

## The relationships between mental stress, risk of eating disorders and Internet addiction among university students in Algeria, France and Hungary, 2010-2012

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### Background

Risk behaviour, mainly related to tobacco, alcohol and cannabis used in university students have been widely reported, but new risk compartments emerged. The objective was to investigate the relationship between substance use, behavioural addiction and stress in order to implement appropriate public health interventions in Algeria, France and Hungary.

### Methods

Students from Batna (B, Algeria), Miskolc (M, Hungary) and Rouen (R, France) completed an anonymous self-questionnaire that collected a large sample of data, including age, gender, alcohol, tobacco and cannabis consumption, mental stress (Cohen stress scale), risk of cyber addiction (Internet Stress Scale) and eating disorders (Scoff questionnaire).

### Results

A total of 2,876 students were included: 345 in B, 658 in M and 1,873 in R. The mean age was 21.1 years (without significant difference in the 3 countries). Respectively in B, M and R, the mean stress level was 19.0 (SD = 3.5), 21.7 (SD = 4.9) and 16.0 (SD = 3.3) ( $p < 10^{-4}$ ). Respectively in B, M and R, 23.0% of students, 10.5% and 29.3% presented a high risk of cyberaddiction ( $p < 10^{-4}$ ). In B, 6.1% of students, 22.7% in M and 22.5% in R presented risk of eating disorder ( $p < 10^{-4}$ ).

### **Conclusions**

These findings stress the need to develop investigations on these topics in student population, to have a better understanding of these new phenomena and to assess the interactions with other risk compartments (alcohol, cannabis).

### **Key messages**

- Alcohol, tobacco and cannabis consumption are well documented as relevant public health topics in student populations; but new risk compartment are today challenging.
- New research areas are required to investigate the impact of these new risk behaviours on students and their future professional careers.