

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNG ADOLESCENTS FROM TWO DIFFERENT SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS IN BELGIUM

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INTRODUCTION

At young age, while the body is still in development, alcohol consumption can cause irreversible brain damages and may affect negatively the cognitive, emotional and social development of children [1]. Moreover, people who started to drink regularly before the age of 14 are more likely to develop alcohol addiction in adulthood [2]. Previous research have reported sociodemographic inequalities in health-related behaviours among young people but patterns seemed not always clear [3].

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study was to estimate the associations between sociodemographic characteristics and alcohol consumption among 10-14-year-old adolescents in French-speaking Belgium.

Such characteristics were investigated separately in the Walloon Region (WR) and in the French part of the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR); indeed, these two regions are characterized by distinct socio-cultural and economic contexts, which could lead to differences in determinants of consumption.

METHODS

- ▶ "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" (HBSC) cross-sectional survey conducted in 2014 in the French-speaking part of Belgium [4].
- ▶ Self-administered questionnaires.
- ▶ Two-stage random sample, stratified proportionally on the distribution of the school population by province and education network.
- ▶ Sample: 4,983 10-14-year-old adolescents (4,093 in the WR and 890 in the BCR).
- ▶ Alcohol consumption: having drunk at least one day during the last 30 days before the survey.
- ▶ Sociodemographic characteristics: sex, age, socioeconomic status measured through the "Family Affluence Scale" (FAS) [5], family structure, and migration background.
- ▶ Multivariable logistic regressions models, separately for the WR and the BCR.

RESULTS

Main differences between the two regions (Table 1):

- ▶ In the WR, 73.2% were native versus only 23.4% in the BCR.
- ▶ In the WR, almost twice as many adolescents from stepfamilies and half from low FAS families compared to the BCR.

	WR (n=4,093)		BCR (n=890)	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Boys	2,001	48.9	432	48.5
Girls	2,092	51.1	458	51.5
Age				
10-12 years	1,818	44.4	353	39.7
13-14 years	2,275	55.6	537	60.3
Family structure				
Two-parent families	2,720	66.4	631	70.9
Stepfamilies	642	15.7	73	8.2
Single-parent families	731	17.9	186	20.9
Family affluence scale (FAS)				
High	1,579	38.6	268	30.1
Medium	1,874	45.8	366	41.1
Low	640	15.6	256	28.8
Migration background				
Natives	2,998	73.2	211	23.4
Adolescents with foreign origins ¹	1,095	26.8	679	76.3

1 This term includes adolescents born abroad and adolescents born in Belgium with one or both parents born abroad.

The proportion of 10-14-year-old adolescents who have drunk at least once in the last 30 days before the survey was almost 2.5 times higher in the WR compared to the BCR (WR: 21.7%; BCR: 8.9%).

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Data are collected using self-administered questionnaires: rates of alcohol use might be misreported.
- ▶ Sub-groups analyses (analysis of effect modification with gender in BCR) are limited by small sample size.

CONCLUSION

Despite very different prevalence, alcohol consumption in young adolescence was associated with the same sociodemographic characteristics in both regions but with variable strengths. Living with both parents played a protective role. In contrast, other rather favourable living conditions such as having a high socio-economic status and being born in Belgium had, here, a negative influence by making young adolescents more likely to consume alcohol. In addition, effect modification due to gender was only observed in the BCR. These results highlight the socio-demographic profile of adolescents to be targeted in the awareness-raising measures to the danger of early alcohol consumption.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES IN THE WALLOON REGION (WR)

Were more likely to consume alcohol (Figure 1):

- ▶ boys versus girls;
- ▶ adolescents aged 13-14 years versus 10-12 years;
- ▶ adolescents from "medium" or "high" FAS versus "low" FAS;
- ▶ adolescents living in a single-parent family or a stepfamily versus those living with their two parents;
- ▶ natives versus adolescents with foreign origins.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES IN THE BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION (BCR)

