Perception of Risk and Drug Use: An Exploratory Analysis of Explanatory Factors in Six Latin American Countries
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This paper describes 2006 data on risk perception among high school adolescents in six South American countries. Multiple factors influence teens’ risk perception on drug use. More non-users perceive risk from drug use, disapprove of such use, and have a lesser sense of drug availability than users. Fewer alcohol or tobacco users disapprove of use, but more perceive a higher risk on illicit drug use. Meanwhile, fewer illicit drugs users disapprove of smoking or drinking, but many of them still show a high risk perception of illicit drug use. A larger proportion disapproves of regular or continuous illicit drugs use. Further analyses are to be carried to better understand the relationship between risk perception and drug use in South America. Keywords: drug use, risk perceptions, high school students