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Binge drinking among teens in Spain and recommendations for a prevention approach

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Binge drinking among young people in Spain is a result of the interaction between multiple factors: globalization of consumption patterns; weather conditions that favor consumption in the street, in squares, or in large groups; easy access to alcohol; and a favorable culture of consumption associated with fun, celebration. To achieve a better understanding of this phenomenon, the influence of brain development during adolescence and young adulthood, as well as the late acquisition of reflection skills and self-control, must be taken into account. The human brain continues to develop until the individual is around 25 years of age. Because the brain matures from back to front and the last region to mature is the frontal area, which is involved in making thoughtful and planned decisions, it is necessary that programs are developed with this in mind. It is important to consider the late development of self-control and planning skills when designing and implementing educational programs and strategies to combat heavy drinking in youth. These actions should involve political, social, and educational agents, in addition to the family:

- Train teachers in the field of addiction prevention.
- Establish appropriate channels of communication between schools and families to facilitate early detection of problems.
- Implement education plans to help youth develop skills in critically analyzing the current alcohol consumption messages in advertising, films... in order to enable better decision-making and the ability to say "no".
- Promote and publicize healthy leisure activities available at institutions as alternatives to binge drinking.
- Promote education on emotional development.

Biography

Francisco José Montero Bancalero, from Spain, studied psychology at Seville University and obtained his doctorate at Huelva University. He is currently a professor at Osuna University. His professional career started in the field of addictions working as a therapist in an outpatient treatment center, and then he began to participate in different investigation projects. He reached the point of leading a pioneering tool in Aula de Alcoholismo. He has become a member of the National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse and has presented his projects at different international conferences.

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