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Social representations of illicit drug use

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Attitudes towards illicit drug use have shifted in Europe during the past decades. In the 1990's, an idea of normalized (recreational) drug use was introduced. Although criticized since, this idea provided a new framework in which drug users are controlled and active consumers instead of passive addicts. However, in parallel to the normalization of drug use in some environments, it is still very much tied to its traditional roots as a silenced subject and the target of stigmatization and moral judgement.

Against this ambiguous attitudinal atmosphere, in this study we look at the social representations of illicit drug use. Social representations are sets of attitudes, images and practices shared within groups of people, which help us orienteer in our social worlds and communicate with others. As suggested by European studies and by looking at the Finnish development, drug use has become more frequent and a salient phenomenon in our societies. In light of these changes, what are the social representations of illicit drug use within different sub-populations?

We study people's opinions and attitudes towards illicit drug use and drug policy collected through a national drug survey, representing Finnish people from 15 to 69 years old (n=3229 in 2018). The inquired attitudes and opinions act as components of social representations. Using latent class analysis, we aim to uncover different attitudinal profiles, as the basic tenets of social representations theory state that different groups have different social representations.

The results of the analysis present four groups of respondents with different attitudinal profiles. A majority of respondents belongs to the first group, in which trying or using any drugs is seen as a moderate or high risk for both the user and the society. In the second group, trying and using drugs is again seen as risky, with the exception of cannabis; trying cannabis is not found risky, and using it regularly less so than in the previous class. In the third group, although respondents find the regular use of drugs to be a moderate or high risk, they judge trying drugs once or twice a small risk at most. Respondents in the last group see trying and using drugs to be low risk, although harder drugs are judged more restrictively. These profiles show that drug use is not seen as a homogeneous phenomenon, but as diverse in regard to the substance used and the way of use. These profiles will be further analyzed for their respective opinions towards drug policy.

Keywords: Social representations, illicit drug use, drug attitudes, drug policy, Finland

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Drug and user constructs within the Latvian media

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Objective: Media analysts worldwide have often found problematic media depictions of stigmatised users and illicit substances (Boyd, 2002; Brown, 2007; Becker, 1953; Montagne, 2008; Osborne & Fogel, 2008; Kardi, 1993; Lagerspetz & Moskalewicz, 2002). This is exemplified by Boyd's (2002) observation of the white naive female victim construction that contrasts the older dark-skinned male in the media narratives. Similarly, more contemporary studies still highlight problematic media narratives of cannabis. As McGinty et al (2016) note the disproportional use of public health arguments that are positioned against legalisation and the rare presence of the link between public health research and recreational marijuana policy. Yet unlike the study conducted by McGinty et al (2016) in the US, Hughes et al (2011) Australian based study found that the media is experiencing a shift from "sensationalised, biased and narrow" illicit substance reporting towards broad and systematic reporting. Such an analysis of the existent media in Latvia has not yet been conducted, therefore this study has addressed this gap in research. It is expected to provide some insight as to how has media framed illicit substance discourse in Latvia.

This is important, because when viewed from the social constructionist frame of thought, these media depictions are the key source of knowledge for those that do not possess their own experiences on the topic. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand how substances and their engagers are depicted in the media. The study focuses upon Latvia because there is a rising public interest in the re-examination of the cannabis policies. This attitude change might be revealed within the media depictions, that remain unexamined.

Methodology: The study sources media publications that span between the 2004 and 2019. The approach allows the researcher to note of any changes in attitudes and depictions throughout the contemporary 15-year narrative. The data gathering engages 'Google Alerts' and 'Google Analytics' tools constrained to Latvian sources. The sourcing is limited to five key words in Latvian and Russian that must appear within the article. For example the search results show all the released articles within the geographical boundaries of Latvia that use the word 'marihuāna' (marijuana). Data analysis utilises Mayring's (2000) thematic content analysis that places focus on the quantitative count aspect and the qualitative analysis of the defined group's attached themes. The process of the analysis is depicted in figure 1. All the emergent articles are examined for relevance. The content is then categorised within the 10 categories that emerged throughout the data gathering process. Ten most recurring categories, total count, and combination that the categories are reported in was noted.

Conclusion: Two main tendencies are visible in the data. Firstly, the news reporting has become less focused upon the user or seller, decreasing the demonisation or criminalisation link towards this reported agent. Though such examples are still common. Secondly, there seems to be an emergent urgency in news reporter focus on the inescapable decriminalisation, even legalisation, of cannabis use and sale.

Keywords: Media, drug users, Latvia, thematic content analysis

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A comparative analysis of drug issues coverage in French and German print news media using lexicometric approaches

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Introduction: We would like to introduce a mixed-method we used in a study conducted for “Drug and Urban Security” (DRUSEC), a research project investigating issues of public safety stemming from drug and alcohol use in public spaces of French and German cities. To conduct our research, we employed a variety of approaches: quantitative methods (through surveys), qualitative methods (through interviews with harm reduction professionals and drug users), and a mixed-method (lexicometry). For this presentation, we have decided to focus on the third approach, which we used to conduct a lexicometric analysis of print media.

Objectives: Our final aim is to compare French and German coverage of illegal substance use and policy from 2013 to 2018. We sought to find out whether news coverage reflects differences and similarities between these two countries. For this presentation, we will present the results obtained from the study of the French press.

Methodology: In our analysis, we first selected regional and national publications. Then, we created a list of keywords, extracted all articles containing keywords, using the Europresse databases and imported the articles (about 15,000) into IRAMUTEQ, a software that provides users with statistical analysis of texts. Through different analyses, we compared the national and regional press. With this study, we hope to show the efficiency of mixed methods in processing a very large textual corpus to contribute to our knowledge of public opinion and to participate in the public debate on drugs and drug policy. In terms of analysis, the software we used is not “intelligent” — it simply provides a word count. It is up to the researcher, therefore, to be aware of the social, cultural and legal contexts, to bring the qualitative dimension to the analysis.

Significant results: We found many similarities between national and regional corpora. They point out two main themes: most articles address issues of repression and condemnation of drug trafficking, as well as issues of policy and public health. Many articles address the issue through the lens of criminalization, which reflects on the French legal framework. We can, however, note some nuances: the national press reports facts that are more violent and the regional press reports on local specificities such as cross-border traffic between Spain and south-west France.

Keywords: Media analysis, lexicometry, drug policies, regional-national comparison

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Cannabis festivals and their attendees in four European cities with different national cannabis policies

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Purpose: The objective of the current study was to: (1) describe and contextualize the aims and characteristics of cannabis festivals in countries with different cannabis policies; (2) assess characteristics of participants; (3) identify reasons to attend cannabis festivals; (4) explore to which extent cannabis festivals contribute to the social and cultural acceptance of cannabis, as perceived by attendees.

