



IJSRIS
journal
ISSN: 2820-7157

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF

**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND
INNOVATIVE STUDIES**

Advancing Knowledge, Inspiring Innovation

www.ijsrisjournal.com



**INDEXED
JOURNAL**

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RECEIVED
17 August 2026



ACCEPTED
09 September 2026



PUBLISHED
1 October 2026

 **October 2026**

 **Volume 5**

 **Number 5**

755 to 763



Creating an interactive app to raise awareness amongst young people about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs

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IJSRIS JOURNAL

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ABSTRACT

The creation of an interactive app to raise awareness amongst young people about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs is a vital initiative for the prevention of addiction amongst young people. This app could include detailed information on the harmful effects of these substances, interactive quizzes to test knowledge, poignant personal accounts, support tools and

educational games to make learning fun. By developing an engaging and informative app, it is possible to effectively engage young people and raise their awareness of the risks associated with the use of addictive substances, thereby helping to promote healthy behaviours.

Keywords: Interactive app, awareness-raising, young people, dangers, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, prevention, addictions,

information, interactive quizzes, personal accounts, support tools, educational games, healthy behaviours.

Introduction

The launch of an interactive app to raise awareness amongst young people about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs is a vital step in preventing addiction and promoting healthy behaviours amongst young people. By utilising technology and interactivity, this app aims to provide detailed information on the harmful effects of these substances, as well as offering support tools and educational games to make learning engaging. This initiative forms part of a wider effort to effectively raise awareness amongst young people of the risks associated with the use of addictive substances, in order to encourage them to make informed choices for their health and wellbeing.

A. Background to the issue of addiction amongst young people

The context of the issue of addiction amongst young people is a complex and worrying subject. Indeed, many young people are exposed to the risks associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, which can have harmful consequences for their physical, mental and social health, as well as their general well-being. Social pressures, family problems, stress, curiosity and the search for thrills are all factors that can lead young people to experiment with these addictive substances.

Addiction amongst young people is a public health issue that can lead to serious consequences, such as physical health problems, mental health issues, difficulties at school and in the workplace, relationship problems, and even the risk of delinquency. It is therefore crucial to take proactive measures to raise young people's awareness of the dangers of these substances and help them adopt healthy and responsible behaviours.

B. Objective of the interactive awareness-raising app

The objective of the interactive awareness-raising app on the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs is to provide young people with comprehensive and relevant information on the risks and harmful effects of these addictive substances. This app aims to educate and raise awareness amongst young people about the consequences of alcohol, tobacco and drug use, with a focus on preventing addiction and promoting healthy and responsible behaviour.

By offering informative and educational content, prevention tools, poignant personal accounts and fun activities, the interactive app seeks to engage young people in an effective

and interactive way to raise their awareness of the real dangers of these substances and encourage them to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. It also aims to encourage reflection, communication and dialogue on issues relating to addiction amongst young people, whilst offering support and resources for those who may be facing difficulties linked to these substances.

The main objective of this interactive awareness-raising app is to help reduce risky behaviour linked to the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs amongst young people, and to promote greater awareness and autonomy in managing their health and wellbeing.

1. Analysis of the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and drugs

Alcohol, tobacco and drugs are substances that pose significant risks to the health and wellbeing of those who use them. Here is an analysis of the risks associated with each of these substances:

1.1. Alcohol

- Alcohol is an addictive substance that can lead to dependence in some people;
- Excessive alcohol consumption can cause serious health problems, such as liver disease, heart conditions, mental health disorders and neurological problems;
- Alcohol is also associated with an increased risk of road traffic accidents, assault and risky behaviour;
- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause serious harm to the foetus, such as foetal alcohol syndrome.

1.2. Tobacco

- Tobacco is a highly addictive substance due to the presence of nicotine;
- Tobacco use is the leading cause of cancers of the respiratory tract, particularly lung cancer;
- Smoking is also associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases and other health problems;
- Second-hand smoke can also cause harm to the health of non-smokers, particularly children.

