



# Project SNIPE

A European feasibility study of a web-based  
Social Norms Intervention for Polysubstanceuse  
use in university students

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# Project SNIPE

- Funded by the European Commission Drug Prevention and Information Programme
- Feasibility study of a web-based, personalised social norms feedback intervention for polysubstance use in university students
- A multi-national study, including 26 higher education institutions across seven European countries

# The Social Norms Approach

- University students experience unique social pressures to engage in substance use, at a time which often coincides with the transition into adulthood
- However increasing evidence suggests that university students and other young adults over-estimate the rates of alcohol and other substance use by their peers
- These misperceptions may therefore lead individuals to use substances more heavily and frequently than they would otherwise do, if at all

# The Social Norms Approach

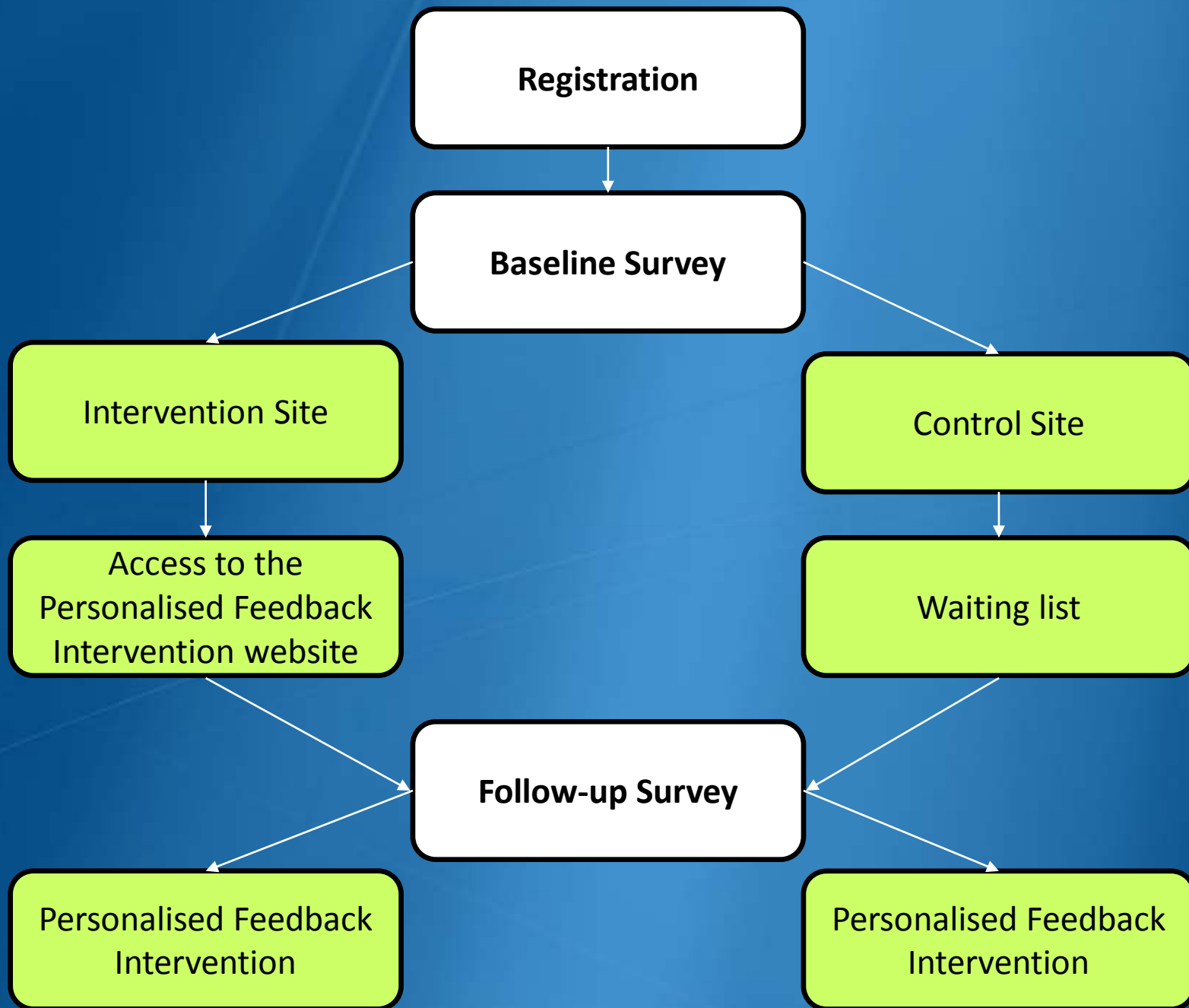
- The social norms approach operates on the simple premise that if these misperceptions are corrected then the rates of use in the target population will fall
- This is achieved through mass media campaigns and increasingly through the use of online personalised feedback
- To date however there is a lack of European research and a lack of cross-cultural comparisons