Methodology: Our approach incorporates three methods of data collection in the research design; quantitative research among 1355 participants, participant observation and interviews with the organizers.

Findings: Cannabis festivals in Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, and Athens have common features but also maintain and reproduce local, social, and cultural characteristics. Cannabis festivals, as well as their attendees, represent heterogeneous categories. In the total sample, age ranged from 14–70 years (mean age 24.9 years) and close to two thirds were male. Overall, 18- to 24-year-old respondents constituted the largest age category. The vast majority of respondents had used cannabis at least once in their lifetime, and 9 out of 10 had used cannabis in the past month. Over half of respondents were daily cannabis users, but more often in Amsterdam than in the other cities, and least often in Athens. The analysis also reveals that in the total sample, 8 out of 10 respondents used cannabis at the festival. Significant differences can be observed among the participants of these festivals. A large majority of respondents thought that the cannabis festival they attended positively affects the social and cultural acceptance of cannabis. The most prevalent reason for participating in cannabis festivals was “entertainment/leisure” or “protest/activism”, but there were significant differences between the four cities. The style of the festival— music festival or march combined with music—affects the main reason for attendance by the participants. In cannabis festivals more similar to music festivals the majority of the respondents attended for entertainment while at the cannabis festivals in the form of a march combined with music the majority attended for protest. Furthermore, increasing age and the high frequency of cannabis use are factors that led the participants to attend for protest.

Originality/Value: This paper not only explores the aims of cannabis festivals in four capital cities of Europe and the characteristics of their attendees, but also offers interesting insights for understanding the ways in which political and social constructions like cannabis festivals shape attitudes, perception and behaviours around cannabis use.

Keywords: cannabis festivals, cannabis, activism, cannabis events, cannabis policy, cannabis users

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Cognitive and behavioural stigma management strategies among medicinal cannabis users

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Objectives: Once limited to particular conditions and diseases, medicinal cannabis use is now becoming more and more widespread. Despite increasing cannabis normalisation (Hathaway, Comeau & Erickson, 2011), several cannabis users still feel stigmatized and face social disapproval in various contexts. Little is known about the experiences of stigma among medicinal cannabis users nor about their coping mechanisms (Bottorff, Bissell, Balneaves, Oliffe, Capler & Buxton, 2013). The stigma of cannabis undermines health care seeking behaviour, and therefore threatens successful treatment outcomes (Satterlund, Lee, & Moore, 2015). This presentation focusses on behavioural and cognitive coping strategies employed by self-identified medicinal cannabis users to deal with stigma.

Methodology: This paper is based on the qualitative results of a wider study that is designed to better understand the experiences and characteristics of medicinal cannabis users living in Belgium. The analyses are based on data derived from qualitative in-depth interviews with 62 adult self-identified medicinal cannabis users, aged 21-78. The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Self-identified medicinal cannabis users employed many strategies to gain social acceptance and to justify their use. Cognitive strategies included: neutralisation techniques, normalization of cannabis use, downplaying the risks and emphasizing the benefits of cannabis, claiming self-control, and symbolic boundary work by scapegoating recreational cannabis users. Behavioural responses to stigma included: secrecy, discriminative disclosure and using discrete administration methods. The dual status of cannabis, commonly used as a recreational drug versus the increased recognition of legitimate medical cannabis use, shape the complex and ambivalent attitudes among medicinal cannabis users towards cannabis.

Conclusions: If Belgium were to follow other countries in the trend of regulating medical cannabis and improving its accessibility, we believe it could have a positive influence on the social acceptance of medicinal cannabis use and the empowerment of medicinal cannabis users. However, our findings illustrate the diversity and complexity of coping efforts to deal with stigma attached to medicinal cannabis use, which require adaptive stigma-reduction interventions.

Keywords: Medicinal cannabis use, stigma, stigma management, qualitative research

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The emerging cannabis industry: corporate misconduct on the horizon?

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Background and objectives: After legalizing cannabis in parts of the United States, Canada and Uruguay, the debate on legalizing cannabis is ongoing. If this evolution pursues in Europe, Europe has the potential at becoming the largest cannabis market. This worldwide trend of cannabis legalization ensures that other companies see the cannabis market as a growing industry. It has many similarities with other large, commercially driven industries and is a profitable business today. The market is closely observed by other industries that have the opportunity to expand their market through the legalization of both recreational and medical cannabis. The legalization of cannabis gives opportunities to companies, including tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical companies that see potential in the investment. Regulation policy should ideally be aimed at maximizing profits and reducing costs associated with a particular drug policy. Values, such as protecting public health, have a legitimate role in determining an approach. It can be argued that private organisations have commercial interests, rather than preventing harmful use.

When studying this phenomenon, two disciplines are combined. Both a criminological, as an economic perspective are used. Criminological frameworks, that studies malpractices by businesses, can clarify why large companies or industries conduct harmful behaviour. Business organizations act within a structure of a developed capitalist society and in a culture of mutual competition whereby motivations, opportunities and rationalisations can be created for malpractices. In addition to these criminological models, economic theories can be applied to explain why, within a specific economic context, industries such as the tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical companies are developing a culture receptive to corporate misconduct.

Methodology: This presentation will be based on literature research that looks at the emerging legal cannabis industry, their relations with the tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical industries and the practices of these industries. To estimate the potential impact of the commercialization of cannabis production and sales, one could take a look at other similar industries. The tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical industries provide insights into the dangers of commercialization. Some of these dangers, which will be the focus of attention, are aggressive marketing, lobbying, influencing scientific research, corruptive practices, disguising health risks, etc.

Results and conclusions: According to scientific research, it became clear that Big Tobacco, Alcohol and Pharma are guilty of corporate misconduct. Clear links can be observed between these industries and the cannabis industry. It can therefore be predicted that the cannabis industry will adopt their strategies.

Keywords: Cannabis legalisation – industries – corporate misconduct

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People and Dancefloors: narratives of drug-taking

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Based on a participatory action research methodology, this UK-based project has involved knowledge co-creation between myself and two research partners, a film-maker and an activist, and with project participants, who were invited to share their stories of drug taking in social and music spaces through multiple media forms (on-camera interviews, audio interviews, written statements, creative writing, images). So far, there have been N = 13 participants. The main output of the project is a film. Other outputs have included the co-creation and maintenance of social media platforms, and will include academic research papers. Alongside this, two workshops in two locations were organised to discuss the themes of the project in small groups. One of the workshops was filmed.

The principal aim of this project is to build channels to voice drug users' narratives as a step towards opening the drug policy debate in the direction of a key affected community, rendering their experiences both valid and visible. However, other important reflections have arisen from the research process. For this paper, I will share such reflections, focusing on doing qualitative research on drugs through film, working across different media, and doing research through collaboration.

