

# Factors associated with the consumption of illicit drugs in students aged 9 to 14 years

## Las estrategias para prevenir el consumo de drogas ilícitas deben aplicarse a temprana edad

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Every day more adolescents begin consuming drugs and at increasingly younger ages. Due to social stigma and criminal sanctions, studies on illicit drugs (ID) require methodologies that reduce underreporting. To identify factors associated with illicit drug use in children, 234 students aged 9 to 14 years were interviewed by 12 students from the same school (methodology of peers) about drug consumption, using a validated instrument (structured interview). Those who had consumed illicit drugs were compared with those who had not in order to identify factors associated with such behavior. Results: 22.5% of students reported having consumed tobacco, 18.5% alcohol, and 3.5% illicit drugs during the past year. The group of ID consumers, had an average age of initiation to tobacco and alcohol use significantly lower ( $p$  value  $< 0.05$ ) than those who did not consume ID. They had significantly higher values for consumption within the last month of licit drugs (LD), tobacco and alcohol; consumptio