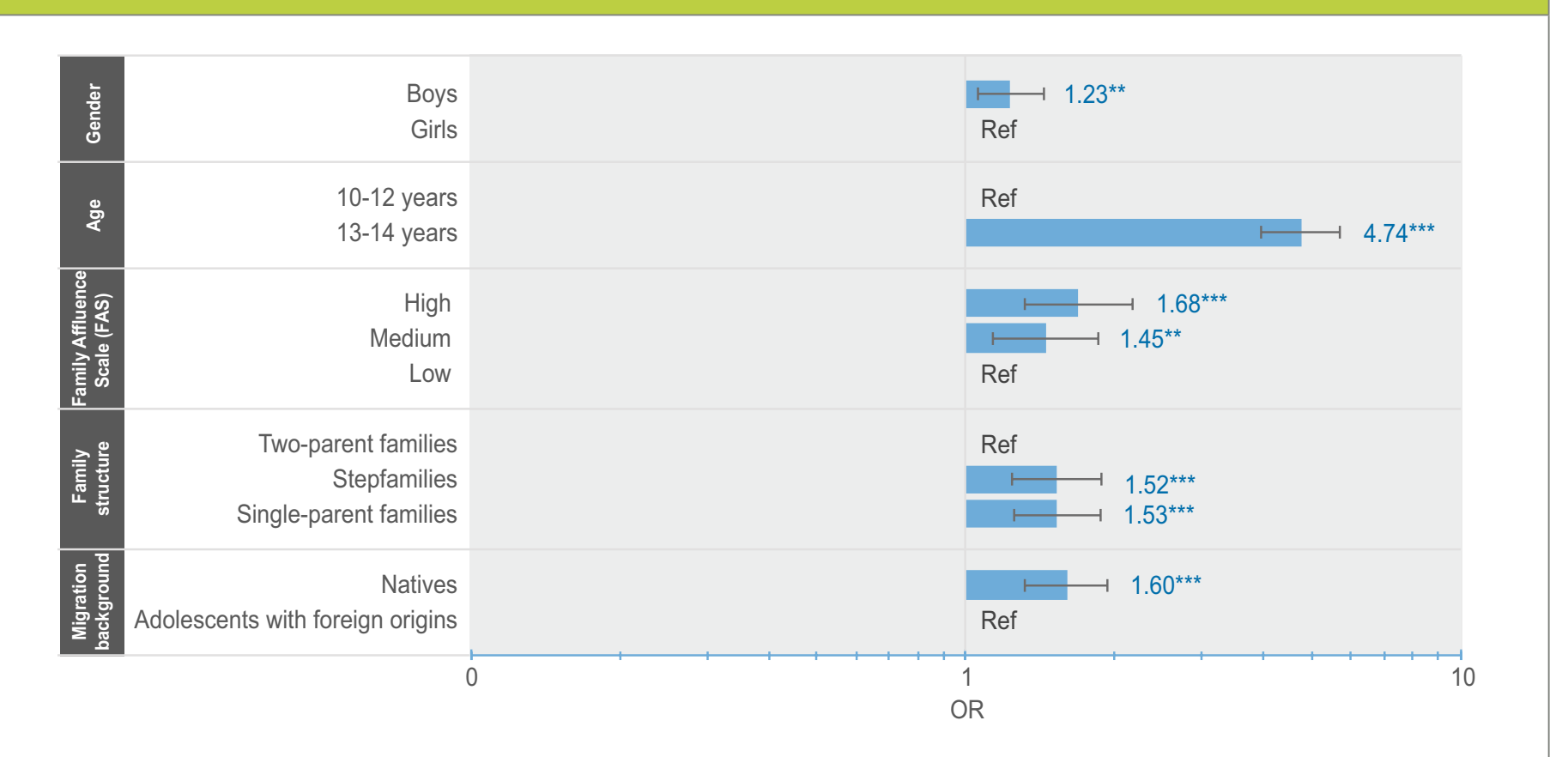
Large wealth and regional inequities persist in mother and child care utilization

- ▶ Like in the WR, boys, 13-14 year olds, adolescents from stepfamilies, those from "high" socioeconomic status and natives were more likely to consume alcohol (Figure 2).