I hope these reflections may be useful to anyone who is considering doing qualitative research in the field that attempts to challenge some of the traditional "tropes" of academia, such as individualism, or the pressure to produce and deliver solo, rather than through collaboration, and its associated competitiveness. Other tropes include the tendency to objectify research participants, withdrawing participants' power to define themselves, and the making of research outputs inaccessible, which is connected to obscure use of language, but also more structural issues such as academic publishing. While acknowledging some of the difficulties that emerge in the process, the making of multiple, more accessible outputs in a collaborative fashion may offer a mechanism to disrupt such tropes.

Keywords: participatory action research; multi-media engagement; qualitative research through film; collaboration with non-academic research partners.

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'Chicks Day' in Budapest: reflecting on visual methods research at a women-only needle and syringe exchange programme

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'Chicks Day' refers to the name of the only women-exclusive needle and syringe exchange programme in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, which ran once-weekly services from 2010 to 2014 on top of other harm reduction services open to people of all genders. The research discussed in this presentation took place during the final ten months of the harm reduction centre being open. The main objective of the research was to understand both clients and workers understandings of 'harm' and 'harm reduction' through the use of participatory action research and creative methods.

The innovative methodology of photovoice was used by way of researcher-led photovoice training workshops, participant-generated images, individual photo elicitation interviews, and group photo elicitation focus groups, as well as ethnographic observation. As photovoice is situated within participatory action research, the action-based output from this research came in the form of a photo exhibition. To the researcher's knowledge, this was the first research project to use photovoice within a harm reduction context, and with women who inject drugs (WWID) in Hungary.

Significant results included over 500 participant-produced photographs that captured nuanced meanings of 'harm' and 'harm reduction' in the context of both women who inject drugs, as well as workers of harm reduction centre during the women-only day. Both clients and the workers at Chicks Day produced images that, contextualised through qualitative interviews, detailed both the harms experienced by clients, as well as the harms the workers experienced trying to deliver harm reduction services, as well as the role of the Chicks Day as a 'safe space' for clients.

Co-creation with the researcher and participants resulted in 67 photographs chosen to be displayed at fundraiser photo exhibition event to raise money for the harm reduction centre. This presentation considers researcher reflexivity and the ethical challenges in conducting research with the vulnerable population of WWID. As well, this presentation critically discusses the power dynamics of research, and whether the claim to redress power imbalances or 'give voice' to such imbalances through the use of photovoice is justified.

One main conclusion from the research was the expression of multifaceted, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing harms in the lives of WWID, and the impact these harms had on the effectiveness of service provision for harm reduction workers. Conclusions about the methodological and ethical considerations of the research include critically reflexivity on the ongoing negotiation of issues of consent, empathy, and power.

Keywords: Photovoice, women who inject drugs, harm reduction, Hungary, qualitative research

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A new Foucault-influenced poststructural approach to analysis of interview data and its application in social drug research

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The use of interviews pose a theoretical challenge for researchers that draw on a Foucauldian-influenced poststructural research paradigm, and the potential incompatibility of governmentality studies and ethnography has been subject to debate. This stems from the fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions about 'truth' and the 'founding subject' in Foucauldian-influenced poststructuralism. Bacchi and Bonham (2016) propose to circumvent this challenge through a new analytic strategy, which they refer to as Poststructuralist Interview Analysis (PIA). PIA is informed by Foucauldian concepts similar to those that underpin Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to Be' (WPR) approach to policy analysis. Here, the interview is understood as a text with an analytic focus on 'what is said' and the forms of knowledge that makes 'what is said' possible, rather than on who says it. Importantly, interviews are understood as a significant political resource for researchers through their transformative potential. To date there is a dearth of literature on the application of the PIA approach, a gap that this paper addresses.

In my paper I first discuss the key premises of the PIA, and I describe the interconnected processes of questioning applied to an interview text. Subsequently, I explain how the PIA complements the WPR approach to policy analysis. Following this, I discuss the application of PIA drawing on examples from my research, which examined how families are governed through drug policy (Devaney 2018). This study involved 17 interviewees, including professionals with national and regional drug policy making and coordination roles and service providers across statutory and voluntary sectors involved in drug treatment, family support and policing. I was interested in examining the degree to which these professional discourses reproduced or challenged policy discourse about 'families' and the governing of families' conduct. I conclude the paper with a personal reflection on the challenges and opportunities I experienced in using the PIA as an analytic method.

Keywords: poststructuralism; interviews; qualitative data analysis

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'Coming out': stigma, reflexivity and the drug researcher's drug use

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In this paper we consider the arguments for and against drug researchers' public disclosure of their own experiences with illegal drugs. Some personal drug use history undoubtedly exists within the population of academic drug researchers. But it is rarely acknowledged, and even more rarely reflected upon, in published work. This is understandable: criminal and social sanctions may follow public admission of illicit activities. However, to not 'come out' seems contrary to some core academic principles, such as transparency in data collection and ethical conduct. Here, we consider the potential impacts of acknowledging and reflecting upon personal drug-use experience.

Drawing on the academic literature, a workshop with c. 30 participants (conducted at the 2016 ISSDP conference in Aarhus), personal communication with colleagues, and our own 50+ collective years of experience as drug researchers, we identify risks and benefits across a range of professional and personal spheres, including research, teaching, policy influence and private lives.

The paper identifies potential pros and cons of admitting to being a drug user in the context of drug research. On the one hand, there is a clear risk of stigmatisation for admitting to an illegal and 'deviant' activity. Being known as a drug user could lead to employment difficulties, undermine the researcher's credibility or even result in criminal justice sanctions. On the other hand, social scientists are encouraged to be reflexive about their own position and identity in the research process and good science may call for honest discussion of potential (positive and negative) impacts that drug use may have on the research process and resultant findings. At the same time, admitting to drug use may also have benefits when seen as a form of activism, helping to destigmatise and normalise the drug using population more generally - or it may further marginalise more 'problematic' drug users.

Both the risks and benefits have implications for how research and researchers may influence drug policy. Two key themes, stigma and reflexivity, underpin the discussion. We do not conclude with clear instruction for drug-using drug researchers. However, there is clear merit on further open discussion on the role of disclosure and reflection on personal drug use experience among those working in drug research and drug policy, and we urge this from those who feel able.

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Self-governance by darknet drug markets

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Background: The combination of anonymising software and cryptocurrencies have contributed to the proliferation of drug markets on the darknet – a subset of the internet where users can communicate almost completely anonymously. With this socio-technical innovation, users conceal their personal identity and physical location. Research has demonstrated cryptomarkets are continually growing in terms of sales volumes generated despite law enforcement interventions (Tzanetakis 2018).

