Evidence Based Primary Prevention

The Icelandic Model

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Introduction
Reykjavik in the summer of 1997
15-16 year old who have become drunk past 30 days in Reykjavik and in some European cities 2017

%  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>RVK 2013</th>
<th>RVK 1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RVK 2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVK 1998</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Iceland knows how to stop teen substance abuse

But the rest of the world isn’t listening
Iceland knows how to stop teen substance abuse but the rest of the world isn’t listening

In Iceland, teenage smoking, drinking and drug use have been radically cut in the past 20 years. Emma Young finds out how they did it, and why other countries won’t follow suit
Based on the Icelandic Prevention Model

From highest to lowest in substance use – 15/16 year old students
Heavy episodic drinking in the last 30 days*

*ESPAD 2015
Substance Use Amongst European Youth
(ESPAD, 2015)

- Iceland
  - Cigarette use past 30 days
  - Drunk past 30 days
  - Lifetime use of cannabis

- Malta
  - Cigarette use past 30 days
  - Drunk past 30 days
  - Lifetime use of cannabis
International development of the Model

Youth in Europe started 2005
Easily Transferable

• The Model can be implemented in any community
• Everywhere parents are afraid that their children start using drugs
• If the solution is there, why not at least give it a try?
What is the commitment?
Global reach

As of 2019 we have partnered with over 100 communities in Australia, Chile, Portugal, Spain, France, Malta, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Faeroe Islands, Netherlands, Ireland, Ukraine, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau.
Global reach

As of 2020 – almost 200

Australia, Canada, USA, Chile, Portugal, Spain, France, Malta, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Faeroe Islands, Netherlands, Ireland, Ukraine, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau.
Building blocks
The three pillars of success

The Icelandic model is predicated upon three pillars:

1) Evidence-based practice
2) Using a community-based approach
3) Creating and maintaining a dialogue among research, policy and practice
Upon reflection

evidence
community
dialogue
Why research based?

• Medicine
• Engineering
• Tourism
• Fisheries
• Pharmaceutical industries
• Children’s lives, health and well-being
Youth in Iceland database 1992 - 2018

Data collections in schools

- 10 – 13 year old (since 2000) Primary school
- 14 – 16 year old (since 1992) Primary school
- 16 – 20 year old (since 1992) High-school
Indicators

- lifestyle leisure
- substance use
- internet gambling
- depressive symptoms
- local community
- violence
- activities
- life events strain
- peer group
- delinquency
- values
- physical health
- attitudes
- anxiety
- status indicators
The twofold use of research

1. Scientific
2. Practical
The scientific role of research

• In depth analysis of the data
• Over 100 peer reviewed publications in international journals
• Science forms the platform for practice
The practical role of research

• Data collections on substance use regularly

• Practical information immediately to the municipalities

• Local information INTO all levels of prevention work is a KEY issue
Immediate feedback

- Make sure practical information is out immediately after data collection
- Not 3-4 years later but almost immediately
- Every school, every parent, every prevention worker can have access to current situation in the close community
Measure often

• Continuously
• At least bi-annually
• Things change fast in the lives of adolescents
Sophisticated data systems

• Guarantee immediate feedback to municipalities, schools and practitioners about the local situation amongst youth.

• Speed and accuracy
The researchers “guru” approach
The way we work now
Fact:

Substance use prevention:
There are no quick fixes or simple solutions

Long term population changes will require long-term, population level, interventions
What did we learn?
Analysis

- We learnt several things
- Use of substances on an upward trend
Trends in substance use among 10th grade students in Iceland from 1989-1998
The year is 1998

At this point in time research had already showed us that certain circumstances and behaviour in the lives of adolescents were strongly connected with substance use.

We tried to establish the risk and protective factors.
The main risk and protective factors

- Family factors
- Peer group effect
- School
- Extracurricular activities, sports
And analysing deeper

Organized activities vs. unorganized
Extracurricular activities, sports
Inside and outside of school, at home, bullying e.t.c.
School
Family factors
Peer group effect
Time spent with parents
Support, Monitoring, Control
Positive and negative effects. How we as parents approach the peer group. Staying outside late. Hanging out in malls.
1998 Drug-free Iceland

• A totally new methodology in substance use prevention

• Obviously, what we had been doing before, was not working
We had been doing this
Remember this?
Aim of Drug-free Iceland