# The Social Norms Approach

- The social norms approach differs from many existing health education strategies in several ways:
  - It is based on promoting the healthy behaviour of the majority, rather than focussing on the unhealthy actions of the minority
  - It does not use fear based imagery or use 'health terrorism' tactics
  - It aims to engage the target population and stresses that the content of the intervention is based on the information that they themselves have provided

# The SNIPE Project

- Feasibility study of a gender-specific web-based social norms personalised feedback intervention across seven counties
- Students across 26 European Universities complete a baseline survey of personal substance use and perceptions of other substance use
- This survey then informs the intervention – students can access feedback of their use, their perceptions of normative use behaviours, and actual norms





# ATTENTION STUDENTS!



## Project SPIN: HOW DO YOU COMPARE?

SPIN is an exciting new study being conducted at the University of Bradford which gives students the opportunity to see how they compare with their peers on certain behaviours.

The SPIN survey has been launched and is now accessible via the UoBradford Mobile App! Take part now! Everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw for book vouchers & a set of study skills books (worth £100)!

**TAKE PART NOW [WWW.PROJECTSPIN.EU](http://www.projectspin.eu)**



**Bradford Students: log onto [www.projectspin.eu](http://www.projectspin.eu) now to see how you compare with your fellow Bradford students across a range of health-related behaviours!**



The Bradford Student - May 2012

## Students - How Do You Compare?

**A new website to be launched at Bradford University will allow students to compare their attitudes and behaviours with other students.**



**H**ave you ever wondered how you, your opinions, your thoughts, and even your behaviours, may compare with those of your fellow students? Ever been curious as to what your fellow students actually think and get up to?

Well, a new website called SPIN which will be launching at Bradford in the near future will let you do just that - see how you compare! Rob Dempsey from SPIN UK said: "SPIN is an exciting new website and students at Bradford will be one of the first groups of students from the UK to see how their thoughts and behaviours compare, or don't, with their peers".

Students at the University of Bradford will be able to log onto a dedicated website to see how their attitudes and behaviours compare with other students. "SPIN is a very unique website and will show how your attitudes and behaviours as measured on a short survey compare with what you thought other students think and do, and most interestingly, what other Bradford students actually do," said Rob Dempsey. "What's exciting about SPIN is that the website will present the actual opinions and behaviours of Bradford students as we collect students' opinions directly

and make this information available via the feedback website".

The SPIN UK team are looking for students from across all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, nationalities, as well as both undergraduate and postgraduate who are currently studying at the University of Bradford to access the SPIN website ([www.projectspin.eu](http://www.projectspin.eu)), complete a short survey, with access to the feedback website given in a couple of weeks time. Every student who takes part in SPIN will also be entered into a draw for various prizes including a set of book tokens and a box of study skills books donated by Pearson ([www.pearson.co.uk](http://www.pearson.co.uk)). All responses on the SPIN survey are confidential, and the comparisons on the SPIN website will be anonymous - so your personal responses won't be viewable by other people but you will be able to see what other Bradford students in general think and do!