1.3. Drugs

- Illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis can cause severe addiction and lead to serious mental and physical health problems;
- The use of illicit drugs is associated with an increased risk of overdose, infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis, and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety;
- Illicit drugs can also have a negative impact on the social, professional and personal lives of those who use them.

The use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs poses significant risks to people's health and well-being. It is therefore crucial to raise awareness and provide education about the dangers of these substances and to promote healthy, substance-free lifestyle choices.

2. Harmful effects on physical, mental and social health

Substances such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs can have harmful effects on the physical, mental and social health of those who use them. Here are some examples of these effects:

2.1. Effects on physical health

- Alcohol can cause damage to the liver, heart, brain and other vital organs. Excessive alcohol consumption can also lead to an increased risk of cancer, heart disease, digestive disorders and neurological problems;
- Tobacco is directly linked to a range of health problems, including lung cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases, strokes, throat and mouth diseases, and other health issues;
- Illegal drugs can damage various organs and systems in the body, cause chemical imbalances in the brain, weaken the immune system and increase the risk of infectious diseases.

2.2. Effects on mental health

- The use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs can affect brain function and lead to problems

with memory, concentration, coordination and other cognitive functions;

- These substances can also have a negative impact on mental health by increasing the risk of developing mood disorders, anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

2.3. Effects on social health

- Excessive consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs can lead to impulsive, aggressive and violent behaviour, which can harm individuals' interpersonal relationships and social lives.
- Illegal drugs can lead to anti-social behaviour, a breakdown in social and family ties, financial problems and conflicts with the law.

The use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs can have devastating effects on people's physical, mental and social health. It is important to recognise these risks and to encourage healthy, sober behaviour in order to safeguard everyone's health and well-being.

3. Statistics on substance use amongst young people

Here are some statistics on alcohol, tobacco and drug use amongst young people:

• Alcohol

- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), alcohol is the most commonly used psychoactive substance among young people in many countries;
- In France, around 40 per cent of young people aged 18 to 24 report having drunk alcohol at least once a week;
- In the United States, around 60 per cent of sixth-form students reported having consumed alcohol in the past month, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

• Tobacco

- In France, around 27 per cent of young people aged 18 to 25 smoke regularly,

according to the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT);

- In the United States, around 8 per cent of final-year secondary school pupils smoke daily, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- **Drugs**

- In France, according to the OFDT, around 14 per cent of young people aged 18 to 34 have tried at least one illicit drug;
- In the United States, around 38 per cent of final-year secondary school pupils reported having used cannabis at some point in their lives, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Table 1: Comparison between the WHO, France and the United States.

<i>Substance</i>	WHO: global data	France: 17-year-olds	United States: secondary school pupils
<i>Alcohol</i>	22 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2019	80.6 per cent had already consumed alcohol in 2022	22 per cent had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days in 2023
<i>Tobacco</i>	No single global figure directly comparable in the data used	15.6 per cent use tobacco daily in 2022	10 per cent are currently using a tobacco product in 2023
<i>Cannabis</i>	5.5 per cent of adolescents in 2022, according to the indicator cited by the WHO	29.9 per cent have used it at some point in 2022	17 per cent have used it in the last 30 days in 2023

These statistics highlight the importance of raising young people’s awareness of the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and drug use, and of implementing prevention and support programmes to promote healthy, substance-free behaviour amongst this population.

4. Features of the interactive application

4.1. Detailed information on the dangers of addictive substances

Addictive substances such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs pose numerous risks to physical, mental and social health. Here is detailed information on the specific risks associated with each substance:

- **Alcohol**

- Effects on physical health: Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to damage to the liver (cirrhosis), the heart (high blood pressure, cardiomyopathy), the brain (neural damage, dementia) and the digestive system (ulcers, pancreatitis). Alcohol is also associated with an increased risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and neurological disorders;
- Effects on mental health: Alcohol can cause mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety, as well as cognitive and memory impairments.
- Effects on social health: Alcohol consumption can lead to risky behaviour, family conflicts, problems at work, road traffic accidents and negative social interactions.

