

Results Euroregional Health Survey

euPrevent Social Norms
Approach project

YOUTH
12-26y

The basis of social norm theory is that an individual's behaviour and attitude are influenced by their perception of the attitude and behaviour of their peers, meaning the perception of the norms.

We can differentiate social norms into two types:

- descriptive social norms (behaviour): which refer to an individual's perception of the amount and frequency of peers' consumption of a substance
- injunctive social norms (attitude): which are based on the individual's perception of peer approval (of use) of this substance.

Those norms tacitly dictate the behaviour that is expected and seen as acceptable by the group. Usually, people tend to overestimate the unhealthy choices while underestimating the healthy choices made by their peers (i.e. think that peers drink more soda and eat less vegetables compared to themselves).

In short, SNA is based on:

- behaviours and attitudes being influenced by how the norms are perceived and interpreted;
- people usually misperceiving those norms (either over or underestimating them);
- these misperceived norms then increasing unhealthy and decreasing healthy choices;
- a necessity of developing actions promoting more protective and positive behaviours in order to rectify those erroneous perceptions.

To ensure that one of the essential conditions for the implementation of a quality SNA was met in our population, i.e. the misperception of descriptive and injunctive norms, a large 'Euroregional Health Survey' was carried out.

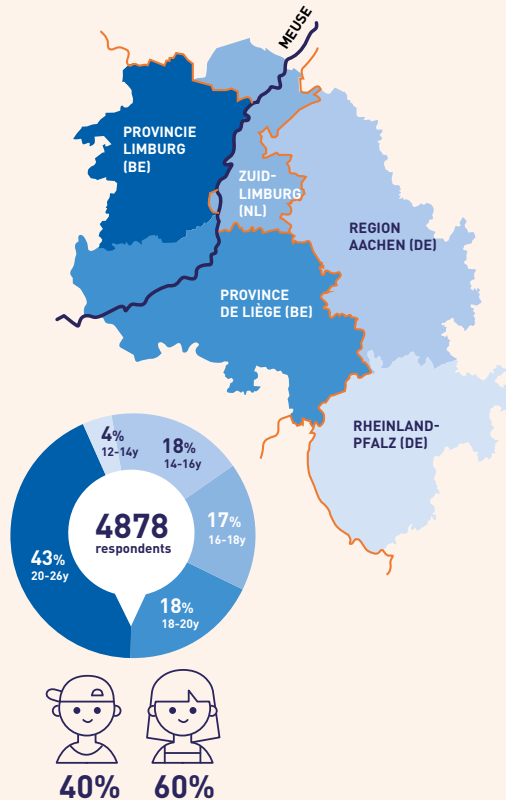
Euroregional Health Survey

The 'Euroregional Health Survey' was carried out online from September 2019 until January 2020. The questionnaire was fully anonymous and the GDPR rules were respected. The themes that were incorporated in the questionnaire were:

background information of the respondents (demographics), identification (the more an individual identifies with a given group, the greater the likelihood that he or she will submit to the social norm of that group), alcohol, cannabis and gaming.

Study population

Youth aged 12 – 26 years and living in the Euroregion Meuse-Rhine or West-Eifel were part of our study population. More specific, living in: South Limburg (NL), Province of Limburg (BE), Province of Liège, French speaking part (BE), Province of Liège, Ostbelgien (BE), Städteregion Aachen (DE), Kreis Heinsberg (DE), Kreis Euskirchen (DE) and Landkreis Bitburg-Prüm (DE).



44% of the youth is at risk

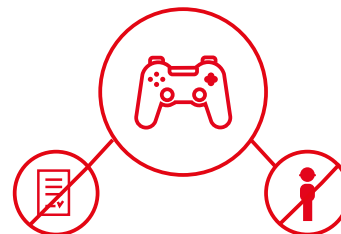
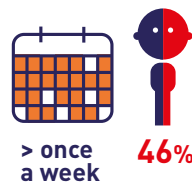
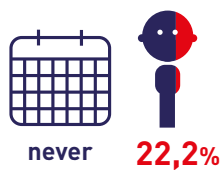
Riskgroups were determined in order to establish how many youth might be at risk of developing problematic behaviour in drinking alcohol, using cannabis or playing games. In general people in the risk-groups misperceive substance use of their peers. For more information about this group, check the report.

Youth at risk per substance:

- Gaming: 4%
- Alcohol: 40%
- Cannabis: 5%

Gaming

Almost half of the participants games multiple times a week or (almost) every day in the last month, with only 22,2% that had never gamed (descriptive norm). However, whereas they are playing a lot, not much impact on social or academic life has been reported. Indeed, the majority of the participants told us that they rather stop gaming and spend social time in real life than continue gaming. They also do not prefer gaming instead of doing their homework. Only 5% prefers gaming (very) often rather than spending time in real life with others or skips their homework.