Further details about the SPIN website can be accessed via [www.projectspin.eu](http://www.projectspin.eu) or you can e-mail Rob Dempsey for more information: [rdempsey@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:rdempsey@bradford.ac.uk). Information and regular news updates are also available via the SPIN UK Twitter feed ([http://twitter.com/projectspin\\_uk](http://twitter.com/projectspin_uk)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/ProjectSPIN.UK](http://www.facebook.com/ProjectSPIN.UK)).

# Recruitment Materials



S.P.I.N. About SPIN

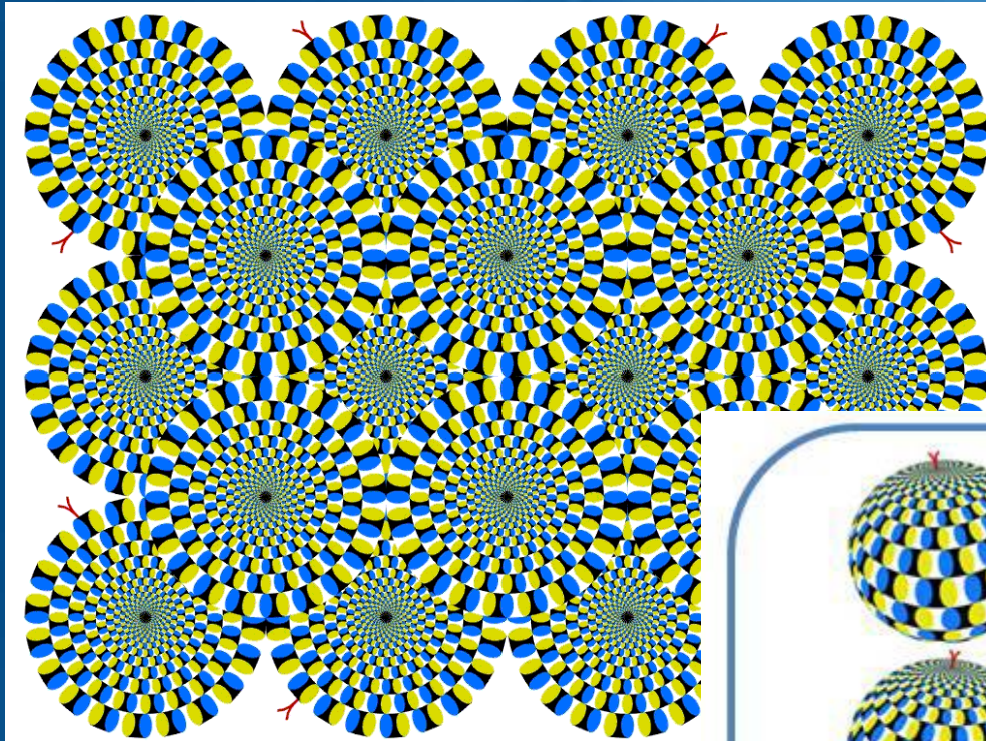
### What is project SPIN?

SPIN is an exciting new study being conducted at the University of Bradford which allows students to compare their attitudes and behaviours with their fellow Bradford students! SPIN involves completing a short survey which takes no more than 10 minutes to complete.




Once the survey data is collected, the SPIN team will produce a personalised feedback website which you can access later this semester and you will be able to see how your answers on the survey compare with other Bradford students' behaviours and attitudes!

SPIN is open to all University of Bradford students and everyone who takes part will be entered into a prize draw for Book Tokens and various prizes (including £100 worth of study skills books!)

# Recruitment Materials



See how you compare at  
[www.projectspin.eu](http://www.projectspin.eu)



# Current status

- 6423 students across sites have registered for the study
- 4464 completed baseline assessment
- Interventions are now online at all sites
- Control sites to receive access to intervention Oct/Nov 2012
- Future aim: to make the intervention website accessible to any university

# The SPIN Intervention

- Six web pages of gender-specific personalised social norms feedback
  1. **Alcohol** – frequency of consumption
  2. **Alcohol** – typical number of ALC drinks consumed per session
  3. **Alcohol** – frequency of drunkenness
  4. **Tobacco**
  5. **Cannabis**
  6. **Polysubstance use** (Alcohol + Tobacco)
- + **“Did You Know?”** boxes on each page for other substances, descriptive and injunctive norms (ecstasy, cocaine, etc.)



