Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: To present preliminary results of a pilot project on the prevention of alcohol-associated problems in adolescents with acute alcohol intoxication. METHOD: Questionnaires were filled in by 110 of 128 adolescents (85.9% response rate) who had been admitted to a hospital in Munich, Germany, between December 2007 and July 2008, because of alcohol intoxication. Data were obtained on sociodemographic characteristics, alcohol intoxication and drinking patterns, and were analysed using descriptive methods. RESULTS: Half of these adolescents mainly suffered from moderate to severe degrees of alcohol intoxication. Drinking patterns leading to alcohol intoxication were characterized by relatively low drinking frequency interspersed by episodes of excessive alcohol intake (binge drinking). Thirteen (14.8%) of the adolescents reported previous hospital admissions for alcohol intoxication, nine (17.3%) did not know about the life-threatening danger of alcohol intoxication and twelve (22.2%) reported taking illegal drugs within the last 12 months. CONCLUSION: Adolescents who had been admitted to hospital because of alcohol intoxication had a drinking pattern which put them at a higher risk for alcohol intoxication and acute alcohol-related problems than adolescents in the general population. Re-admission to hospital within 12 months because of alcohol intoxication, revealing a lack of
knowledge about the life-threatening danger of alcohol intoxications and of consuming illegal drugs, may indicate an increased risk for alcohol-related problems. This points to the need for preventive action in adolescents showing these indicators, a need that was met within this pilot project by brief intervention.