- **Tobacco**

- Effects on physical health: Tobacco is the leading cause of cancers of the respiratory tract, particularly lung cancer. It is also associated with cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases, diseases of the throat and mouth, and fertility problems;
- Effects on mental health: Smoking is linked to an increased risk of mood disorders, anxiety and depression;
- Effects on social health: Smoking can lead to social stigma, family and interpersonal conflicts, as well as restrictions in public spaces due to anti-smoking laws.

- **Drugs**

- Effects on physical health: Illicit drugs can cause significant physical harm, such as infectious

diseases (HIV, hepatitis), brain damage, heart problems, gastrointestinal disorders and damage to vital organs;

- Effects on mental health: Drug use can cause severe mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, psychosis and personality disorders;
- Effects on social health: Illicit drugs can lead to serious social problems, such as isolation, crime, loss of employment, and the breakdown of interpersonal and family relationships.

It is essential to understand the specific risks associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in order to make informed decisions and safeguard one's health and wellbeing. It is recommended that you seek appropriate help and support if you are experiencing difficulties related to these addictive substances.

4.2. Interactive quiz to test your knowledge

Of course, here is an interactive quiz to assess knowledge of the dangers of addictive substances such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Question 1: What are the main effects of excessive alcohol consumption on physical health?

- a) Damage to the liver, heart and brain
- b) Increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease
- c) Mood disorders and anxiety
- d) All of the above

Question 2: What is the main cause of tobacco-related respiratory tract cancer?

- a) Lung cancer
- b) Throat cancer
- c) Liver cancer
- d) Brain cancer

Question 3: What physical harm can be caused by the use of illicit drugs?

- a) Infectious diseases (HIV, hepatitis)

- b) Brain damage, heart problems
- c) Gastrointestinal disorders, damage to vital organs
- d) All of the above

Question 4: What are the effects of smoking on mental health?

- a) Increased risk of mood disorders and anxiety
- b) Increased risk of depression
- c) Increased risk of psychosis
- d) All of the above

Question 5: What are the negative social effects associated with alcohol consumption?

- a) Family conflicts, problems at work
- b) Road traffic accidents
- c) Social stigma
- d) All of the above

Answers:

1 - d) All of the above

2 - a) Lung cancer

3 - d) All of the above

4 - a) Increased risk of mood disorders and anxiety

5 - d) All of the above

4.3. Testimonials from people affected by addiction

Profile 1: David, aged 22

“At first, I only drank at parties with my friends. Gradually, I started drinking when I was stressed or facing difficulties. My drinking eventually began to affect my studies, my family relationships and my concentration. My family and friends would comment on it, but I thought I could keep it under control. It was only when I saw the impact it was having on my daily life that I realised I needed help.”

Observed consequences:

- Difficulties at school or work;
- Conflicts with family and friends;
- Reduced concentration and well-being.

Key takeaway: alcohol can gradually take up an excessive amount of space in a young person's life. Early support can help prevent the situation from getting worse.

Profile 2: Mireille, aged 25

"I started smoking out of curiosity and because several people around me were smoking. At first, I thought I'd be able to give it up easily. Over time, I realised I was finding it hard to do without cigarettes. I tried to give up, but the cravings kept coming back. I finally realised that I shouldn't face this challenge alone and that a healthcare professional could help me."

Observed consequences:

- Nicotine dependence;
- Repeated expenditure on cigarettes;
- Increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

Key takeaway: tobacco dependence can develop gradually. Appropriate support increases the chances of successfully quitting.

5. Support tools and resources

Table 2: Needs and recommended support tools.