Alcohol

Tobacco

Cannabis

Alcohol & Smoking

**Click** on the links next to the SPiN-man to find out how you **compare with other students**.

## Did you know?

**...99%** of male students from Bradford have NEVER used cocaine

**PRELIMINARY VERSION  
OF FEEDBACK WEBSITE**



# PRELIMINARY VERSION OF FEEDBACK WEBSITE

University of Bradford



Alcohol

Tobacco

Cannabis

Alcohol & Smoking

## Did you know?

**...96%** of male students from Bradford have NEVER used hallucinogens (e.g., LSD, acid, mushrooms)

## ALCOHOL

General alcohol use (in the last 2 months) ?

You said



I never drank alcohol in my life

I thought most male students at Bradford University did not drink alcohol in the last two months



Most male students (**68%**) at Bradford said

We think that the majority of male Bradford students **drank alcohol at least once a week**

Actually, most male students from Bradford (**60%**) **drank alcohol once a week or less!**

General alcohol use (in the last 2 months) ?

Number of drinks (in the last 2 months) ?

Getting drunk on alcohol (in the last 2 months) ?



Alcohol

Tobacco

Cannabis

Alcohol &amp; Smoking

### Did you know?

...**96%** of male Bradford students have NEVER used sedatives or sleeping pills (e.g., diazepam, alprazolam)

## TOBACCO

In the last 2 months

You said



I have never smoked tobacco in my life

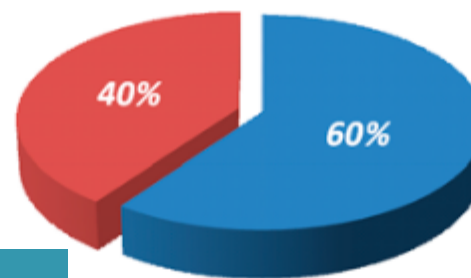
I thought most male students at Bradford University smoked tobacco twice in the last two months



Most male students (**76%**) at Bradford said

We think most male Bradford students **smoke at least one cigarette a fortnight**

What male Bradford students *actually* did in the past two months:



■ Have NOT smoked tobacco at all

■ Have smoked tobacco at least once



**PRELIMINARY VERSION  
OF FEEDBACK WEBSITE**



Alcohol

Tobacco

**Cannabis**

Alcohol & Smoking

### Did you know?

...**88%** of male students at Bradford think that it is not OK to use inhalants (e.g., glue, petrol, paint thinner)

## CANNABIS

In the last 2 months

You said



I have never used cannabis in my life

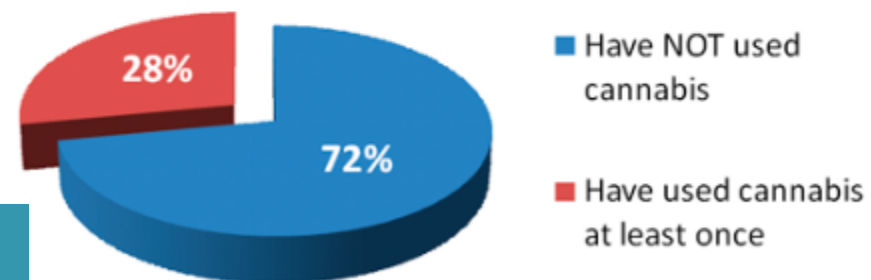
I thought most male students at Bradford University had used cannabis twice in the last two months



Most male students (**68%**) at Bradford said

We think the majority of male students at Bradford **used cannabis at least once**








What male Bradford students *actually* did in the past two months:










