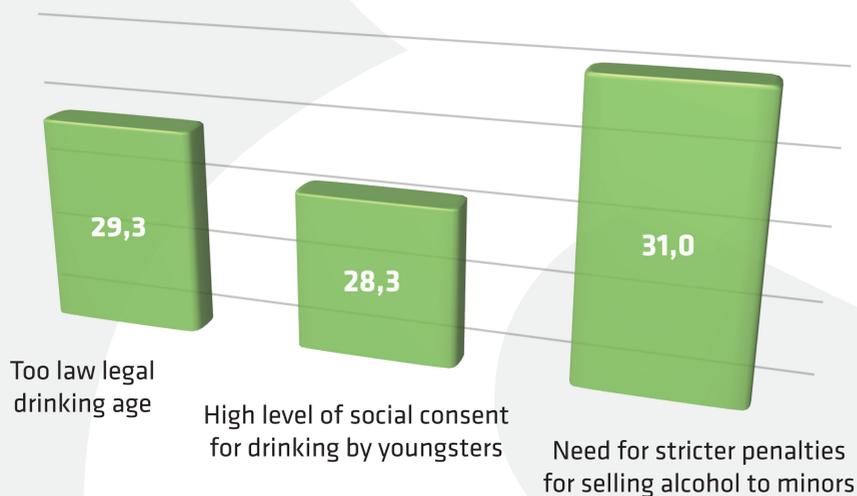
and older adolescents) explaining parental "willingness to change the law" by:

- adolescent variables (sense of support from the family, permission given by parents for a child to drink alcohol and drinking alcohol by a child)
- parental variables (attitudes towards alcohol-related socialization of a child and perceived optimal age of legal alcohol purchase)

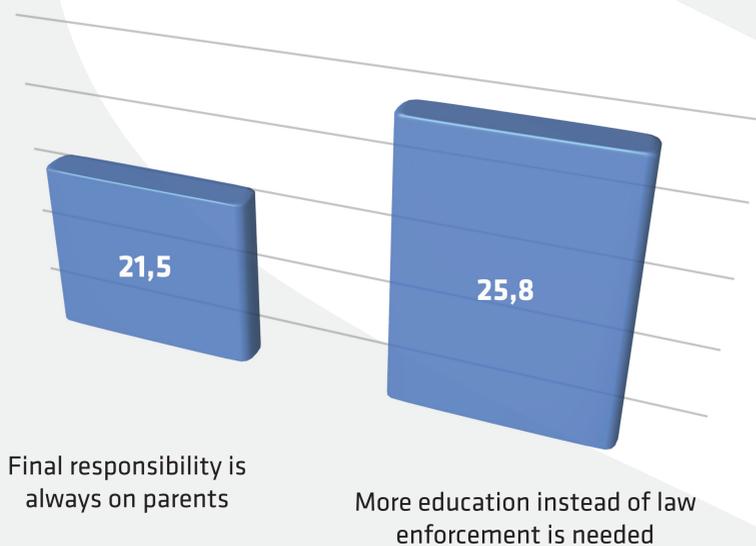
Results:

The tightening up of regulations to protect children from alcohol-related harm is supported by 61% of parents.

Their motives include:



Those who are satisfied with the present law (39%) argue that:



Logistic regression models for prediction of willingness to change the law of parents of 15 and 17 years old children

Variables (reference category)		Categories	17 years old children	15 years old children
Parental variables	Acknowledgement of the key role of parents in helping children make decisions about alcohol (parental role is of key importance)	The role of parents is the same as of the others	-	-
	Perceived optimal age of legal alcohol purchase (Less than 18)	= 18	-	-
		> 18	* ↓	-
	Perceived difficulties in enforcing alcohol rules (no)	yes	-	-
	Opinion that alcohol is a threat to child's health (rather untrue)	Rather true	-	-
		Totally true	-	-
Who should help children in making responsible decisions about alcohol (parents and school)	Parents and others (but not school)	-	-	
	No one	-	-	
Adolescent variables	Sense of child support from the family (week)	Medium	-	* ↓
		Strong	-	-
	Drinking alcohol by a child (no)	Yes	-	-
Mother's permission to drink alcohol (no)	Yes	* ↓	-	
	Father's permission to drink alcohol (no)	Yes	* ↑	-

*p<0,05

Logistic regression analysis indicated that more willing to change alcohol legislations are parents who think that alcohol legal drinking age should be higher than 18, who give low or high emotional support for their children (in contrast to moderate level of support). The relationship of emotional support for a child and attitude toward legal

measures is statistically significant among parents of 15-year-olds, while among parents of the older adolescents (17 years of age) the acceptance for tightened regulations is associated with the attitude of mothers (firm, negative) and fathers (positive) toward alcohol use by their child.

Conclusions

Although the majority of parents would like to change legislations regarding alcohol use by minors, they rather do not support any of the concrete solutions proposed in the questionnaire such as increasing legal drinking age or stricter penalties for selling alcohol to minors. It may suggest that parents advocate the enforcement of existing provisions rather than tightening up regulations. Significant factors determining parental willingness to tighten alcohol legislations is their opinion on the optimal legal drinking age, parental emotional support perceived by their 15-year-olds and explicit father's (but not mother's) permission to drink alcohol given to a 17-year-old child.

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