Identified need	Recommended support tool
Difficulty controlling one's consumption	Specialist medical consultation
Stress, anxiety or feeling unwell	Psychologist or mental health professional
Family conflicts	Guided dialogue and family support

Difficulties at school	School counsellor and educational support
Social isolation	Self-help group or association
Need for confidential information	Helpline or remote counselling service

6. Design and development of the app

6.1. Selection of appropriate technologies and platforms

The choice of technologies is a fundamental step in the design and development of the application aimed at preventing and supporting young people facing addiction to alcohol, tobacco and drugs. This choice is based on several criteria, including accessibility, security, ease of maintenance, development costs and adaptability to the available digital infrastructure.

For the development of this application, we propose a web architecture based on React.js for the user interface, Node.js and Express.js for managing the application logic, and MySQL for structured data storage. The use of a REST API will ensure communication between the various components of the system.

With regard to the deployment platform, a responsive web application, which can be developed into a progressive web application (PWA), is the preferred option. This solution will allow users to access content from various devices, including smartphones, tablets and computers, without requiring them to install a native app in every case. It will also enable certain prevention resources to be accessed offline.

Finally, given the sensitive nature of the information likely to be processed, the design will incorporate mechanisms for securing communications, controlling access, limiting the collection of personal data and ensuring data backup. These technological choices aim to guarantee an application that is accessible, scalable and tailored to young people's needs for prevention, information and guidance.

6.2. Implementation of features and content

Young People & Health — Addiction Prevention

HTML file Integrated CSS and JavaScript Offline functionality:

file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/jeunes_sante_prevention_addictions.html



Figure 1: User interface.



Figure 5: Drugs interface.



Figure 2: Topic Explorer interface.



Figure 6: 'Ask for support' interface.

6.3. Testing and adjustments for an optimal user experience

7. Promotion and dissemination of the app



Figure 3: Alcohol interface.



Figure 4: Tobacco and nicotine interface.



Figure 7: Promotion and dissemination of the app.

The promotion and dissemination of the 'Jeunes & Santé' app aim to raise awareness of this digital tool amongst young people, schools, families and healthcare professionals, in order to strengthen the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and drug addiction.

The proposed strategy takes into account the context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), particularly the use of smartphones, social media and the means of communication available to young people.

Discover 'Jeunes & Santé'!

Would you like to better understand the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and drugs?

The *Jeunes & Santé* app helps you access prevention information and discover the support resources available.

- Let's get informed so we can make informed choices;
- Let's ask for help without shame or judgement;
- Let's look after our health and our future.

Jeunes & Santé: take preventative action today for a better life tomorrow!

App link:
file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/jeunes_sante_prevention_addictions.html

Conclusion

The use of addictive substances, such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs, represents a genuine public health problem, particularly amongst young people. In light of this, it is important to step up awareness-raising initiatives to help young people better understand the risks associated with these substances and adopt healthier, more responsible behaviours. It is with this in mind that the creation of an interactive addiction prevention app is particularly valuable. It would make the necessary information available to the public in a simple, accessible way that is tailored to young people's digital habits.

To achieve this objective, the app could offer several features, including information on the dangers of addictive substances, quizzes to test users' knowledge, video testimonials to illustrate the consequences of addiction, as well as self-assessment tools and a chatbot capable of providing awareness-raising advice and directing users towards appropriate support services. Furthermore, collaboration with healthcare professionals, prevention organisations, schools and other relevant bodies would help to strengthen the app's credibility and broaden its audience.

However, simply launching such an app is not enough to guarantee its effectiveness. It is also necessary to assess whether it genuinely helps to improve users' knowledge and change their attitudes towards addiction. To this end, several indicators can be taken into account, such as the number of users, their participation in the activities on offer, their quiz results and their feedback on the app. Questionnaires completed before and after using the tool could also help to measure progress in raising awareness and identify areas for improvement.

The development of an interactive app dedicated to addiction prevention represents an interesting approach to informing,

educating and supporting young people in their day-to-day choices. By combining digital tools with awareness-raising initiatives and collaboration with specialist partners, this project could help prevent risky behaviour, encourage healthier lifestyles and improve the well-being of the population.

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