

# School Questionnaire Survey of Substance Use and other Forms of Risk-taking Behaviour among Adolescents and their Personality Characteristics



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**Citation:** Skopal, O., Dolejš, M. (2014). Školní dotazníková studie o návykových látkách, dalších formách rizikového chování a osobnostních charakteristikách adolescentů. *Adiktologie*, (14)1, 54–65.

**BACKGROUND:** The main effort of the research project was to verify the efficacy of the SURPS questionnaire tool in the relatively extensive mapping of risk behaviour in the adolescent population. Adolescence involves a large number of risk factors that may have a dramatic impact on future behaviour. We perceive the study of personality traits in adolescents as an opportunity for effective and early screening of individuals at risk. **AIMS:** To analyse the relationship between risk-taking behaviour among adolescents and personality traits representing the risk of engaging in this behaviour. **METHODS:** We used two questionnaires: 1) "Substance Use Risk Profile Scale" (SURPS); 2) a questionnaire focused on selected forms of risk behaviour. **SAMPLE:** The sample consisted of 836 pupils (aged 13–16 years) from randomly selected primary and junior secondary schools in all four regions in Moravia. **RESULTS:** the interpretation of the results, which show the prevalence of substance use,

found statistically significant relationships between the SURP's four personality traits (hopelessness, anxiety sensitivity, impulsivity, sensation seeking) and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and marihuana. Of particular interest are the differences found between the group of respondents who are not regular smokers and those who are. The latter group showed the highest difference in hopelessness/negative thinking, where the relationship under monitoring is significant at the  $p < .001$  level. Moreover, we were able to confirm the population norms for SURPS for the Czech Republic, the standardisation of which took place in 2010. **CONCLUSIONS:** The study presents the relationships between substance use and personality traits measured by SURPS. Findings confirm that SURPS is an effective tool for identifying risk-taking individuals and has a potential for use in prevention programmes.

**KEY WORDS:** ADOLESCENCE – RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOUR – PREVALENCE – PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS – SURPS

**Submitted:** 20 / NOVEMBER / 2013

**Accepted:** 6 / MARCH / 2014

**Grant support:** Grant support from the Philosophical Faculty of Palacky University as part of SGS / IGA (FF\_2013\_012).

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