**PRELIMINARY VERSION  
OF FEEDBACK WEBSITE**



# Baseline frequency of substance use

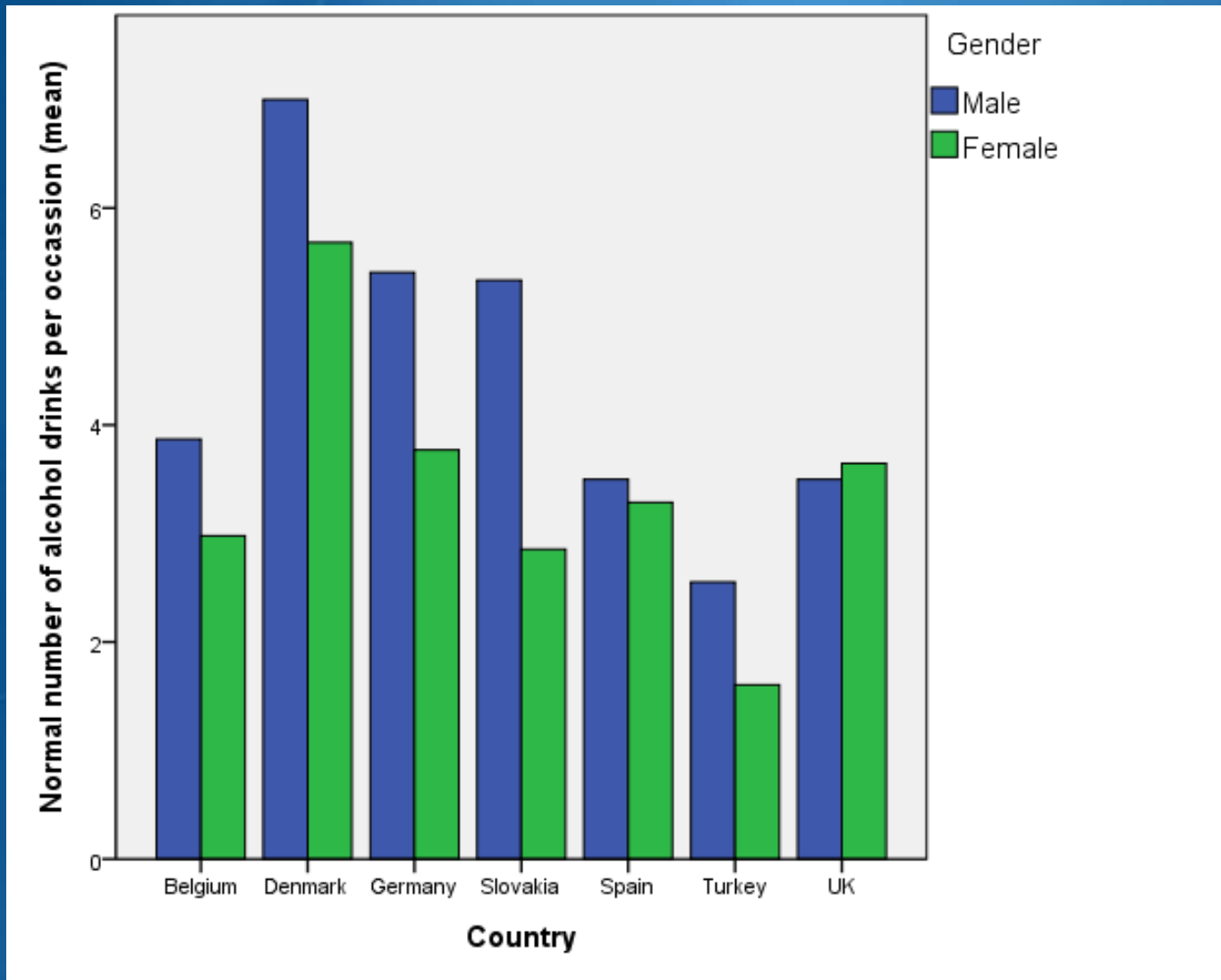
							
<b>Alcohol</b>							
Have ever used	95.9%	96.8%	98.0%	98.2%	96.2%	62.5%	76.0%
Have used in last 2 months	88.2%	90.2%	88.8%	85.5%	90.7%	46.0%	67.7%
Have used in last week	51.8%	53.0%	29.1%	28.4%	44.8%	20.2%	44.8%
<b>PRELIMINARY BASELINE DATA</b>							
<b>Tobacco</b>							
Have ever used	38.8%	69.9%	54.5%	58.5%	55.4%	60.2%	44.8%
