

E. Danana, D. Dyntsikou, C. Rongotis. *Department of Addictions, Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece*

Background and Aims: Drug use, in isolated "primitive" communities, has been considered as a mechanism of social integration; in ethnocultural subgroups in contact with mainstream society, drug use has been considered as a marker, or sometimes as a cause of social disorganization.

Methods: This is a retrospective archives study. Admissions in Detox Unit of Thessaloniki (residential facility, part of Addictions Department at the Psychiatric Hospital and the only Detoxification Unit in Greece) for the decade 1996-2005 were studied. Socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of patients were recorded.

Results: Patients belonging to ethnocultural subgroups represent 4.8% of the total number of patients admitted (109/2265) and 7.2% of the total admissions number (191/2655). 86.73% are men and 13.27% are women. The mean age is 29.68 years old. The vast majority (77%) is Greek repatriated from European Community Countries and the Former Soviet-Union Republics, and some are from Albania. The median length of stay in Greece is 8.9 years. The rest (17%) belong to ethnocultural Greek subgroups (Roma, Greek Muslim minority). Most of the patients admitted are singles and have a secondary education level. The vast majority (84.6%) are unemployed.

Conclusions: The very low percentage of these admissions, 7.2%, doesn't necessarily represent the actual ratio of users in ethnocultural subgroups in Greece. Specific programs would undoubtedly lift some of the obstacles that hinder minority users from seeking help.

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Minorities in a detoxification unit in Greece: II. Clinical characteristics

K. Nikolaou, G. Papazisis, K. Katsigiannopoulos, E. Kazantzidou, A. Kefalas, V. Papadopoulou, G. Kesidis, P. Alektoridis, N. Theodorides, D. Dyntsikou, C. Rongotis. *Department of Addictions, Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece*

Background and aims: Drug use, in ethnocultural subgroups, has been considered either as a mechanism of social integration or as a marker/cause of social disorganization. The health status and health outcomes of many minorities have remained poor, or have deteriorated, despite massive health promotion campaigns.

Methods: This is a retrospective archives study. Admissions in Detox Unit of Thessaloniki (residential facility, part of Addictions Department at the Psychiatric Hospital and the only Detoxification Unit in Greece) for the decade 1996-2005 were studied. Socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of patients were recorded.

Results: Patients belonging to ethnocultural subgroups represent 4.8% of the total number of patients admitted (109/2265) and 7.2% of the total admissions number (191/2655). 44% of the total admissions completed the 21 days of stay and 46% left prematurely (median length of stay 5 days). 62% were admitted only once and 43% completed the program. 38% were admitted more than once and 45% of these admissions were successfully completed. The initiation drug is cannabis (82%) and the mean age of beginning drug use is 17 years old. The main substance is heroin, the median period of drug use is 7.5 years and the main way route of administration is intravenous (85%). 48% of them tested positive for Hepatitis C, 1% for Hepatitis B, and 9.1 for both HBV&HCV. 70% have problems with the law.

Conclusions: The percentage of completed admissions of the minorities in Detox is comparable to the Greek patients, but more campaigns about hepatitis seem to be necessary.

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Nonspecific treatment response in alcoholics

J.K. Penberthy. *Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA*

Background: Nonspecific treatment response is common in pharmacotherapy trials for alcohol dependence, and results in a marked decrease in alcohol consumption even before subjects' enrollment in a treatment study. We propose that nonspecific effects are associated with trait and state factors operating prior to treatment to influence participants' expectation/perception of future treatment outcome and their drinking behavior. Trait factors include personality, and state factors include readiness to change and severity of drinking at screening. Our study goal was to determine how these nonspecific effects contribute to pre-double-blind clinical outcome.

Methods: We examined the association of trait factors (gregariousness or conformity on MacAndrew Alcoholism Scale (MAS)) and state factors (stages-of-change scale, level of drinking at screening) with pre-double-blind clinical outcome among 321 alcoholics in a pharmacotherapy trial.

Results: Nonspecific effects were associated with significant reduction in alcohol consumption among heavy drinkers (10.3 ± 5.9 drinks/day at baseline vs 5.3 ± 5.1 drinks/day during the last week of single-blind treatment; $p < 0.001$) but not non-heavy drinkers (3.07 ± 0.65 vs 2.98 ± 2.6 ; $p > 0.05$). Partial correlations indicate that significant predictors of pre-double-blind drinking reductions were: level of drinking (-0.215) and the stages-of-change subscales of pre-contemplation (-0.152), contemplation (0.144), and the struggle to maintain (-0.284). The MAS did not predict pre-double-blind drinking reductions.

Conclusions: Participants with higher motivation levels and greater drinking severity were most likely to experience nonspecific treatment effects before double-blind treatment. Gregariousness and conformity were not associated with nonspecific treatment effects.

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Multimodal treatment of alcoholic patients in a day hospital setting: A preliminary study of retention

A. Frustaci, G. Martinotti, G. Pozzi, L. Janiri. *Day Hospital of Clinical Psychiatry, Institute of Psychiatry and Psychology, Roma, Italy*

Background and aims: Outpatient treatment may be as effective as inpatient treatment if clients are retained, especially in the early phase. On the contrary, dropping out from treatment predicts relapse in alcohol dependence. We investigate early predictors of retention in a cohort of alcoholics undergoing a day-hospital rehabilitation programme.

Methods: A consecutive sample of 85 patients entered this prospective study by completing an intensive start-up phase. The main characteristics of the sample were: mean age 43.1 ± 10.7 ; 65% male; 68% employed; 27% polyabuser; 76% ongoing psychopharmacological therapy. Clients were assessed (AWRS, VAS for alcohol craving, ODDS, SCL-90-R) at baseline, T30, T60, T120 and T180. The statistical significance of comparisons was tested by Chi square and Mann-Whitney.

Results: The overall retention rate was: 60 pts (70%) at T30, 54 pts (63%) at T60, 42 pts (49%) at T120, 35 pts (41%) at T180.