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SELF-REPORTED DRUNK DRIVING AMONG FINNISH ADOLESCENTS

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J Markkula, K Raitasalo, P Lillsunde, S Ahlström. *National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland*

Background Drunk-driving compromises traffic safety as it impairs driving skills even at very low blood alcohol concentrations among

young drivers. According to previous research, the drunk-driving arrest incidence rate of 18–19-year-olds was twice that of the general population (15–84-year-olds) and also their proportion of alcohol-related crashes was high.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose The aims of this study were to investigate the frequency and patterns of adolescents' self-reported drunk-driving.

Methods The data were collected with a nationally representative cluster sample of 15–16-year-old pupils (n=3744) as part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) in 2011.

Results/Outcome According to the results, 15% of boys and 11% of girls reported that they had driven a motor vehicle after drinking alcohol or using drugs during the past 12 months. 4% of them reported also at that time getting into a traffic accident. The vehicle used by drunken drivers was in most cases a moped or a scooter. Girls reported a bit more often than boys being a passenger in a motor vehicle driven by a drunk-driver (16% vs 10%). Typically the driver was a friend (77%), but in 19% of cases it was a relative, a family member or other acquaintance. 4% reported the driver was a total stranger.

Significance/Contribution to the Field Different professionals working with adolescents should emphasise the risks related to drunken driving, for example, as part of school health care counselling. Also a lower blood alcohol level to adolescents and young people should be considered in addition to targeted road checks.