Objectives: This paper addresses ways in which anonymous online drug platforms govern themselves through informal modes of coordination and governance. In contrast to the governance of cryptomarkets, self-regulation is an underexplored issue in darknet drug markets and Internet governance scholarship alike. Cryptomarkets cannot rely on formal institutions and state actors for their internal ordering. Nor do anonymous online markets operate in a legal vacuum with no regulation at all. Instead, processes, structures and actors contribute to ordering darknet drug markets. Drawing on Hofmann's et al. (2016) conceptual framework of governance as reflexive coordination, this paper examines governance by cryptomarkets as an evolving negotiation process.

Methodology: In this study a multi-sited online ethnographic approach is used to explore informal rules, routines and conventions guiding behaviour and coordinating interactions of cryptomarket users. Data collection started in 2014 and includes unstructured observation of various drug selling platforms, associated discussion forums, eighteen face-to-face semi-structured interviews as well as twelve encrypted online interviews.

Significant results and conclusions: The analysis characterises self-governance by cryptomarkets in four dimensions. (I) The *regulative dimension* of governance addresses the provision and enforcement of formal rules. In its terms of service market administrators specify which goods and services are or are not allowed for sale (e.g., ban of Fentanyl). (II) The *normative dimension* addresses shared values and informal norms that classify legitimate and illegitimate practices, such as the consensus within the community not to publish private or identifying information on users. (III) The *discursive dimension* addresses shared beliefs that are deeply embedded in social routines and structures. As such, users support libertarian ideas by drawing a clear line separating their activity from the coercive state and from more violent traditional drug markets. (IV) The *technological dimension* takes into account affordances and rules in cryptomarket infrastructures. This includes platform infrastructures, TOR, Bitcoin, wallets, PGP, VPN, escrow payment, among others. The paper examines how darknet drug markets perform relatively stable forms of ordering despite their lack of formal regulation and despite regular disruptions like the sudden closure of marketplaces by police. Finally, it discusses policy implications of self-governance by darknet drug markets.

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Gendering online illicit drug markets

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Objectives: Online drug markets represent a fairly recent development in the illicit drug trade. While this global phenomenon has attracted considerable international research interest, questions related to gender have been neglected. This inattention may be driven by twin assumptions: that illegal drug selling is essentially a male dominated activity; and that the peripheral role of women in drug selling is likely to be reproduced in the online context. We aim in this paper to: (i) interrogate the validity of these assumptions; (ii) explore the potential benefits of developing a gendered perspective of online drug markets; and (iii) outline the steps that need to be taken to achieve one.

Methodology: In our first section we lay bare the stereotypes and unarticulated assumptions connected to the relative value of gendered activities that may influence researchers, thereby driving characterisations of drug markets that inappropriately relegate or de-value women's roles. We further consider how academic cross-national disciplinary assumptions that underlie the identification of drug dealing activities may serve to render invisible female-dominated illegal online drug selling. In our second part, we turn our attention forward. We examine the fresh opportunities and insights that become available with an improved and fuller understanding of women and gender in online drug markets. Finally, we draw on the work in these two sections to produce our outline of a way forward.

Significant results: Our reflections suggest that women's roles in online drug markets have been rendered invisible because of commonly held assumptions that shape the way we see women and gender in the field of drug markets. As a consequence, the potential for online drug markets to provide a rich mine of information about the way that women operate and the way in which gender is performed within drug markets more generally, has been missed.

Conclusion: To increase the visibility of and interest in women and gender in online drug markets, we need to encourage a more rounded conceptualisation of online drug markets which includes Clearnet drug trading and a more diverse range of substances. Empirical research on women is needed to address substantive knowledge gaps, but gender analysis must go further. We need creative methodologies that can explore how gender is performed and how women's purchasing and labour support the online illegal drug trade. Research of this nature should also aim to benefit women and meet their specific needs.

Keywords: Gender; drug-markets; cryptomarkets

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Variations in the accomplishment of persistent heroin use: A typology of users' lifestyles

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The aim of this paper is to offer a qualitative typology of heroin using lifestyles. Although some previous literature has described variation within the careers of heroin users or between different heroin users little of this is relevant to the United Kingdom or the 21st century. The paper aims to use thick description to understand subtle variations of the lifestyles of heroin users, including those who might be hidden from the view of the public as well as drug and criminal justice services. It is hoped the paper can help to illuminate variations of heroin user's lifestyles beyond stereotypical depictions.

Data gathering involved 51 interviews with long term heroin users conducted at a harm reduction service where the researcher was volunteering. The participants were sampled purposively by identifying heroin users from service users at a needle exchange. Whereas previous qualitative typologies of heroin users have been opaque regarding their methods of classification, a system of validation utilising two members of the research team is outlined to show the process is reliable.

Four distinct types were identified on the basis of user's narratives concerning: levels of drug use; repertoire of drugs used; social environment; housing; and income. 'Domestic users' attempted to maintain a somewhat conventional lifestyle despite being dependent to a highly stigmatized drug. 'Top boys' sold drugs in a profitable manner despite their excessive use of heroin. Users living 'On the wander' formed part of a community of homeless heroin users who inhabit the city centres, users living 'On the run' lived a little differently as they were primarily crack users and shunned the city centre community.

The conclusions suggest that one size fits all approaches to drug policy are misguided in the case of heroin use. Heroin users living different lifestyles are exposed to differing risks as well as possessing different capital which could be utilised in recovery or harm reduction.

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„Junkies“ versus „zombies“: Changes in drug use patterns within open drug scenes

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The bilateral Project „Drugs & Urban Security“ (DRUSEC) investigates public drug and alcohol use in several German and French cities by qualitative methods (participant observation, interviews). Empirical findings for drug use patterns in Bremen`s open drug scene are outlined and discussed in comparison to those from other cities participating in the study. Although open drug scenes in European cities share similarities such as being located in city centres and near train stations, they vary with regard to prevalent consumption patterns. While the use of crack cocaine has been observed to be part of polyvalent consumption patterns in Frankfurt/Main and Hamburg since many years, and massive problems are reported from Paris in recent years, it is a new phenomenon in Bremen and has not yet reached a visible extent in Munich or Bordeaux.

Since 2018, an increasing use of crack emerges among opiate addicts in Bremen, leading to a segregation of scene groups. Most traditional “junkies” keep using opiates (heroin and/or substitutes) as their primary drug, complemented by alcohol, prescription drugs (e.g. benzodiazepine, Lyrica), cannabis and an occasional cocaine use. Another group has shifted from this pattern towards a dominant use of crack cocaine during daytimes, using opiates mainly to come down and find sleep at night, and/or as substitution in the morning. Members of this latter group are called “zombies” by other drug scene fellows, due to their states of enhanced neglect, decline and diminished social responsiveness.

