

Out of school youth

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Exploring the social and cognitive correlates of early school leaving and alcohol and tobacco use

1. There are gender, racial and geographical differences in the social and cognitive correlates of early school leaving and alcohol and tobacco use among out of school youth in South Africa.
2. School performance factors and vocational aspirations, as well as social interactions at school and family-related reasons play an important role in youth's decision making to leave school.
3. Insight into the social networks of out of school youth assists in formulating recommendations for discouraging school dropout, alcohol and tobacco use.
4. Preventing and reducing early school leaving and alcohol and tobacco use would require tailored intervention programmes to be grounded within a framework of poverty reduction and social upliftment of young people.
5. Out of school youth are more vulnerable to the experimentation and uptake of alcohol and tobacco use compared to in-school learners.
6. Focusing on the establishment of a healthy lifestyle among the youth would likely ensure the healthiest possible start to life for the next generation.
7. Tackling the behaviours that place young people at risk requires an integrated approach that brings together youth, lay and professional producers and adolescent consumers of health and health services, researchers, programme implementers, and policy-makers.
8. Gender and cultural specific programmes that combine alcohol and tobacco resistance skills are needed to reduce alcohol and tobacco use among out of school youth.
9. "Preventing the conflicts of tomorrow means changing the mind-set of the youth today." (Graca Mashel)
10. "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." (Mahatma Gandhi)
11. "People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing everyday." (Winnie the Pooh)

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