

Substance Use Among Medical Students in Greece

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Introduction

Limited research exists worldwide on medical students' substance use patterns including alcohol and marijuana use.

Aim

The aim of the study was to examine the prevalence of substance use, including marijuana, alcohol and other illicit substances (i.e. cocaine, hallucinogens and ecstasy) in a sample of medical students in Greece.

Methods

655 students from the School of Medicine of Thessaloniki completed an anonymous, web-based survey including the CAGE questionnaire for alcohol abuse. Students were asked to report the frequency (lifetime, past year, past month) and the motive of the use.

Results

72% percent of the students reported having never used any illegal substance and 21% reported marijuana use at least once in their lifetime. 20.9 % were nicotine smokers. No gender difference regarding marijuana use was observed. Marijuana users underestimated the risk of marijuana use on their health compared to non users. Although the relative mean Cage scores are low indicating a lack of severe alcohol related problems in our sample, there is a significantly higher mean CAGE score in students who use marijuana. The use of other illicit substances was rare (3% used inhalers, 2.3 % cocaine, 2.3% ecstasy, 2% ketamine, 1.8% amphetamines and 1.7% mephedrone). However, the use of marijuana was significantly correlated with use of cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, ketamine, amphetamine and mephedrone.

Conclusions

The findings represent initial data on the prevalence of substance use among Greek medical students. Nationwide studies are needed further investigating the prevalence, the motivation and the impact of this risky behaviour among this population.