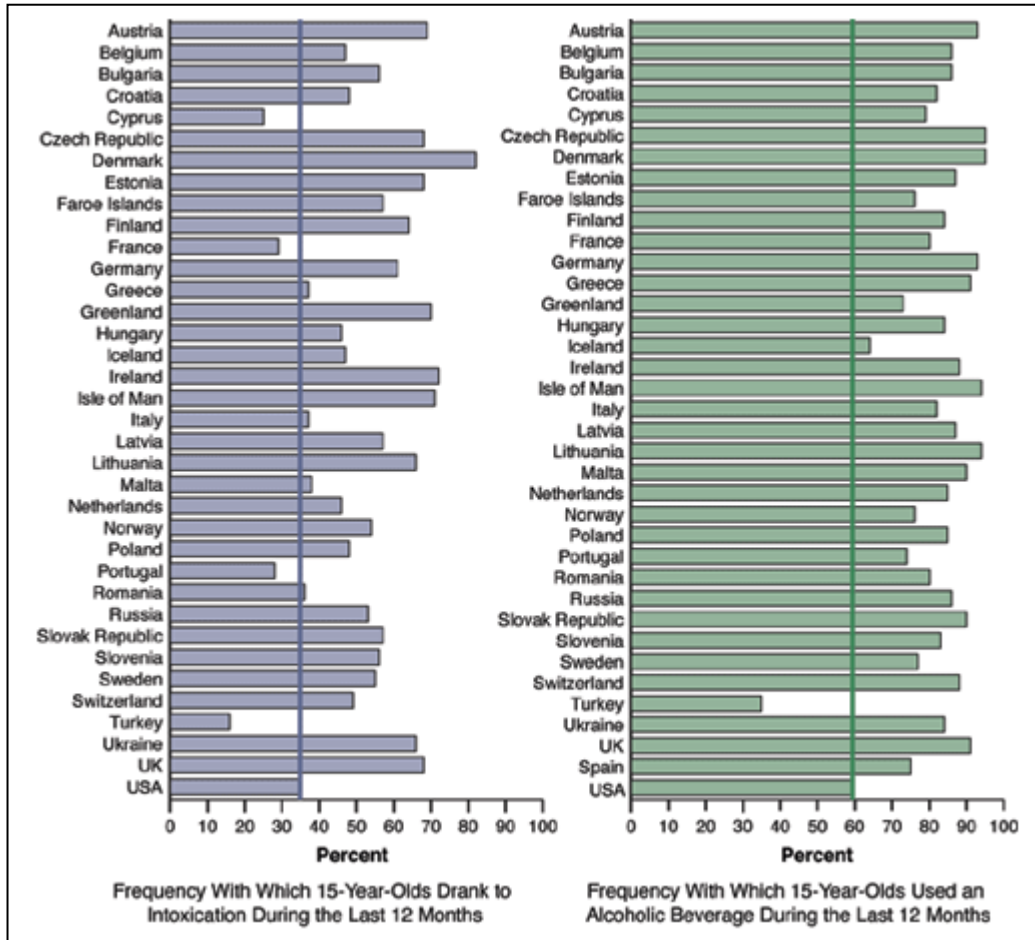


Do European Teens Experience Fewer Alcohol-Related Problems Than U.S. Teens?

The concept that European teens start drinking at a young age without problems is a myth. A recent National Institutes of Health publication shows that European countries with lower drinking ages have the same teen drinking problems as the U.S., or worse.



Alcohol use by youth is an international phenomenon. The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) surveyed 15-year-olds in 35 European countries where legal drinking ages are lower (typically ages 16–18) than in the United States. The ESPAD questions were similar to those used with 10th graders in the U.S. Monitoring the Future study. In all European countries except the predominantly Moslem nation of Turkey, a greater percentage of 15-year-olds drank alcohol than in the United States; and in more than three-quarters of the countries, a greater percentage reported drinking to intoxication in the previous year than in the United States.

SOURCES: <http://www.espad.org/reports.html>, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh283/111-120.htm>