

# EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM UNPLUGGED FOR DRUG USE PREVENTION AMONG SLOVAK SCHOOLCHILDREN

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## BACKGROUND

Given that schoolchildren are exposed to considerable peer pressure, strengthening of refusal skills plays an important role in the prevention of drug use.

The program Unplugged is part of the project EU-DAP (European Drug Abuse Prevention). The curriculum consisted of 12 lessons managed by trained lecturers. It is an interactive program, based on the comprehensive social influence model. In the school year 2013/2014 the program Unplugged was implemented in the Slovak Republic and its effectiveness is under the process of evaluation.

The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the school-based drug use prevention program Unplugged. The exploration was focused on the refusal of smoking among schoolchildren right after the program implementation (T2) as well as after 3 (T3) and 18 months (T4). The moderation effect of the gender was also explored.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

678 schoolchildren (M=13.09; 43.7% boys).

- ✓ Experimental group - 289 schoolchildren
- ✓ Control group - 389 schoolchildren.

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The refusal of smoking was measured by a single item measure: Have you ever had the possibility to try smoking cigarettes without trying it? (1=no, 2= yes).

Statistical analyses – Binary logistic regression was applied, adjusted for gender and the refusal of smoking prior to the program implementation (T1).

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## RESULTS

Regression analysis showed:

- Refusal of smoking in T1 significantly contributed to the models. Those who refused smoking before program participation (T1) had higher probability of refusal of smoking right after the program implementation (T2, Table 1), 3 months after (T3, Table 2) and also 18 months after the program implementation (T4, Table 3).
- Participation in Unplugged program was positively associated with refusal of smoking. Participants of Unplugged program had higher probability of refusal of smoking in T2, T3, T4.
- Gender significantly contributed to the explanation of the refusal of smoking. Boys had higher probability of smoking refusal in T1, T2, T3, T4 regardless of program participation.

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Table 1 Regression model for refusal of smoking – T2

	B	p	OR	95% C.I	
Refusal of smoking T1	2.085	0.000	8.047	5.734	11.295
Gender	-0.582	0.001	0.559	0.401	0.780
Unplugged	-0.361	0.036	0.697	0.497	0.967

\*The regression model explained about 21.7% of variance.

Table 2 Regression model for refusal of smoking – T3

	B	p	OR	95% C.I	
Refusal of smoking T1	1.737	0.000	5.680	4.118	7.835
Gender	-0.346	0.028	0.708	0.520	0.963
Unplugged	-0.363	0.022	0.696	0.510	0.949

\*The regression model explained about 15.6% of variance.

Table 3 Regression model for refusal of smoking – T4

	B	p	OR	95% C.I	
Refusal of smoking T1	1.719	0.000	5.581	3.860	8.068
Gender	-0.389	0.022	0.678	0.486	0.947
Unplugged	-0.379	0.026	0.684	0.490	0.955

\*The regression model explained about 15.2% of variance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Participating in a drug prevention program Unplugged is a significant predictor of refusing to smoke. Participating in the Unplugged program increases the probability of refusal skills regarding smoking and this effect is demonstrated also after a year and a half.

The short and long-term effectiveness of the drug prevention program Unplugged regarding refusal skills was confirmed regardless of gender.

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