• To change the actual **behaviour** of youth and not only their **attitudes**

• Change the **life-style environment** of our children so that they would be in **lesser risk** of substance use
Digging deeper
Substance use follows cohorts

**Lifetime drunkenness**

- **Children born 1985**
  - 13 years: 20%
  - 14 years: 57%
  - 15 years: 41%

- **Children born 1991**
  - 13 years: 10%
  - 14 years: 41%
  - 15 years: 41%
Alcohol use trend in Icelandic High-Schools 16 - 20 year old students
Drunk past 30 days – once or more often

- 15-16 year old students in 1998: 42%
- Under 18 year old students in High-school in 2016: 25%
Never got drunk in lifetime
High-Schools 16 - 20 year old students
Population cohort proportion enrolled into drug use treatment in Iceland over time

Source: SÁÁ Annual Report 2016
Number of individuals, 19 and younger, enrolled into treatment, 1977 - 2015
Source: SÁÁ Annual Report 2016
“Underage drinking is a leading public health problem. People who reported starting to drink before the age of 15 were four times more likely to report meeting the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives”

* National Institute of Health
Our focus is primary prevention

1. Primary prevention, preventing the development of substance use before it starts

2. Secondary prevention, that refers to measures that detect substance use

3. Tertiary prevention efforts that focus on people already abusing substances
How were the findings used?
This we knew was important
Examples of local/community actions

• Research as a basis before deciding on any actions
• Strengthen parent organizations and co-operation
• Support young people at risk inside schools
• Form co-operative work groups against drugs
• Support active NGOs’
• Support extracurricular activities / sports
The Leisure Card

• The grant is **400 Euro pr. child** since the beginning of 2017.
• Parents have the right to allocate / transfer a certain amount in the name of their child, to refund the registration fees
• The purpose of the Leisure Card is that all children and adolescents in Reykjavik 6-18 years old can participate in constructive leisure activities regardless of economic or social circumstances
Examples of national/government actions

• Age limits to buy tobacco and alcohol (18 and 20)
• Age of adulthood raised from 16 to 18
• Advertising ban of tobacco and alcohol
• Guidelines on outside hours for adolescents
• Visibility ban of tobacco and alcohol
Tobacco and chewing gum
Peanuts and gin
Community focus
Focus on close community

How could an average figure on alcohol use in your country help prevention workers in your community/municipality?

“Average” doesn’t tell all the story!
Focus on the close community

Brisbane

Melbourne
Local information fuels dialogue

Dialogue between key stakeholders
Politicians, municipalities and local authorities
Parental groups and family planners
School authorities and school workers
Health educators, health and social services
Leisure time workers, prevention workers
Sports and youth institutions
Impact
Rates of students in 9th and 10th grade who spend time (often/almost always) with their parents during weekdays.

Parents and children spend more time together.
“My parents know where I am in the evenings” (applies very or rather well to me) 9th and 10th grade
Rates of students in 9th and 10th grade that participate in sports with a team or club four times per week or more often

Increased participation in organized sports
Rates of students in 9th and 10th grade who have been outside after 10 pm, 3 times+ in the past week

Less late outside hours
And substance use is going down
Thank you!

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Other associated factors...
Measures on bullying (10\textsuperscript{th} graders)

- Group, teasing an individual, 1+
- Group, teasing an individual, 2+
- Group, hurting an individual, 1+
- Group, hurting an individual, 2+
Measures on theft (10th graders)

- Stolen sth worth less than 5,000 ISK, % 1+
  - 1997: 31.6
  - 2006: 20.7
  - 2012: 7.4
  - 2016: 9.5

- Stolen sth worth less than 5,000 ISK, % 2+
  - 1997: 5.0
  - 2006: 7.0
  - 2012: 4.1
  - 2016: 2.9

- Stolen sth worth more than 5,000 ISK, % 1+
  - 1997: 22.4
  - 2006: 12.9
  - 2012: 7.4
  - 2016: 4.9

- Stolen sth worth more than 5,000 ISK, % 2+
  - 1997: 4.1
  - 2006: 3.6
  - 2012: 2.1
  - 2016: 2.9
What about other places?
Core trend: Riga, Latvia (%)
www.planetyouth.org

- Overview of publications
- Members area with more info on processes
- News
- Overview of the team
- Our history
- The method
- Examples from our data collection
- Applications and contact us forms
Thank you!
Icelandic Model publications


