



EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM UNPLUGGED ON DESCRIPTIVE NORMATIVE BELIEFS AMONG SLOVAK SCHOOLCHILDREN



Marcela Štefaňáková¹, Oľga Orosová²

¹ Department of Psychology, PJ Šafárik University in Košice (Slovak Republic)

² Department of Educational Psychology and Psychology of Health, PJ Šafárik University in Košice (Slovak Republic)

Unplugged

INTRODUCTION

Normative beliefs are considered to be one of the strongest predictors of substance abuse. Descriptive normative beliefs can be defined as the perception of what many people do (Cialdini, Kallgren, Reno, 1990). The effective approach to drug prevention consists of several components including normative education which targets the correction of the misperception that most people use drugs (Botvin, 2000).

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the short-term and the long-term effect of the school-based drug use prevention program Unplugged on descriptive normative beliefs
- To examine the moderation effect of gender in these relationships among schoolchildren in Slovakia.

The exploration was focused on **descriptive normative beliefs (DNB) regarding the number of friends who use alcohol and who get drunk at least once a week.**

RESEARCH DESIGN

The universal drug prevention program UNPLUGGED

- The Unplugged is designed for **schoolchildren aged 12 to 14**
- The Unplugged is based on the **Comprehensive social influence model** which focuses on building specific skills enabling individuals to manage social impact and deconstruct normative beliefs (Kreeft et al., 2009)
- The curriculum consists of **12 lectures**
- The verification of the effectiveness of Unplugged in Slovakia had an experimental design. **The data were obtained prior to the program implementation (T1), immediately after its implementation (T2) and 12 months (T3) post the implementation.**

RESEARCH SAMPLE

- 60 primary schools were randomly assigned to experimental (N=641) or control groups (N=654).
- **1295 schoolchildren** have participated in the program (**M=11.52; 46.8% boys**)

METHODS

Descriptive normative beliefs (DNB) regarding the number of friends who use alcohol and who get drunk at least once a week were measured by these questions:

- *How many of your friends would you estimate drink alcoholic beverages?*
- *How many of your friends would you estimate get drunk at least once a week?*

The individual items were rated on a 5-point scale (1=nobody, 5=everybody). The responses were dichotomized for using binary logistic regression.

Participation in the Unplugged program was monitored through two categories: an experimental group (with intervention) and a control group (without intervention).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Binary logistic regression was used to analyze the data with respect to descriptive normative beliefs before program implementation (T1). The moderation effect of gender was also explored.

REFERENCES

- Botvin, G.J., Griffin, K.W. (2007). School-based programmes to prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 2007, 19, 6: 607–615.
- Cialdini R, Reno R, Kallgren C.(1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: A theoretical refinement and reevaluation of the role of norms in human behavior. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 1990;24:201–234.
- Gabrhelik, R., Duncan, A., Lee, M.H., Stastna, L., Furr-Holden, C.D.M., & Miovsky, M. (2012). Sex specific trajectories in cigarette smoking behaviors among students participating in the Unplugged school-based randomized control trial for substance use prevention. *Addictive Behaviors*, 37(10), 1145-1150
- Vigna-Taglianti, F., Vadrucci, S., Faggiano, F., Burkhart, G., Siliquini, R., Galanti, M.R., & EU-Dap Study Group. (2009). Is universal prevention against youths' substance misuse really universal? Gender-specific effects in the EU-Dap school-based prevention trial. *Journal of epidemiology and community health*, 63(9), 722-728.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0253-11 and APVV-15-0662. **ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:** Marcela Štefaňáková, PJ Šafárik University in Kosice, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology Moyzesova 9, Kosice, Slovak Republic, E-mail: marcela.stefanakova@upjs.sk

RESULTS

Table 1 Regression model for descriptive normative beliefs regarding the number of friends who get drunk in T2 and T3

	B	p	OR	95% C.I		R ²
T2						
Descriptive normative beliefs T1	2.147	<0.001	8.562	5.581	13.138	17.1%
Unplugged	-0.031	0.871	0.969	0.664	1.415	
Gender	-0.320	0.098	0.726	0.497	1.061	
T3						
Descriptive normative beliefs T1	1.458	<0.001	4.299	2.694	6.860	11.3%
Unplugged	-0.288	0.246	0.750	0.461	1.219	
Gender	-0.005	0.982	0.995	0.643	1.541	
Unplugged by Gender	-0.848	0.017	0.428	0.214	0.859	

Table 2 Regression model for descriptive normative beliefs regarding the number of friends who use alcohol in T2 and T3

	B	p	OR	95% C.I		R ²
T2						
Descriptive normative beliefs T1	1.942	<0.001	6.973	5.173	9.399	23.3%
Unplugged	0.022	0.879	1.022	0.768	1.361	
Gender	-0.014	0.924	0.968	0.738	1.317	
T3						
Descriptive normative beliefs T1	1.156	<0.001	3.178	2.144	4.712	10.1%
Unplugged	0.153	0.580	1.166	0.677	2.007	
Gender	-0.063	0.813	0.939	0.555	1.588	
Unplugged by Gender	-1.059	0.010	0.347	0.154	0.780	

Participation in the Unplugged program was not associated with lower level of descriptive normative beliefs regarding the number of friends who use alcohol and who get drunk at least once a week.

The main effect of Gender was not confirmed in any of the regression models.

Moderation effect of Gender was found. The girls in the experimental group had a lower level of descriptive normative beliefs regarding the number of friends who use alcohol (the regression model correctly classified 85.2% of the cases) and who get drunk at least once a week (the regression model correctly classified 77.0% of cases) in comparison with the boys.

CONCLUSIONS

However, the findings also show that when evaluating the effectiveness of the Unplugged regarding the changes in descriptive normative beliefs, gender differences may be expected. Our conclusion is consistent with previous research (Gabrhelik, Duncan, Lee, 2012; Vigna Taglianti, Vadrucci, Faggiano, et al., 2009) confirming the gender differences in the effectiveness of the program Unplugged.