Security risks for all open drug scene members are observed while many “crackheads” display risky and careless behaviours in their urban environment, including accidents, acquisitive crime, various dangerous situations. Aggressive and exploitative conducts towards other drug users are perceived as threat to security by the drug scene groups and lead to exclusion from their community, social disintegration and isolation.

This recent development of an urban crack use and its implications call for recognition and specific action by the local authorities in public health and social policy. Most excessive crack users show an accelerated physical decay including heart or respiratory diseases, massive physical exhaust, and mental health problems while they are currently hard to reach by the addiction care system. Due to their street-based lifestyle, there is an increased need for mobile on-site help services and outreach work/streetwork.

Keywords: Open drug scenes, consumption patterns, opiates, crack cocaine

SLIDES NOT AVAILABLE

Risk taking and risk management. Adolescents voice on psychoactive substance use and harm reduction

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Introduction: Social transformations due to globalization and technology innovations deeply affects young people's lives. Psychoactive substance use is an ongoing public health concern. Due to its pragmatism and inclusiveness, harm reduction poses a promising approach in responding to this concern. Yet, little is known about management of substance use and related harms among this group of age.

Objectives: This study aimed at exploring risk and harm reduction practices among Polish adolescents who use various psychoactive substances, on the background of their patterns, contexts and motives of use.

Method: In-depth semi-structured individual-interviews were conducted with 72 users (aged 17-18, 50% male) including six groups with different leading substance-of-choice: new psychoactive substances (N=12), stimulants (N=12), cannabis (N=12), inhalants (N=12), over-the-counter drugs (N=12) and non-medically used prescription drugs (N=12). Besides, 12 professionals who work with youth at-risk were interviewed, ensuring data triangulation. Participants were recruited using online announcement on thematic forums and snowballing-sampling methodology. Qualitative analysis have been carried out by four researchers, both within and between groups of users of different substances.

Results: Our study identified both general (e.g. use only in the safe setting with comfortable mental state and trusted company) and substance-specific (e.g. swallowing instead of snorting stimulants to avoid compulsive intake) protective strategies to manage substance use-related risks and harms across all six groups of study participants. These strategies were categorized as: knowledge-base, safety conditions, risk minimisation means and controlled use. Adolescents using substances recreationally had the best knowledge and the highest prevalence of applying such strategies. Yet, most of these strategies were on an informal, selective or ad hoc basis. In addition, the most common pattern was poly-drug use. Moreover, results indicate that substances are used despite the perceived risks and experienced harms, due to their benefits, subjective meaning and capacity in fulfilling developmental and recreational needs. Participants pointed to the Internet as the main source of information about substances and harm reduction measures, following by friends experiences and knowledge exchange. Friends played also a crucial role in management of one's substance use-related risks.

Conclusion: Despite the risk-taking, young people show an active involvement in reducing one's substance use-related risks and harms. Moreover, our research identified a strong demand for knowledge and practices regarding substance use management among adolescents who use psychoactive substances. Therefore, interventions targeting adolescents substance use might benefit from utilizing the harm reduction approach and Internet-based designs.

Keywords: adolescents substance use, risk and harm reduction, substance use management

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Patterns of cannabis use among students in Estonia and neighbouring countries in 2003–2015

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The study analysed lifetime cannabis use trends and factors associated with cannabis use among 15 to 16-year-old students in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden in 2003 to 2015.

Methods: The sample consisted of 15- to 16-year-old students who participated in the European School Survey Project (ESPAD) in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden. Prevalence of lifetime cannabis use was calculated for each country. Chi-square test for trend was calculated to evaluate the changes of cannabis use, perceived access to cannabis and perceived health risks due cannabis use over the study period. Logistic regression was used to assess associations between cannabis use and different factors. Adjusted odds ratios (OR) were calculated with 95% confidence intervals (CI).

Results: In 2015 the prevalence of lifetime cannabis use was 25% in Estonia, 17% in Latvia, 18% in Lithuania, 8% in Finland and 7% in Sweden. During 2003–2015 the prevalence of cannabis use increased significantly in Latvia and Lithuania, whereas in Finland and Sweden cannabis use remained low and stable. Estonia had the highest prevalence already in 2003, after that it has stabilized. In 2015 the prevalence of perceived easy access to cannabis was 34% in Estonia, 23% in Latvia, 25% in Lithuania, 16% in Finland, 28% in Sweden and the prevalence increased in all countries, besides Finland. In 2015 the prevalence of students who reported that 1–2 times cannabis use is not associated with health risks was 11% in Estonia, 18% in Latvia, 20% in Lithuania and similarly 12% in Finland and Sweden. Perceived low health risk of cannabis use increased in all countries in 2003–2015.

In all countries the higher odds for cannabis use were among students who perceived cannabis easy to access, perceived no health risks associated with cannabis use, used alcohol and smoked. Parental rules set outside home and parents' knowledge of a child's Saturday night whereabouts differed between the studied countries. Similar to Sweden, Finnish and Lithuanian boys had higher odds to use cannabis when their parents knew sparsely where their child spent Saturday nights. Rare parental rule-setting outside home was associated with higher odds to use cannabis among Latvian girls and Estonian buys.

Conclusions: It is crucial to explore the sources for easy cannabis access, to find different social platforms to address adolescents and what are the important topics to adolescent's that would help to change their behaviour.

Keywords: adolescents, students, cannabis use, ESPAD

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Substance use among prisoners: An attempt to conduct a complete survey in Wittlich prison / Rhineland-Palatinate

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Objectives: Health care in prison and the accompanied issue of drug use amongst inmates has not yet been given much consideration in scientific research in Germany. Most available information on prevalence rates and other indicators related to drug use and substance use disorders in intramural settings are frequently outdated. A comparison between Germany and other European countries is therefore not possible at the moment. Prevention and offers of assistance are often not tied to the specific needs of the prison population because we know too little about current drug use patterns and their changes. There are observable changes in drug use outside the prison setting which may require adjustment of help measurements. Currently it is not clear if those changes are similar in prisons – particular indications, like the use of synthetic cannabinoids, seem to suggest that assumption. For future research it is very important to learn more about the developing drug use patterns and the associated problems. This is the only possibility to figure out which problems the inmates actually have at the moment and which consequences regarding help measurements have to follow out of this.

Methodology: A two-sided questionnaire was handed out to every inmate who wanted to participate voluntarily and only self-reporting was included. The questionnaire was divided into four different topics: Legal drugs, illegal drugs, risk behavior and knowledge about offers of assistance and repression within the prison. Information on lifetime-prevalence of alcohol, nicotine and drug use and during the actual imprisonment were collected as well as information on consumption patterns. The survey also included questions about injecting drug use. Furthermore the participants were asked about their utilization of help offers in- and outside prison.

