

Pre-conference: Adolescent Risk Taking and Risk Paradigms in Public Health

Amsterdam, November 10 2010

Organized by EUPHA sections on:

Child and Adolescent Public Health

Ethics in Public Health

Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

CHAIRS: J.Lund, E. Maeckelberghe, A.Wiegersma, A.de Winter

Aim of the pre-conference is:

- to increase the knowledge about concepts of risk and risk taking behaviour – discussion of paradigms used;
- to increase the knowledge of the way the development of the brain influences risk taking in adolescents – discussion of the implications for preventive activities;
- to increase the knowledge of the ethical concepts and moral understandings surrounding the paradigms used – discussion
- to be able to apply the knowledge acquired to the design of effective and efficient preventive activities.

INTRODUCTION

Is risk taking behaviour in adolescence to be prevented at all cost or is it just part of the normal development? Adolescents do engage more frequently in risk taking behaviour than adults. For example, adolescents have the lowest rate of seatbelt use observed in any age group. Furthermore, adolescents are notorious for experimentation with drugs, sex, heavy episodic drinking and all kinds of what adults would call 'dangerous and irresponsible behaviour'.

Preventing and changing risk taking behaviour of adolescents is a challenge for professionals, researchers and policy makers. Despite enormous efforts to decrease or prevent this behaviour, prevention or intervention strategies have variable or limited success. Recent publications and discussions in the media raise the question whether public health needs new ideas, concepts and approaches to improve its understanding of adolescent risk behaviour in order to design more effective prevention and intervention strategies.

This preconference will consist of informative presentations, discussion and a workshop. It aims to provide you with new insights in brain development throughout adolescence and its effects on adolescent behaviour. Furthermore, the preconference aims to link ethical concepts and moral understandings of paradigms used in risk taking behaviour.

Managers, policy makers, preventive health care workers and researchers will have the opportunity to share concerns, ideas, theories, and perceptions about risk behaviour and prevention strategies in adolescence. During and at the end of the preconference we will explore the implications of the new insights for decisions in practice, methodological issues or research priorities. We aim to draft an agenda for future research and practice.

Programme:

10.00 – 10.15: chair

Opening and explanation of programme and aims of the pre-conference

10.15 – 10.45: Dr. Andrea de Winter and Dr. Auke Wieggersma (Health Sciences, University Medical Center Groningen)

Risk: what are we talking about?

A short debate about the concept of risk. Questions to be discussed are among others: is 'risk' normal behaviour for adolescents, is an unhealthy lifestyle 'risk taking behaviour', etc.

10.45 – 11.30: Invited speaker

Brain development and risk taking behaviour in adolescents: state of the art.

"Children's thoughts and actions can only be understood if we have a better understanding of the brain mechanisms that support this behaviour."

11.30 – 12.00: Dr. Els Maeckelberghe (Expert Center of Ethics in Care, University Medical Center Groningen)

Ethics of Risk: concepts and moral understandings.

"Risk and risk assessment are no fixed notions but negotiable concepts that assign people with specific responsibilities."

12.00 – 12.30: Prof.dr. Gunnar Breivik (Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education)
Who are the risk takers?

What constitutes 'risk' and does that correspond with the views of a persistent risk taker like Breivik?

12.30 – 12.45: chair

Summary and take home messages of the morning session.

12.45 – 13.30: lunch

13.30 - 14.15 Dr. Ursula Löwe (Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit, Wien).

New ways in prevention of injuries among adolescents, results from AdRisk, an EU project

Introduction and video case-study Amsterdam

14.15 - 14.30 chair

discussion about implications video

14.30 - 14.45 introduction workshop:

Risk research and policy: which way to go? (methods, aim, etc)

14.45 - 15.00 tea and coffee

15.00 - 16.30 *workshop: Risk research and policy: which way to go?*

16.30 - 17.00 workshop leaders:

presentations

17.00 - 17.30 conclusions and future plans and agenda