

**P2.13. Increasing Health Promotion and Substance Use Prevention in Secondary Schools in Iceland: Engaging the Political and Social Systems with Research Findings - Hedinn Svarfdal Bjornsson**, Public Health Institute of Iceland  
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**Background/Significance:** The last decade has witnessed considerable advances in public health gains as they pertain to primary school students in Iceland. Indeed, the levels of alcohol and tobacco consumption amongst final year students at that level (15-years-old) have decreased considerably during the last decade. At the same time, consumption of these same substances has continued to be problematic at the secondary school level, with a particularly striking increase occurring nationally betwixt the two levels of schooling.

Legal, cultural and historical parameters have restricted access to the secondary school population (16-20-years-of-age) until recently, particularly with regards to health promotion and substance prevention. Indeed, with levels of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use having annually spiked from the last few months of primary school until the first few weeks of secondary school (with rates of alcohol consumption reaching adult-rates soon thereafter, irrespective of the minimum legal age of alcohol purchase being 20-years-of-age in Iceland) there is a clear need for positive intervention.

**Methodology:** A national study was conducted in November of 2007 by the University of Reykjavik, Ministry of Education and the Public Health Institute of Iceland which studied the backgrounds, attitudes and behaviors (particularly with regards to substance use). This will serve as baseline for the current project, as well as serving as a comparison for a similar study that was conducted in 2003. Furthermore, the undersigned is engaged in a tour of the secondary schools in Iceland (to be completed in February 2008) with the aim of studying the current situation with regards to health promotion, prevention and the general environments in question. Comparisons of considered best-practice and outcomes will be contrasted and compared.

**Results:** The presentation discusses the national situation, past, present and future, based on quantitative research, with an anecdotal focus on socio-political circumstances that led to recent governmental agency collaboration with student bodies. Practical lessons learned will be presented, relevant (and very recent) research findings discussed, and the practical application of the overall findings analyzed.