

# IMAGERY AND ASSOCIATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS REFLECTED IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR

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## SUMMARY

*In adolescent girls, by means of imagery and associations it was studied, which images and associations produce concepts expressing activities which, on the one hand, protect and promote health (exercises, use of seat belts, and condoms) and, on the other hand, represent a health risk (drinking beer and liquor, cigarette smoking, marijuana smoking and cocaine use, and sexual intercourse) and how they influence the respondents' behaviour. Nursing school students were interviewed by means of a questionnaire published by the Oregon Research Institute, U.S.A.*

*The respondents gave a total number of 15,760 images for nine concepts. The associations for smoking cigarettes and cocaine were evaluated only negatively although 35% respondents had smoked in the past six months. The associations for exercising were given mainly positive ratings and, in some cases, neutral ratings although the respondents mentioned low regular physical activities. Drinking liquor and the using of seat belts were evaluated positively, negatively and neutrally. Nearly three quarters of the respondents had consumed alcoholic drinks occasionally or frequently during the past six months. Drinking beer and smoking marijuana were associated with negative or neutral images. Sexual intercourse and condom use were prevalently associated with positive images.*

*Our results have shown that images and associations tend to contradict the adolescents' behaviour. However, the results can form a basis for a particular application in primary preventive programmes which should make use of and promote the development of desirable attitudes and behaviour.*

**Key words:** adolescence, associations, health-threatening behaviour, health-enhancing/promoting behaviour

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