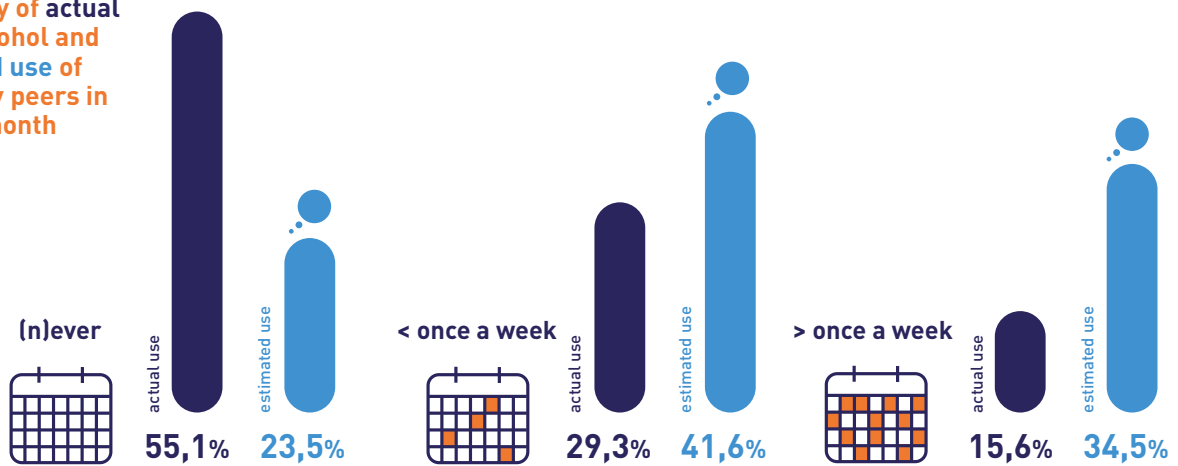


Alcohol

Overall, our respondents perceive their peers to drink more than themselves, whereas the results yield that more than half of the participants has either never drank alcohol in their life or has ever drank alcohol, but not in the last month (descriptive norm). Moreover, when we go further in the analyses, we can see that the 16-26 years old are the ones who, not only drink the most, but also overestimate their peers' consumption the most.



Frequency of actual use of alcohol and estimated use of alcohol by peers in the last month

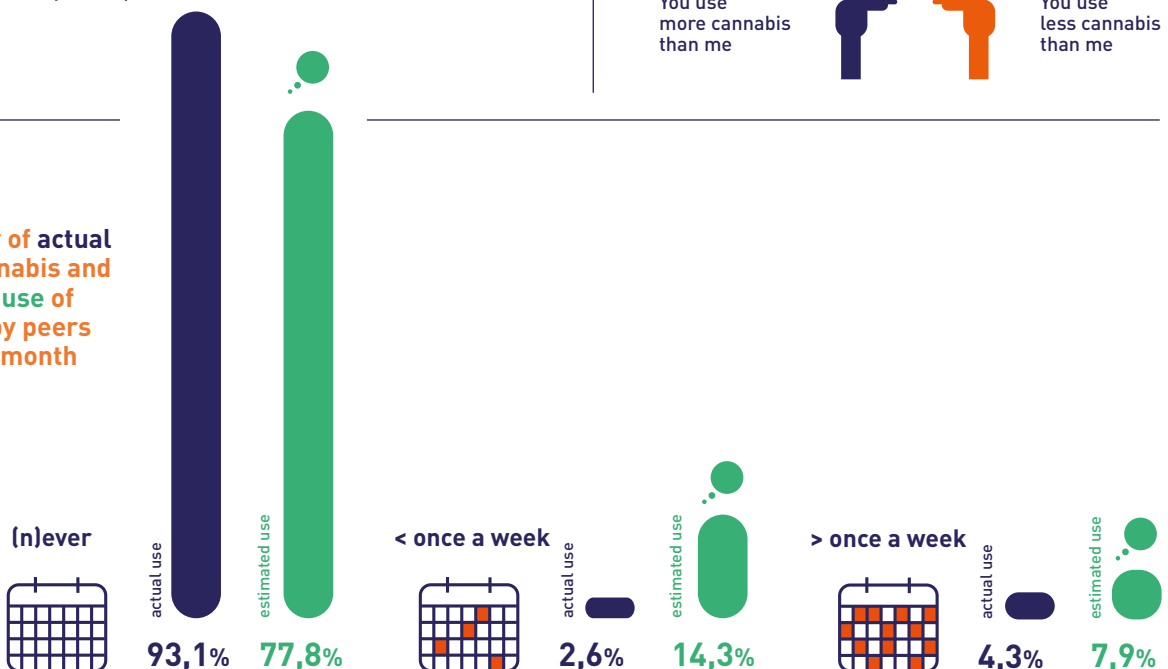


Cannabis

9 out of 10 respondents has either never used cannabis in their life or has ever used cannabis, but not in the last month (descriptive norm). Nonetheless, the younger citizens overestimate the use of cannabis by their peers.