Have used in last 2 months	17.6%	40.6%	25.2%	27.5%	24.5%	43.1%	25.0%
Have used in last week	11.2%	26.7%	14.4%	16.6%	14.1%	30.1%	16.6%
<b>Cannabis</b>							
Have ever used	27.2%	57.1%	33.5%	27.9%	39.6%	9.9%	39.6%
Have used in last 2 months	8.3%	25.1%	6.3%	4.6%	8.1%	4.6%	14.6%
Have used in last week	1.8%	10.8%	1.1%	1.1%	2.7%	0.9%	5.2%

# Baseline frequency of substance use

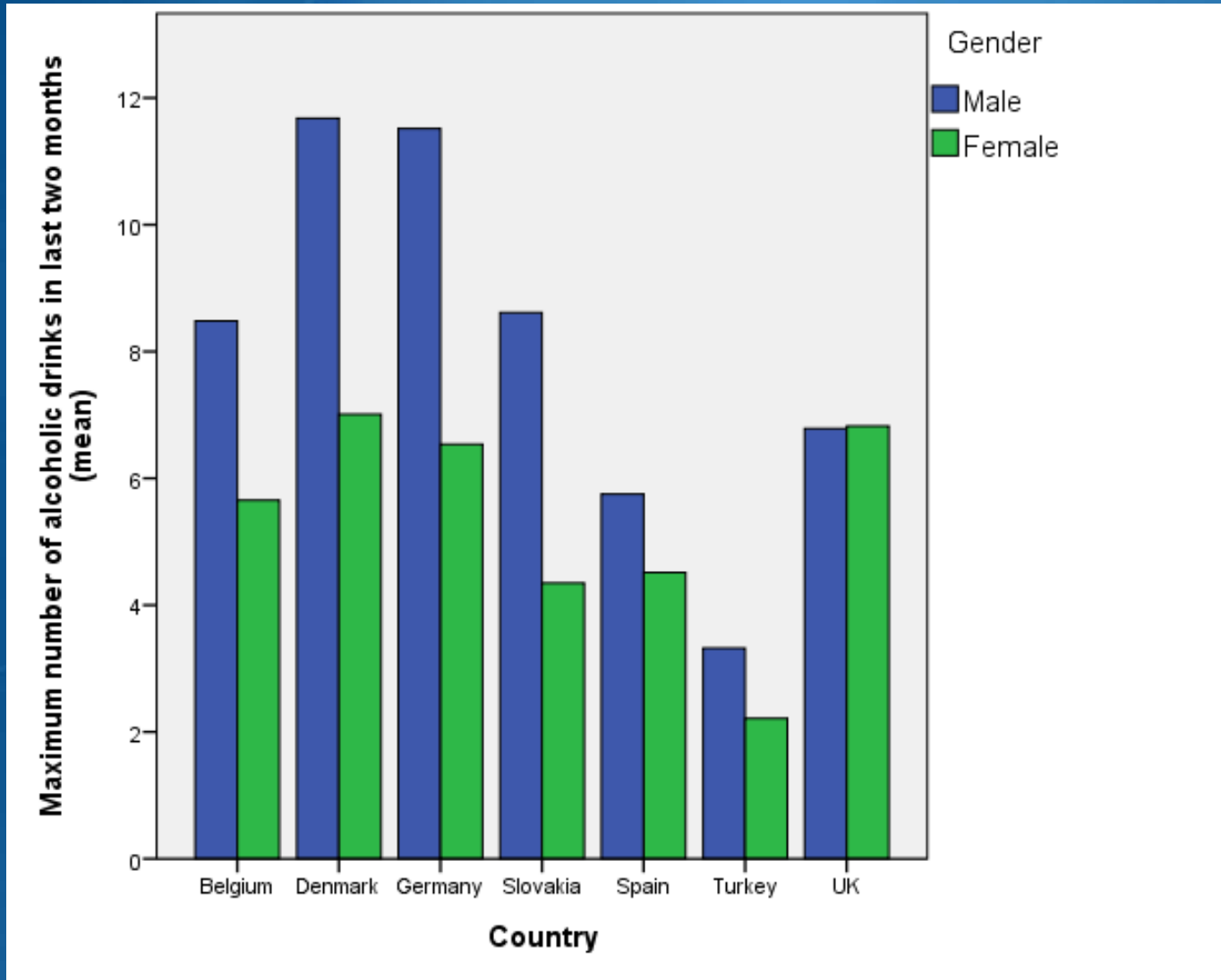
Ever used							
<b>Academic performance enhancing drugs (e.g. Ritalin)</b>	4.7%	3.8%	2.0%	8.3%	5.4%	4.1%	10.4%
<b>Synthetic cannabis</b>	1.2%	5.6%	1.3%	0.9%	0%	1.7%	4.2%
<b>Cocaine</b>	0.6%	13.3%	4.7%	0.7%	3.8%	0.6%	12.6%
<b>Ecstasy</b>	3.4%	11.4%	2.5%	1.6%	1.1%	1.4%	8.3%
<b>Other amphetamines</b>	1.8%	14.2%	7.2%	1.6%	2.8%	1.1%	9.7%
<b>Sedatives/Sleeping pills</b>	3.0%	10.6%	6.1%	10.5%	12.0%	8.0%	12.5%
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	0.6%	12.5%	3.1%	1.5%	3.3%	1.5%	11.6%
<b>Inhalants</b>	0.6%	3.0%	1.6%	0.8%	0%	1.3%	2.1%

