Support letter for the 2015 ESPAD data collection

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) is the largest school survey on substance use in the world. Data were first collected in 1995 by 26 countries. The four subsequent surveys, carried out at four-year intervals, have involved an increasing number of countries. In the most recent study, in 2011, data were collected in 39 countries, with more than 111,000 European students answering the questionnaire. Hence, ESPAD data are now available in nearly all European countries.

The ESPAD project covers students who turn 16 during the year of data collection. Data can be used to compare substance use habits between countries and within countries over time as well as for sophisticated analyses of associations and relationships between variables of interest. Thus, ESPAD data – as a complement to other data – can be of use when evaluating national preventive measures. In recognition of this, ESPAD is used in the evaluation of the EU Strategy on Alcohol as well as for the evaluation of the EU Drugs Strategy.

Since each country may add country specific questions at the end of the standard questionnaire, ESPAD also provides an opportunity to gather data on issues of particular interest at the national level.

Another reason for the importance of participating in ESPAD is that the data are gathered in a database, which constitutes a unique source of data for research purposes. This makes it possible for ESPAD researchers – as well as other researchers – to carry out comparative studies or test hypotheses in order to produce new knowledge that may give us a better understanding of young people’s use of various substances.

The sixth ESPAD data collection will take place in 2015 and preparations are already in full swing. To make the 2015 survey as successful as the previous ones, it is essential that the Principal Investigator or ESPAD Contact Person in each country obtains all the support necessary for participation.

ESPAD cooperates with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon, and with the Pompidou Group at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. However, each country has to provide the resources necessary to carry out the survey. Your active support for the 2015 ESPAD data collection in your country would therefore be highly appreciated.

If you would like more information, you are welcome to visit the ESPAD website at www.espad.org. You are of course also welcome to contact the Principal Investigator or the ESPAD Contact Person in your country, or one of us.

Yours Sincerely,

Björn Hibell, PhD
ESPAD Coordinator
Bjorn.Hibell@emcdda.europa.eu
Tel: 00351 211 210 313

Ludwig Kraus, PhD
Deputy ESPAD Coordinator
Kraus@ft.de
Tel: 0049 893 608 04 30