SIGNIFICANT EFFECT MODIFICATIONS WITH GENDER WERE IDENTIFIED (FIGURE 3)

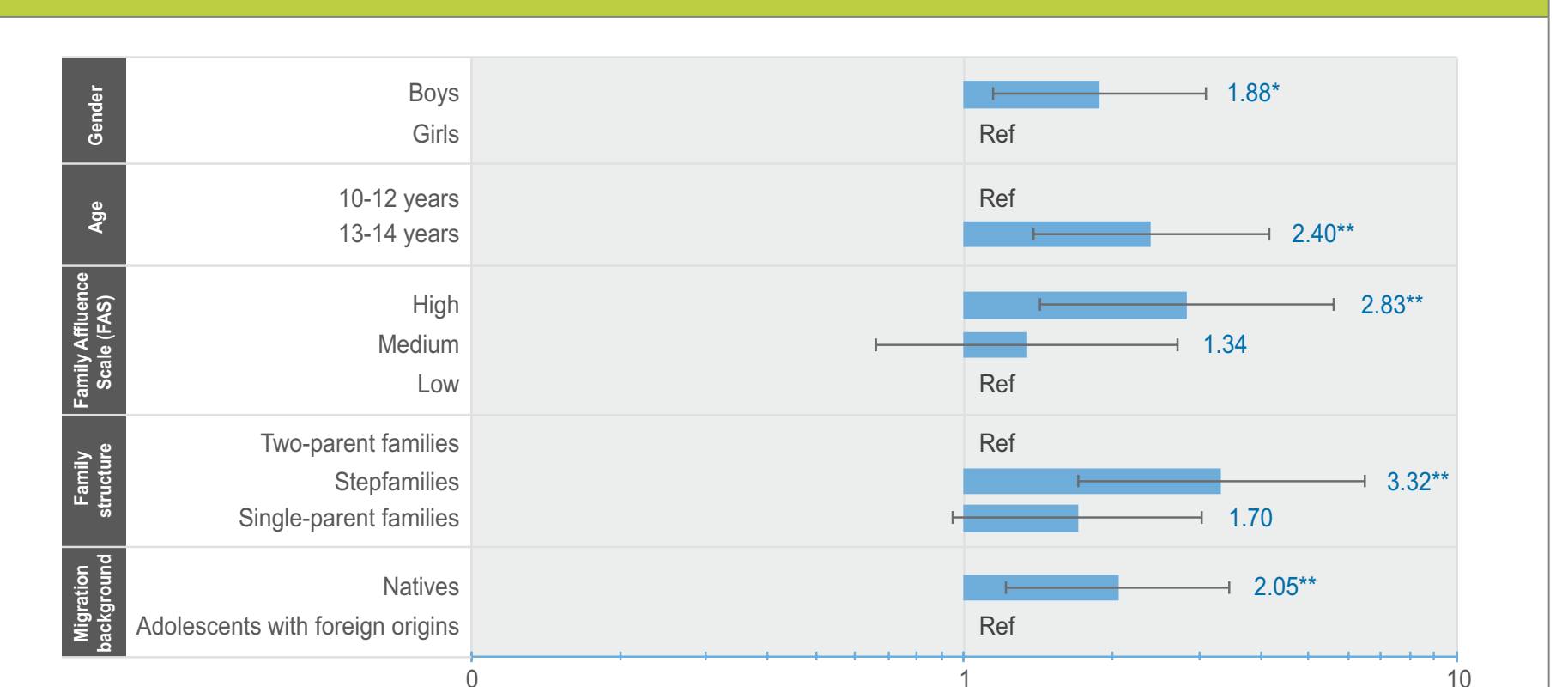
- ▶ Alcohol consumption was not socially marked among boys (all associations NS);
- ▶ among young girls, those aged 13-14 years, from stepfamilies or single-parent families, from "high" or "medium" FAS and natives were more likely to consume alcohol.