Frequency of actual use of cannabis and estimated use of cannabis by peers in the last month



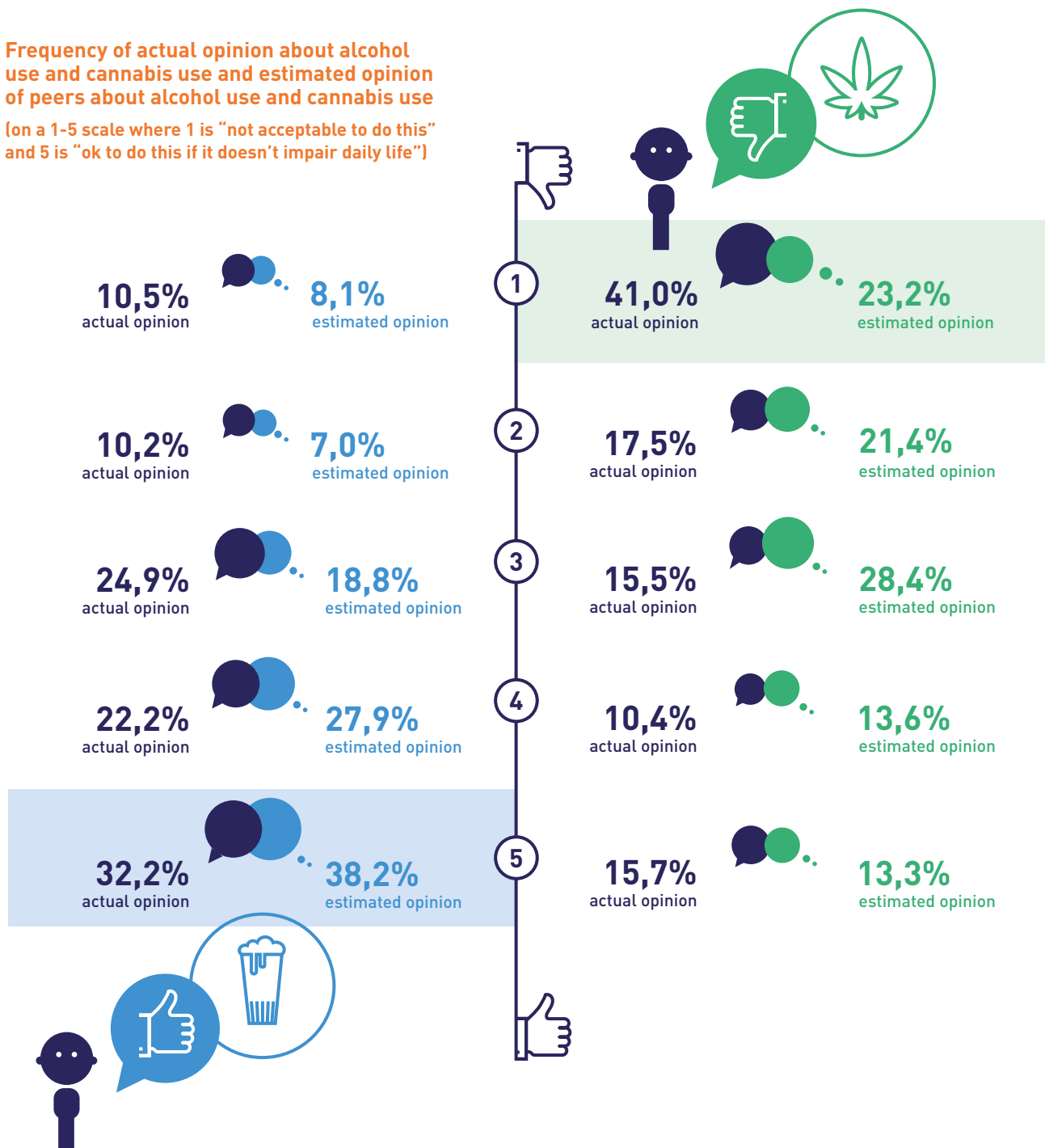
Opinion (injunctive norms)

The opinion (injunctive norm) of our respondents regarding the use of alcohol and cannabis have been measured using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means it is never okay to do and 5 means it is okay to do, if it doesn't interfere with everyday life. Using the same scale, the respondents' perception of what their peers think about alcohol and cannabis use was also determined.

