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Cannabis abuse treatment: A challenging aspect of an outpatient individual drug abuse therapeutic program

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The Counselling Center offers an outpatient drug counselling individual psychotherapeutic program. Specifically for cannabis users, the program allows the adjustment of the treatment intervention to the specific demands of this group, whereas treatment for other drug abuse does not always recognize or effectively treat cannabis abuse.

In Greece, the great majority of the detoxification therapeutic programs addresses to heroin users and includes therapeutic communities and maintenance programs.

A primary problem is the difficulty to motivate users to seek treatment, because although they have already developed dependence to cannabis use, they often fail to make the association between their use and its symptoms. So they seek treatment after decompensation of academic, social and occupational performance or after involvement with the legal system.

Because of the high frequency of comorbidity among cannabis-dependant individuals, the users often seek treatment from a mental health service, where their abuse is ignored, and this results in rapid relapse while their dependence is still present.

Treating cannabis abuse without diagnosing and treating the underlying disorder or symptomatology is not effective. Thus, treatment programs for cannabis dependence should include a dual diagnosis component in order to treat the user as a whole.

The establishment of such drug abuse programs offering treatment to people whose primary drug abuse is cannabis (or who are primarily addicted to cannabis) seems to be a necessity. Those addicts constitute a rapidly increasing population with particularities in recognition and in treatment of their dependence, something that is associated with physical and psychosocial consequences.

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Drug abuse prevention programs for high school students: Factors that enhance their effectiveness

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The Counselling Center applies drug abuse prevention programs for high school students, which aim at the development of basic skills for handling difficult situations and the encouragement of students to adopt a healthy way of life. Experiential techniques are used in the groups, which are coordinated by a specialist or a trained teacher.

The approach of this age group within the school and the incorporation of the meetings in the school program give the opportunity for an intervention which is regardless of socio-demographic characteristics.

The programs include 5–7 two hours sessions, but can be expanded since they are part of a broader health education program which includes creative activities and activation of students in the

community by sensitizing others in issues such as drug abuse, racism, social exclusion, etc.

The active involvement of students in such activities reinforces effectiveness of prevention programs and willingness for participation. One more factor that plays positive role in the effectiveness of such programs is the participation not only of specialists, but of trained and sensitized teachers as well.

It seems that the careful planning of prevention programs, the incorporation of the interventions in the school program, and the active participation of the educational community contribute greatly to the achievement of the programs' objectives which are the change of the attitudes towards drug abuse through the development of social and personal skills, as well as the adoption of principles such as respect of self and others, cross-cultural communication and support.

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Obstetric management including the impact of substance misuse on the fetus, service models and policy context

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Substance misuse in pregnancy is a complex issue requiring multi-agency working between drugs agencies and obstetric services.

The Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths (2000-2002) found that, when all deaths up to 1 year from delivery were taken into account, psychiatric illness was not only the leading cause of indirect death, but also the leading cause of maternal deaths overall.

Moreover, misuse of alcohol and illicit substances during pregnancy has been associated with significant obstetric maternal, fetal and neonatal complications. These include low birth weight, prematurity, fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal loss, and antepartum haemorrhages. Substance misuse also increases the risk for other conditions, for example, sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and domestic violence. These associated problems can present significant risk to the pregnant mother and her unborn child in themselves.

The National Treatment Outcome Study has provided substantial evidence that treatment for adult drug misuse does work in that it reduces drug use, improves health and reduces criminality which benefits individuals, families and communities. Data from our multidisciplinary PDU service demonstrated that there was a statistically significant association between antenatal attendance at the PDU clinic and birth weight centile possibly by enhancing the much needed stability in the often chaotic lives of these young women since it gives them the opportunity not only for substitute medication but also to resolve housing, employment and other social issues and so limit the untoward effects of these factors on pregnancy outcomes.