F1 Sociodemographic factors associated with alcohol consumption among 10-14 year-old adolescents in the Walloon Region (n=4,093)



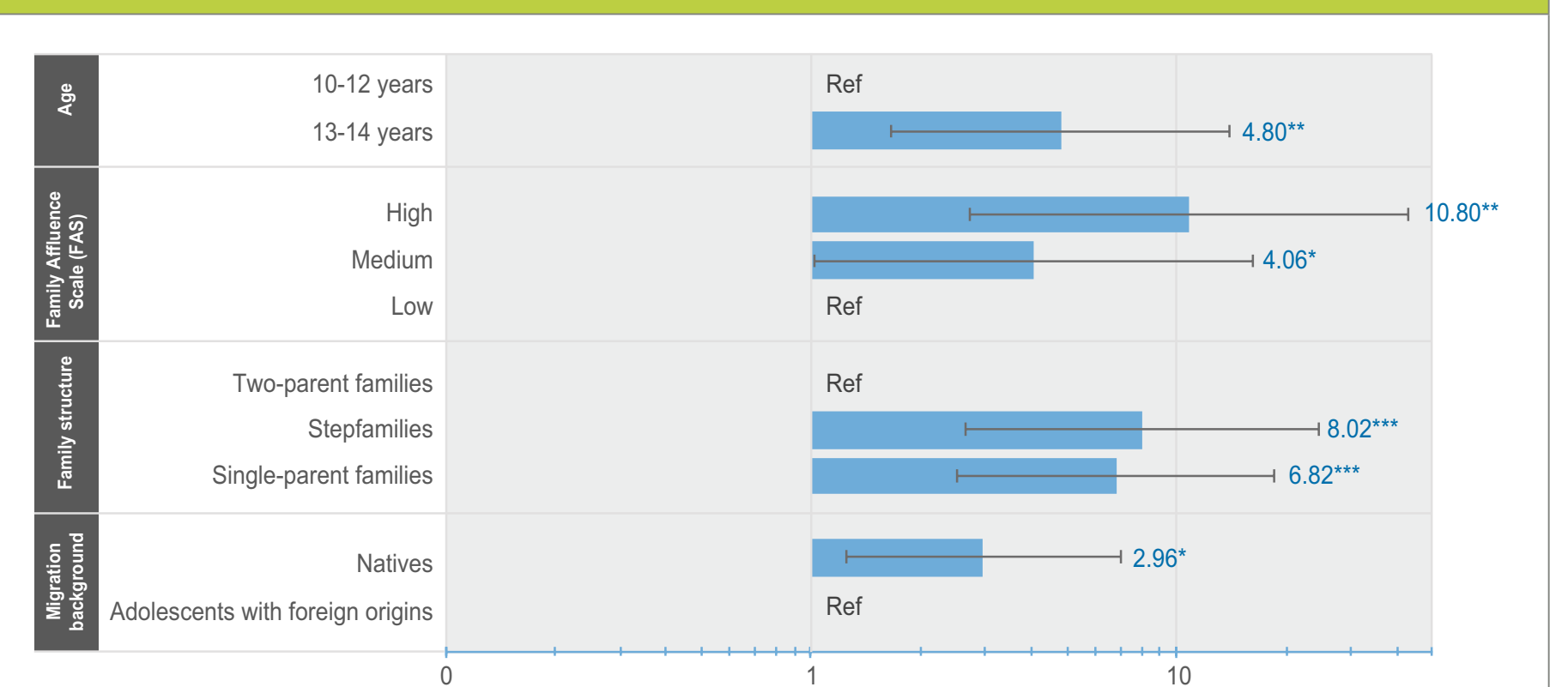
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Multivariable logistic regression.

F2 Sociodemographic factors associated with alcohol consumption among 10-14 year-old adolescents in the Brussels-Capital Region (n=890)



*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Multivariable logistic regression.

F3 Sociodemographic factors associated with alcohol consumption among young girls in the BCR (n=458)



*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Multivariable logistic regression.

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