

# Prevalence of drug abuse among children in basic schools Estudio de prevalencia del consumo de drogas en escolares de enseñanza básica, a través de la metodología de pares

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Peer methodology (PM) is an adaptation of the privileged access interviewer methodology and is used for prevalence studies. PM estimates higher drug consumption frequencies among school and college students than self reports, since it minimizes underreporting. Aim: To assess drug abuse among students using PM. Material and methods: A random sample of 234 school students of middle and low-middle socioeconomic status, aged 9 to 14 years (53% women) were interviewed using PM about drug consumption. Results: The frequency of licit drug consumption during the last year was 29% and 15% during the last month (current consumption). The consumption of tobacco and alcohol was 20% and 18% respectively during the last year. The figures for the last month were 11% and 8% respectively. The beginning age for smoking and alcohol consumption were  $11.1 \pm 1.5$  and  $11.3 \pm 1.8$  years respectively. The frequency of illicit drug consumption was 3.5%. Illicit drug users began licit drug consumption at earlier ages