

**Adolescent drug use escalation and de-escalation: A 3-year follow-up study**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to assess adolescents drug use with a longitudinal perspective in order to identify factors interacting with drug use onset and course. Supported by the Swiss Federal Officer of Public Health, the study was initiated in 1999 with a follow-up in 2001 and 2002. The first objective was to measure risk factors for substance use initiation. The second objective was to analyse the co-variation of substance use with environmental, social, relational, medical and psychological factors. A total of 102 adolescents, aged 14-19 years, were recruited for the study in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Results clearly show that substance use is not a disorder *per se* in adolescence, but that it is part of a multidimensional complex of problems that some adolescents may encounter: increase and decrease in substance use is paralleled with an increase or decrease in the other areas. This implies that prevention of substance use should not be focused mainly on substances but should consider the adolescent's environment and significant life areas.

**An approach to adolescent drug use**

MELISSA KANG

**Abstract**

**BACKGROUND:** Substance use is one the most challenging and emotionally charged areas of general practice as it is in society at large. When this is combined with some of the difficulties in engaging the adolescent patient, it is not uncommon for the general practitioner to feel overwhelmed and unsure about how to approach the issue.

**OBJECTIVE:** This article discusses strategies for GPs in managing adolescent patients with substance abuse, including referral services and opportunities for collaboration and a team approach.

**DISCUSSION:** While there are good reasons to be concerned about substance abuse among adolescents and uncertainty about where to turn for specialised help, there is much the GP can do alone, and in collaboration with other services, to care for the adolescent with a substance use issue.