

Adolescents' Psychoactive Substance Use During the First COVID-19 Lockdown: A Cross Sectional Study in Italy

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Background: Italy was one of the first European countries to be affected by Covid-19; and the severity of the pandemic resulted in a nationwide lockdown that had a significant impact on the population, particularly adolescents. Distance-learning, moving restrictions and pandemic-related concerns, created a particularly stressful situation. This cross-sectional study aims to analyse substance consumption and its associated factors during the Covid-19 lockdown imposed by the Italian government. **Methods:** The ESPAD questionnaire is administered yearly in Italian high schools. In 2020, it was administered online during dedicated hours of distance learning, collecting data from 6027 Italian students (52.4% were male) aged 15–19. The data collected from the 2020 questionnaire was matched with that collected in 2019 to ensure comparability. **Results:** During the lockdown period, the prevalence of consumption of each substance decreased, and the most commonly used substance was alcohol (43.1%). There were changes in factors associated with psychoactive substance use, especially painkillers and non-prescription drugs. For instance, unlike the 2019 model, in 2020, spending money without parental control was associated with painkillers and non-prescription drug use, while risk perception was not. **Conclusions:** Despite restrictions and increased difficulties in obtaining psychoactive substances, their consumption continued, and students with particular risk factors continued to use them, possibly changing the type of substance used.