

SOM.NIT

risk reduction in nightlife establishments

SOM.NIT (We are the night, in Catalan) is a youth-orientated outreach programme run by the Catalan Red Cross that promotes education, prevention and risk reduction associated with recreational drug consumption. It operates in establishments and at events frequented by young people, including nightclubs, concerts and music festivals, throughout the Spanish autonomous region of Catalonia (population 7m). Our teams of volunteers man stalls providing written materials pertaining to drug consumption, as well as offering non-judgmental conversation, among other services.

What we do

Interventions primarily take place in nightlife hotspots including clubs and discos where we set up stalls that provide information on risk prevention and reduction. Our basic intervention provides additional services including chill-out areas, substance analysis and alcohol breathalysing.

Motivations

We accept that drug consumption is a universal reality, and that it is a complex issue which must be placed in context. The effects depend on three factors: the individual taking the drug, the drug itself and the environment in which the drug is consumed

Guiding principles

- We respect the rights of young people to make their own decisions
- We are neither judgmental, paternalistic nor moralistic
- We offer information which is objective and clear, that takes present day realities into account.
- We provide information in establishments where drug consumption takes place
- We have moved beyond the abstentionist "Just Say No" model and the marginalisation of drug consumption, stances that seem to provide poor results
- We provide a response that is realistic, useful and effective
- We take into account the needs of drug users and non-drug users, accepting that the latter also worry about their health

Our volunteers

Our volunteers are motivated young people, trained in the field of drug use and drug addiction, operating throughout the Catalonia region forming a network of young health workers, whose knowledge is passed on to young people who in turn pass on public health messages to their friends (peer-to-peer).

Our aims

- To understand the various factors (physical, psychological and social) associated with drug use
- To provide young people with information because they have the capacity to distinguish between responsible and risky drug consumption
- To provide information on the different effects drugs can have on the human body
- To provide information regarding the adulteration of illegal drugs
- To provide information regarding the risks of consuming multiple substances at the same time (poly-drug use)
- To provide information regarding other health risks associated with drug use, including safe sex, sexually transmitted diseases, physical violence and road accidents
- To stress that information results in responsible and intelligent decision making regarding personal health
- To encourage critical thinking with regard to the messages and influences young people are subject to
- To promote the uptake of other health information

Figures

Since 1999 SOM.NIT has:

- Conducted more than 100 training sessions with some 1900 people qualifying as young health workers
- Made more than 1200 risk reduction interventions in nightlife establishments and venues
- In the course of these interventions, distributed more than 650,000 preventative materials, including condoms and flyers
- Enjoyed the active participation of some 1200 people
- Contacted some 63,000 drug users

Contact

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