Mechanisms of Influences on Smoking and Drinking Behaviour among Secondary Schoolchildren

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Few mechanisms of the development of drinking and smoking behaviour among schoolchildren have been investigated in separate longitudinal studies. A review by Fillmore\textsuperscript{1} of longitudinal studies on alcohol consumption shows the limited approach in each survey, but the surveys together contain many approaches. In most longitudinal studies on tobacco consumption, only one social scientific mechanism is under investigation; one large study also researches epidemiological aspects.\textsuperscript{2} When only one mechanism is investigated, the interconnectedness of different mechanisms cannot be analysed. Furthermore, if one assumes that a theory about behaviour in a certain period of time should be valid and complete, it is methodologically more interesting to study more than one mechanism. When several mechanisms are investigated, it can be studied under which conditions a mechanism is valid, and in particular if mechanisms are complementary or competitive. We developed our approach from known mechanisms and new ideas.

A PRELIMINARY THEORY OF DIFFERENT MECHANISMS

When we started a Dutch cohort study, predictors of drinking and smoking behaviour were distinguished at three levels:

1. Previous drinking and smoking behaviour.
2. Social segments of social and cultural groups. At this level social demographic variables are introduced, such as gender, age, type of school, social class and religious denomination.
3. Mechanisms of changes of behaviour from four sciences: social sciences, economy, epidemiology and policy. The mechanisms with feedbacks are presented in a scheme (Figure 1).

A DUTCH COHORT STUDY

The theory will be tested in a cohort study among Dutch secondary schoolchildren. One thousand, four hundred and fifty-four schoolchildren were investigated during the Autumn of 1989 and will be re-investigated in 1991. The main question is to which extent changes in drinking and smoking behaviour are explained by the shown mechanisms.

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REFERENCES

\textsuperscript{1} Middleton Fillmore K. Alcohol use across the life course. Toronto, Addiction Research Foundation, 1988.