**PRELIMINARY BASELINE DATA**

# Typical number of alcoholic drinks



# Maximum number of drinks

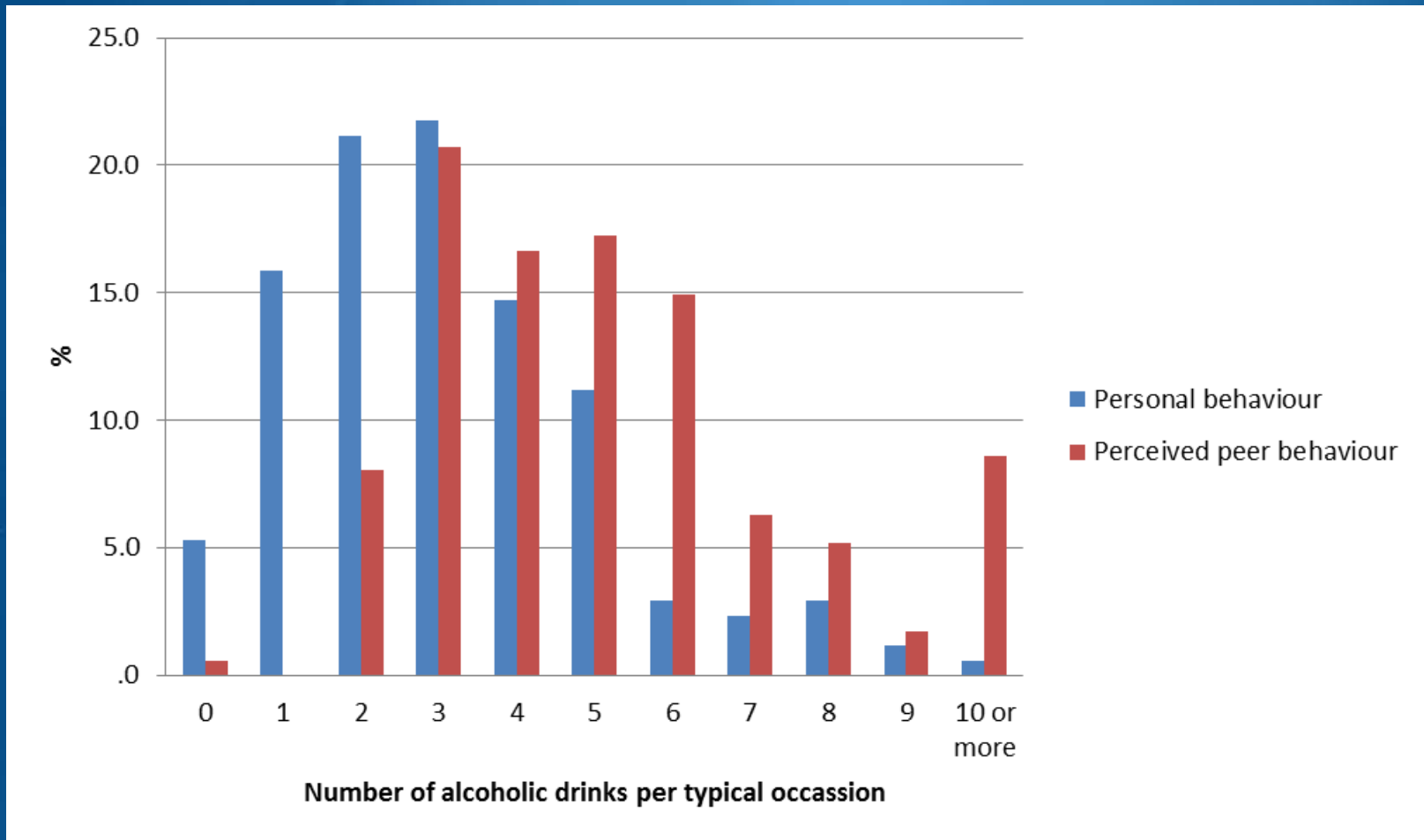


# Perceptions

- There was a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlation between personal and perceived use of alcohol and cannabis in all countries, however only Slovakia and Turkey had significant associations for tobacco use
- In each country there was an overall significant pattern ( $p < 0.05$ ) of student perceiving their peers to use substances more heavily and frequently than they themselves do








# Example

## Number of alcoholic beverages consumed per typical drinking session



# Perceptions of substance use

## PRELIMINARY BASELINE DATA

							
<b>Alcohol</b>							
Less than me	14%	26%	19%	14%	20%	22%	26%
The same as me	28%	22%	24%	17%	19%	20%	23%
More than me	58%	52%	57%	69%	61%	58%	51%
<b>Tobacco</b>							
Less than me	7%	18%	14%	7%	7%	13%	11%
The same as me	6%	14%	10%	14%	9%	26%	20%
More than me	87%	68%	76%	80%	84%	61%	69%
<b>Cannabis</b>							
Less than me	6%	17%	9%	5%	4%	8%	11%
The same as me	18%	15%	35%	22%	11%	53%	23%
More than me	76%	68%	56%	74%	85%	39%	66%

# Future

- Baseline survey data analysis and write-up underway for publication; Intervention “effects” to be analysed and written up late 2012/early 2013
- Qualitative workstream: series of focus groups exploring effectiveness of intervention, intervention delivery/marketing, social influences upon substance use, inc. some international qualitative work
- Follow-up surveys to be launched Oct/Nov 2012, potential further follow-up at 12 months (funding dependent)



# Challenges

- Language Barriers – translation of materials (survey/intervention messages)
- Very difficult to get some universities and students' unions on board/help with advertisements
- Country-specific restrictions to recruitment, research ethics constraints, restrictions in the ability to directly contact students, etc.
- IT capacity problems and delays