Results: 193 (41,45 %) of 468 inmates participated in the survey. Not participating might have had different reasons like distrust and fear of sanctions. Only two inmates reported the consumption of alcohol in Wittlich prison, whereas 82,4 % (n=159) proclaimed being smokers. 19,7 % (n=38) stated that they already used illegal drugs during their imprisonment, lifetime-prevalence rate of any illegal drug use was 64,2 % (n=124). 4,7 % (n=9) of the imprisoned stated that they already shared injecting equipment before being imprisoned. 1,6 % (n=3) affirmed sharing injecting equipment also in prison. 54,9 % (n=106) of the participants already had contact with counseling services regarding their alcohol- or drug-related problems. Even more (59,6 % (n=115) reported contact to respective offers during their actual imprisonment.

Conclusions: Outcomes show that lifetime-prevalence of every called up legal and illegal drug is higher among inmates of Wittlich than in the male adult population in Germany. It seems to be reasonable to provide and expand offerings concerning problems with the use of legal and illegal substances. Overall it needs to be said that a lot of prisoners are already tied to help offers in the prison of Wittlich. It seems to be that those offerings are well accepted.

Keywords: Drug-use in Prison, Lifetime-prevalence of substance-use in prisoners, Health care in prison

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Substance use among people living in prison (PLIP) in seven European countries: analysis based on the European Questionnaire on Substance Use among People living in prison (EQDP)

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Background: The prevalence of drug use and drug-related problems among people living in prison (PLIP) is higher than among general population. The prevalence rates vary between countries due differences in data collection methods. Young adults aged 15 – 34 are high-risk group and usually have the highest drug use prevalence rates. The European Questionnaire on Drug use among people living in Prison (EQDP) has been used in seven European countries to provide a comparable cross-countries picture.

Methods: The aim is to describe the prevalence of substance use of PLIP aged 15 – 34 in seven European countries using EQDP. Seven European countries have conducted cross sectional surveys on substance use among PLIP between 2014 and 2018, using fully or partly the EQDP developed by the EMCDDA. Indexes have been constructed to compare prevalence of substance use among PLIP and the general population; comparing substance use among PLIP outside and inside prison.

Results: In the seven countries included in the analysis, PLIP report high levels of lifetime prevalence of substance use before imprisonment, with up to 78%. The highest excess of substance use among PLIP compared to the general population, was for heroin in Latvia - up to 486 times higher than in general population. In general, substance use decreasing at prison entry, except for Lithuania, where an increase was reported for buprenorphine (index: 3.10), fentanyl (index: 2.45), GHB/GBL (index: 3.85) and other substances. In general, the lowest decrease was reported for tobacco use for both genders (index: 0.87), while the largest reduction was reported for heroin (index: 0.43 for male; 0.23 for female) and powder cocaine (index: 0.26 for male; 0.13 for female). For some countries and some substances women PLIP show higher excess of substance use as compared to the general population and a lower reduction of substance use when they enter prison.

Conclusions: For the first time EU countries using the same questionnaire for data collection among PLIP, what provides comparable – cross country results. Data on prevalence of substance use among PLIP show high rates of substance use among PLIP and a reduction of substance during imprisonment. However, sometimes reduction is minor or even the prevalence of use is even higher than before imprisonment. This cause a concern, that prisons are not drug-free zone and sometimes even increase rates of substance use. Women with drug related problems present more vulnerable drug using profile both before and inside prison and their specific needs have to be addressed. The use of EQDP tool across countries is a useful instrument for policymakers, professionals and prison managers as it provides an international picture of substance related problems in prison settings, identifying commonalities and differences across countries.

Keywords: prison, surveys, Europe, prevalence, substances use

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Drug policy discourses in Hungary between 2010-2018

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Background: In 2010 the progressive pro-harm reduction national drug strategy was rejected by the new government in Hungary. A new, law-and-order and recovery-oriented drug strategy has been created in 2013, subordinating harm reduction to recovery and aiming to make Hungary drug-free by 2020. Representatives of CSOs (civil society organizations) were excluded from the main consultative drug coordination body of the government and CSO efforts to build partnership with the government remained unsuccessful. Several services had to close down, including the two largest needle and syringe programs in Budapest in 2014, distributing half of the sterile needles in the country.

Aim: The desk-based research aim was to explore the public drug discourses between 2010 and 2018 in Hungary and compare the results to European drug policies and discourses.

Method: Drug related grey documents with selected combinations of keywords (drug, policy, strategy, harm reduction, low threshold services) were searched and collected in different databases of the Hungarian printed media between 2010-2018 (Arcanum Database), the Hungarian Parliamentary documents between 2010-2018 (Parliamentary database of speech transcripts), and the Hungarian online media between 2013-2018 (online media, social media, fora discussions – Neticle Database). The principles of document analysis within the methodological framework of discourse analysis were applied.

Results: After clearing the database the relevant documents of the data set consisted of 305 pieces of publications from the printed media, 608 speech transcription pieces from the Parliament, and 510 pieces of online media communication. The quantitative analysis showed the peak of drug related discussion in the Parliament in 2013. From 2010 an increasing number of discussions specifically about the drug policy strategy was found. The peaks of the media discourse are more diverse. Both the online and printed media is discussing drug related topics connected to the police activities (seizures and raids, e.g. on Ozora festival) or celebrities taking drugs and drugged driving and from 2012 the topic of new psychoactive drugs.

Conclusions: The public drug discourses in the Hungarian printed and online media and also the Parliamentary communications between 2010 and 2018 show a shift from the harm reduction discourse to the pathology discourse with a distinct peak at 2013 when the National Drug Strategy was accepted. The generated discourse is regarded as a stand away from other European countries' harm reductionist approaches.

The study was supported by the Correlation European Harm Reduction Network.

Keywords: drug policy, document analysis, discourse analysis, Hungary, pathology discourse, harm reduction

SLIDES NOT AVAILABLE

„Just between the cars, kneel down, boil it up, get ready...“ - Lived spaces of drug users in cities with and without drug consumption rooms

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Objectives: Until now, little is known about how the existence or absence of drug consumption rooms (DCR) shape the everyday life experiences of people from open drug scenes in European cities. Since drug use is the main activity directing the everyday routines of drug users, their spatial movements and habits are influenced through drug policies, such as the establishment of drug service facilities. Likewise, the drug user's daily habits and appropriations of public spaces influence the geographies of cities. European cities are structured around historically dense inner cities with a high intensity of functions, such as housing, tourism and consumption and a wide diversity of social groups. Most of the European open drug scenes are settled within these areas, e.g. close to the main stations, and show similar social and spatial structures. In this presentation, we will focus on a comparison of the different experiences and perceptions of drug users in cities with and without DCR.