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Efficiency of trazodon in treatment of alcoholics

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Depression is old as a humanity, it is the disease that has been described in the early days of medical history. Depression is the most common disorder nowadays. Sometimes alcoholism and narcomania can mask depression. The aim of our work was to find out about the

efficiency of Trazodon in treating depressive disorder with alcoholics who were treated at the department for alcohol addiction in Special Psychiatric Hospital Toponica in the period May–October 2007 (18 patients). For our research we used Beck's scale (Beck and associates) to evaluate the degree of depression. The research lasted for six weeks (average length of hospitalization). After the first week of treatment there was a progress concerning sleeping and reduction of anxiety. The anti-depressing score was evident already after two weeks, there also has been a remarkable dropping of the amount on Beck's scale for evaluation of depression. Throughout the research of the efficiency with depression symptomatology, the daily dosage for alcoholics wasn't over the 200 mg (mostly 150 mg). During 6 weeks of clinical study Trazodon successfully reduced the symptoms of depression in alcohol addicts and after hospitalized treatment significantly helped to maintain abstinence. It was equally used on young and elderly patients and there haven't been notices of any negative effects.

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Addiction problems among high school students in two Polish cities

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Background: According to the studies drug addiction is an increasing problem affecting especially children and young people. It is assumed that about 60% of the drug addicts are found in the age range between 10 and 24.

Aims: The aim of this study were to estimate the general knowledge about drug addiction among secondary and vocational schools students in Zabrze, Poland and Tomaszów Lubelski, Poland, to compare the scales of the problem between studied schools, and to appreciate the level of drug abuse prevention.

Methods: 280 students were included into the study. A two-part anonymous inquiry was implemented. The first part included questions about age, sex, living conditions, family and knowledge on drug abuse phenomenon. In the second part the questions regarded psychoactive substances.

Results: The results show that secondary school graduates have a better knowledge about drugs than vocational school students, the scale of drug addiction problem is higher in schools of Tomaszów Lubelski than in Zabrze, the young people use drugs despite their knowledge of their harmful effects on human organism, boys use drugs more frequently than girls, and the drug abuse prevention in schools is not sufficient.

Conclusions: The analysis of the knowledge on addiction among students in two Polish cities may be useful in creating proper prevention programs.

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Family support & substance abuse during puberty

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A high percentage of research suggests that support by the family, friends and society is related with limited occurrence of psychological symptoms. The results of studies, conducted with samples of

adults, lead to the conclusion that societal support is negatively correlated with substance abuse. Also, concerning young people, parental support, which gives emphasis on emotional and material aspects is a protecting factor. Family support is a relationship of closeness and trust between children and parents. Furthermore, there is evidence that children have better coping mechanisms in terms of negative events and they confront their consequences with positive attitude, when they are emotionally supported by their parents. The benefits of emotional support develop in two forms, either by increasing the protector factors, or by reducing the risk factors. In this investigation, three case-studies are presented and analyzed. Subjects selected were of the same sex (male) and of the same age-group (17 years, 18 years and 22 years old). Results indicated that the interaction between the family affect directly the ways self-destructive behavior as it could be avoided, held or prevented. Lack of boundaries and ambiguous roles create high levels of entropy in any family system. This increased entropy is represented by self-destructed behavior; one of them is substance abuse.

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Tobacco, alcohol and Marijuana use among adolescents and young adults in transitional society of Serbia

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Introduction: Socio-cultural context of transition society intensifies overall risks of use and misuse of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Aim: To determine the prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use among adolescents and young adults in Serbia.

Method: The study included 3180 participants aged between 16 and 35 years from different, both urban and rural, parts of Serbia. Collection of data was conducted in May 2003. Participants completed self-administered anonymous questionnaires (modified YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOUR SURVEY) that consisted of sociodemographic characteristics and experiences related to alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use.

Results: Majority of participants (64%) reported experience with smoking cigarettes at least once, while 51% smoke regularly. Prevalence of smoking was by 10% higher among males. Overall, 75% of the participants reported lifetime alcohol use, and 19% reported drinking alcohol at the age of fifteen or younger. Of the total number 36% experienced alcohol-induced blackouts at least once a month. Males were prone to blackouts significantly more often than females (3:1). The overall prevalence of marijuana use among participants was 32%. During one month before survey 10% of participants had smoked marijuana. Our study showed that the risk of marijuana use in regular cigarette smokers is two-fold higher than in non-smokers. Alcoholism of both parents and family dysfunctionality were related to significantly higher risk of marijuana use.

Conclusion: Early tobacco use, history of family disorganization and parental alcoholism were identified as factors related to increased risk of alcohol and marijuana abuse among adolescents and young adults in Serbia.

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Prevalence of drug dependence in Beta-Thalassemia major patients and its risk factors