

**Almost a third of premature deaths in Poland, Portugal and Catalonia are caused by alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use; the proportion is even higher amongst men**

**social cost  
 drugs**  
 mortality burden

Cross-country comparisons between Catalonia, Poland and Portugal in terms of deaths attributable to 3 addictive substances (alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs) indicate that smoking contributes most significantly to mortality rates and years of life lost in the male population in these countries (in the broadest age group of 15-84, as well as the working age group). Among women, crucial cross-country differences were observed in the burden attributable to different substances: in Catalonia the greatest health burden is caused by smoking, in Poland - by smoking and drinking, and in Portugal - by drinking.

There are also significant cross-country differences in terms of the burden connected to the use of illegal drugs. Even though mortality attributable to illegal drugs is lower than alcohol and tobacco in all 3 countries, it is significantly higher in Catalonia than in Poland and Portugal: attributable mortality and years of life lost among Catalonian men are approximately two times higher than in the two other countries, and three times higher in the female Catalan population.

It should be mentioned however, that, as there are many people who drink and also smoke, or drink and use drugs etc. (poly-drug users), and these addictive substances contribute to the same diseases or conditions, the deaths of these people can be counted twice or even three times, meaning that the mortality rates attributed to the 3 different drugs use appears somewhat overestimated in the graph above.

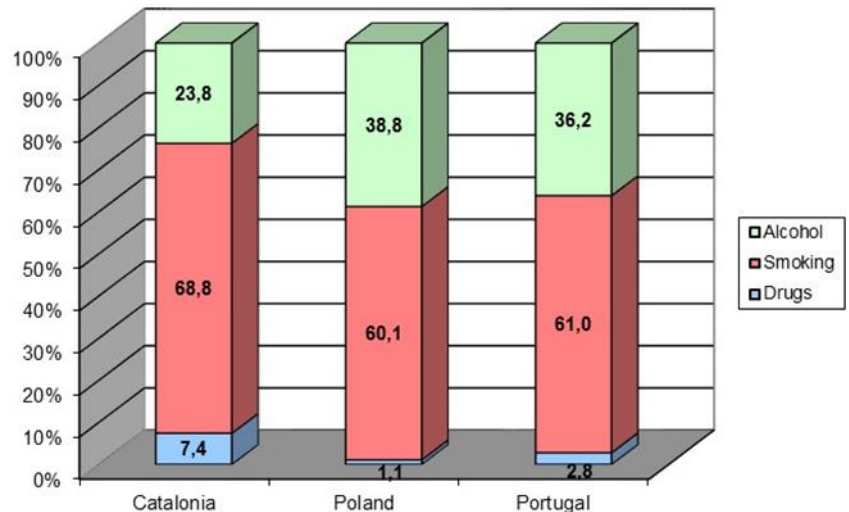


Figure: Percent of deaths attributable to alcohol, smoking or illegal drugs

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