In general, our respondents reckon that their peers have a more positive opinion about the (over)use of alcohol, compared to themselves. Similarly, our respondents think that their peers are less likely than themselves to have a negative opinion about (over)using cannabis.

Frequency of actual opinion about alcohol use and cannabis use and estimated opinion of peers about alcohol use and cannabis use

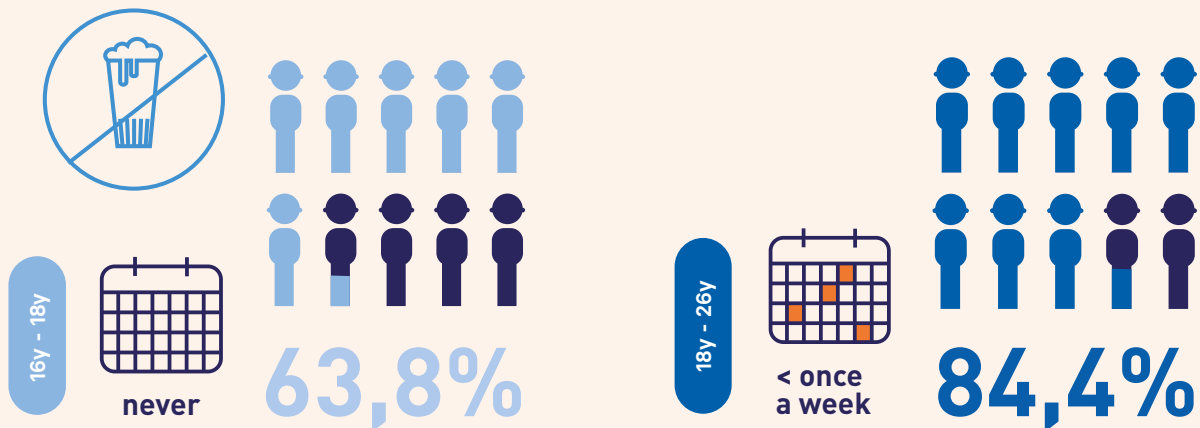
(on a 1-5 scale where 1 is "not acceptable to do this" and 5 is "ok to do this if it doesn't impair daily life")



Message

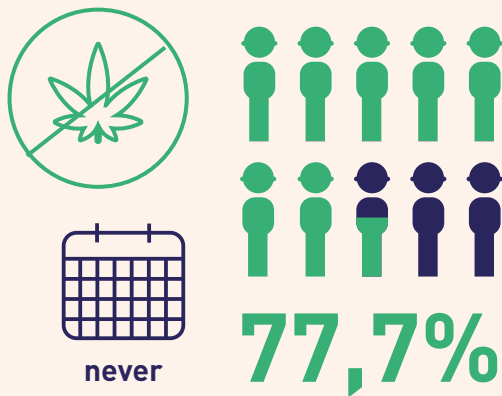
SNA messages emphasise on the positive and protective behaviours and attitudes that the target group is actually engaging in, with the aim of convincing them to make healthier choices, by following those more positive social norms.

The general SNA messages for the target group youth (12 – 26 years) are:

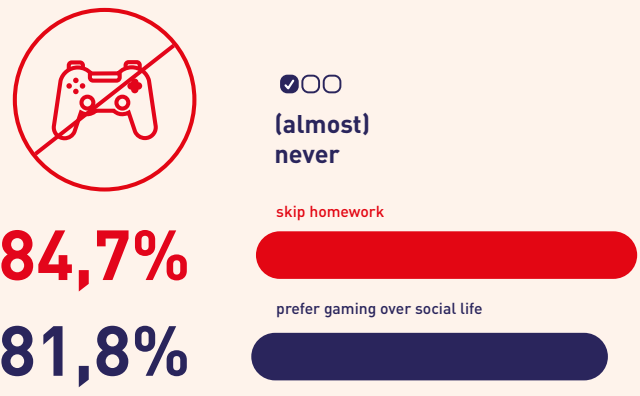


Do you know that the majority of people your age (63,8%) never drank alcohol or at least not in the last month!

Do you know the majority of people your age (84,4%) only drinks once a week or less.



Do you know that the majority of people your age (77,7%) don't smoke cannabis.



Most people your age stop gaming if they have better/other things to do. Keep track of your time spend on gaming.

Contactdetails / more information

Do you want to know more about this research and the results, check the [project website](#), the [Euregional Health Atlas](#), or check the whole report [here](#). If you have any questions about these results please contact GGD ZL, projectpartner of the euPrevent SNA Project: Nicole.curvers@ggdz.nl