Method: Our observations are essentially based on the results of one work package of the research project "DRUSEC (Drugs and urban security)". As part of the project we developed a geographical research method we call emotional mapping which was already presented at the ESSD conference 2018 by Luise Klaus. Asking drug users of the open drug scene about their participation in urban space, their everyday life routines and challenges, as well as their emotions connected to different places, we gain a brighter understanding of the lived spaces of our interviewees. We'll present first results from interviews in the cities of Frankfurt (with DCR) and Munich (without DCR).

Results: In both cities, the open drug scenes are mainly located in the main station areas, districts that are characterized by gentrification processes. The lived spaces of marginalised drug users of the open drug scenes are characterised by a high spatial precariousness and vulnerability and mainly determined through drug use. Nevertheless, the lived spaces of drug users are also shaped by the existence or lack of DCR, which will be shown by different maps and narratives.

Conclusion: The urban setting of the drug scenes in both cities Frankfurt and Munich resemble, since both drug scenes are located in the main station areas, which are influenced by gentrification processes. Nevertheless, the drug policies in both cities are very different (from liberal to repressive approaches), which influence the lived spaces of the drug scenes, mostly by the (in-)existence of DCRs.

Keywords: drug user, urban, space, drug consumption room, mapping

SLIDES NOT AVAILABLE

Rethinking Policy through comparative research: an exploration of the Recovery Assemblage

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Current discussions on recovery from alcohol and other drugs focus on the ways that people in recovery are expected to re-make themselves as a result of their engagement with these services. Within this line of thought there is a proliferation of critical analyses on treatment models and practices, as well as a growing need for specific and recovery-focused policy recommendations. The aim of this account is to go beyond the criticism of specific treatment models and to mobilise the data produced in two recovery contexts, a residential recovery centre in Athens, Greece, and a recovery-focused day centre in Liverpool, UK, in order to think of the recovery space through the Deleuzian and Guattarian concept of the assemblage. In both fieldsites data were produced through the service-users' oral and visual narratives of drug use and recovery, focusing on how the practices of care that take place within the two recovery settings respond to the needs that derive from context-specific drug using experiences. More in specific, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 service-users from each fieldsite. Following the completion of the interviews, interviewees were invited to participate in a photovoice project. This set of empirical data was complemented by interviews conducted with the workers of the two services.

Through the close examination of the empirical data produced, I demonstrate that thinking of the recovery space as an assemblage opens up the possibility to look closely at the affective flows that take place within the recovery space; practices that go beyond the 'good' or 'bad' application of existing treatment models and position the provision of care in the focus of attention. I argue that focusing on practices as they develop in specific contexts rather than on universal treatment models, constitutes a bottom-up fashion to explore recovery. The fundamental change that derives from the exploration of the context-specific transformations of recovery is the potential transformation of policy, from a regulatory mechanism to one that reinforces and supports context-specific practices of care.

Keywords: recovery, assemblage, practices of care

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ATTUNE: Understanding Pathways to Stimulant Use: A mixed-methods examination of the individual, social and cultural factors shaping illicit stimulant use across Europe: first results from the quantitative study module

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Objectives: Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) like amphetamine, MDMA/“ecstasy”, methamphetamine, cathinones or not prescribed medication like “Ritalin” are the second most commonly used illicit drugs globally and in Europe. Yet, there is little evidence on which factors are associated with the development of different patterns of ATS use over the life course. This study aims to examine which individual, social, and environmental factors shape different pathways and trajectories of ATS consumption. The study is being conducted in five European countries: Germany; the Netherlands; Poland; the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom.

Methodology: We used a sequential, exploratory, mixed methods study design to investigate the multiple factors (familial, social and occupational situation, critical life events, general risk behaviour, mental and physical health, satisfaction with life) that shape individual ATS use pathways. A literature review as well as results from qualitative Module 1 informed the quantitative questionnaire of Module 2. Four ATS consumer groups (current and former; frequent and non-frequent) and one non-user group which was exposed to ATS consumption from five European countries (GER, UK, NL, CZ, PL) were interviewed using tablet computers (CAPI method).

Significant results: After the presentation of results from the qualitative Module 1 at the ESSD conference in 2018, this year’s presentation will contain preliminary results of the currently ongoing analysis of the quantitative data, which were collected in Module 2. Besides the description of the transnational sample, results about participants’ substance use in general and ATS use in particular will be presented. Different ATS use patterns appear in our sample, ranging from ATS non-users to users showing controlled ATS use up to participants whose ATS use escalated and flowed into dependency. Data show that amphetamine (“Speed”) and MDMA (“Ecstasy”) are the most popular substances in the whole sample, but looking into country specific analyses reveals a high prevalence of methamphetamine in the Czech Republic as well as a high prevalence of NPS (cathinones etc.) in Poland compared to the other countries. Frequent ATS users show higher consumption of other drugs than non-frequent ATS users. ATS non-users are not abstinent from psychoactive substances in general, they often use other drugs. We will associate different user groups with miscellaneous factors that might have shaped the consumption patterns and their transformation. First analyses show associations with the number of consumption rules (more rules result in less problematic use), the type of use motives (hedonistic vs. functional/coping related) or the experience of critical life events (the more and the earlier, the higher the probability of a problematic ATS use). Negative health consequences seem to be most important when exploring, why participants reduce their ATS use.

Conclusions: ATS use – even when sometimes frequent and/or perpetual – does not have to lead to ATS dependency. Different risk but also resilience factors that one person has seem to shape her/his ATS consumption pattern(s) and play a role regarding one’s capability to change and control the ATS use. When developing tailored interventions, holistic approaches that take into account the wide-ranging contributing factors promise to best meet user’s needs.

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Using systematic monitoring and feedback on data results in a 10 year follow-up study for individuals with problematic substance use

Thomas Solgård Svendsen

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Background: Long-term help efforts are often required when individuals with substance use disorder desire changes in substance use, cognitive functions and psychosocial areas. Systematic feedback on data results that provide information on status and changes in cognitive and psychosocial functions are not commonly used tools internationally in long-term change work. Ethical aspects of dissemination of data results on individual and group levels are not widely discussed internationally.

Methods: In- depth interviews with 30 individuals with full recovery from substance use disorder were completed. The study participants shared information on participation in a longitudinal, prospective follow-up study that use systematic monitoring and feedback on data results as part of the study's methodology.

Results: Study participants reported that systematic monitoring and feedback on data results was useful in several aspects, from baseline assessment to 5 years in full recovery. Systematic monitoring and feedback on data results on cognitive and psychosocial aspects was perceived as interesting and useful support tools both in periods of using and not using substances, and in all phases working toward full recovery.

Conclusions and implications: Systematic monitoring and feedback on data results provides significant amounts of low-cost data, was not perceived as too demanding to follow up for study participants, and was described as interesting and useful supportive management tools in several phases of working toward full recovery from substance use disorder. Treatment, health-and social services could benefit from using systematic monitoring and feedback as supportive tools to work long-term with individuals that desire changes in substance use, cognitive and psychosocial areas.

Ethical aspects of data results dissemination on individual and group levels should be discussed in substance treatment and follow-up services, as well as in all other treatment, health-and social help areas internationally.

Keywords: Long-term study, Problematic substance use, Recovery, Feedback, Data results, Ethics

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Problems when interpreting correlation causally

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Objectives: To demonstrate unequivocally that the popular intuitive interpretation of correlations as causal relationships in policy discourses is commonly inadequate?

Methodology: To search for causal interpretations of correlations in the alcohol policy discourse, which are usually presented and accepted unquestioned and to show as clearly and unambiguously as possible that the conclusions are not only problematic but definitely unsustainable with convincing examples.

Significant Results: The tendency to treat correlations of time series as solid prove for causal relationships is very strong when policy interventions are to be evaluated. This is particularly true in the so called "evidence-based" alcohol policy discourse. The presentation provides examples, where causal conclusions seem very convincing and confronts with similar examples where it is easy to grasp these conclusions are not justified.

Conclusions: When it comes to causal statements based on observation, competent, critical questioning of these conclusions is indispensable. Paradoxically the desired "pure observation" can only be achieved by deconstructing the immediate perception with an intellectual (analytical) endeavour, i.e. doing an "interpretation" based on knowledge (Kriz et al. 1990). Causal interpretations derived from empirical data must not be interpreted as false logical conclusions but these must be explained as "Gestalt" phenomena, similar to optical illusions, which can hardly be avoided deliberately by recipients. As Michotte (1982) stated: "We experience causality as direct as we experience colours".

It must be added here that identifying illogical inference based on empirical data does not necessarily mean that the intuitive conclusions are factually wrong. The insight that specific causal inference is wrong only implies that the data under consideration neither prove nor disprove the conjectures these data seem to support and not that these conjectures are wrong - just as a court acquittal for lack of evidence does not imply that the defendant is innocent.

Keywords: association, causality, epidemiology

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Opioid-related problems in Baltic States and Poland: Has the turning point come?

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Methods and objectives: The aim of the study is to analyse differences and similarities of opioid-related problems in Lithuania (LT), Latvia (LV), Estonia (EE) as well as Poland (PL) in terms of supply and demand by drawing on the latest data with particular emphasis placed on NPS opioids. The analysis attaches particular importance to new trends in opioids problem, which might impact public health. The analysis reviews the existing data (desk research), which were later discussed an expert meeting in Vilnius.

Results: As regards heroin it is worth noting that in 2017 small quantities of heroin were seized in PL and Baltic States. In LV heroin had been replaced by other substances NPS opioid and opioids medicines for several years. In LT, there was a new trend in 2017 and 2016, heroin was replaced by carfentanil. In PL, NPS opioids have been used for a few years especially in Krakow city where there was a shortage of heroin. In EE, fentanyl has been available on the Estonian drug market since 2002 when heroin was replaced by new opioids. Opioids-related deaths still remain the primary cause of fatal drug overdoses (LV 54% of all cases in 2017, LT 55% 2017, PL - Warsaw 60% 2016, EE 91% 2016). EE tops the chart with 132 opioid-induced deaths per million inhabitants (2016 data). According to the last data from EE, drug related deaths have decreased drastically: from 2017 110 cases to 34 (November 2018). The reason behind this has been a shortage of fentanyl on the EE drug market as well as increased availability of naloxone. The analysis results demonstrate that shortages in heroin supplies (LT, LV, Krakow in PL) cause that drug users resort to more dangerous opioids of the fentanil group.

Conclusions: In LT, LV and PL a shortage of heroin was replaced by other substances, mostly NPS opioids (LT, LV) and NPS (PL). Taking into account the experience of EE, which responded to the opioids problem with an extensive naloxone program along with the activities aimed at reducing supply against opioids trafficking may be a crucial approach for implementing an effective response to the problem of opioids. The availability of other harm reduction measures such as safe injecting rooms is needed in the future. As fentanyl potency is very different, the improved situation could change quickly if stronger version of fentanyl emerges on the market.

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How to measure drug related crime? Discussion and suggestions for data collection

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Introduction: Crime and drug use are phenomena that have often been observed occurring at the same time. Many studies point to a correlation between substance use and offending. However, determining the cause and impact is rather complicated. It is estimated that crime committed due to drug use constitutes a significant share of the total crime. Importance of drug related crime monitoring is also accentuated by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), as this thematic area falls within the framework of drug supply indicators. Nevertheless, relevant data on drug related crime are rather absent and monitoring is restricted to drug law offences only.

Objectives: Determination and quantification of drug-crime nexus is very complicated and challenging issue. The aim of the presentation is to discuss possibilities of drug related crime measurement on the example of a research project carried out by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention. The main objective of the project is to improve data collection on drug related crime. New procedure for recording of the extent and structure of drug related crime in the Czech Republic was developed within the project.

Methodology: Designing of data collection procedure was mainly based on the results of expert surveys, especially of focus group performed and survey using the Delphi method. Special emphasis was put to involve all relevant actors. Qualitative data were collected and processed according to semantic categories.

Significant results: For drug related crime measurement the precise definition is crucial. It needs to be very clear, what crime is considered as drug related and what stands beyond this framework. Data collection on police level seems to be promising in measurement the extent of this phenomenon. Motivation of persons responsible for data recording represents the main issue. Participatory approach is very helpful in this respect. Guidelines for police officers need to be very precise but succinct at the same time; they must help to make clear decision whether to label crime as drug related or not without any additional burdens.

Conclusions: The Czech project could serve as an example and suggestion for improvement of supply indicators on European level. Despite its limitations, data routinely and standardly gathered by police enables up to date monitoring of drug related crime as well as monitoring trends in this area.

Keywords: Drug related crime; measurement; data collection; drug supply indicator

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Prevention workforce training - EUPC online in Portuguese

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Preventive approaches are being more and more demanding for the professionals working in the field. Prevention based on prevention science requires new skills and innovative ways of professional development that must be integrated by prevention experts. The recent European Drug Report (EMCDDA, 2019:65) refers that “Professional training does appear to be important for the successful introduction of prevention approaches”¹.

Objectives: In this presentation we explain and critically discuss the Specialized Training Course in Prevention of Addictions – based on the EUPC² and offered online by Universidade Aberta (the only public distance education university in Portugal is member of the *International Consortium of Universities for Drug Demand Reduction* (ICUDDR) as an ‘education provider’). Namely the pedagogical design, resources, technology and tools, interaction and collaboration, e-activities and contents.

Methodology: The analysis is focused on Specialized Training Course in Prevention of Addictions attended by a group of prevention practitioners. This programme being based on Europeans guidelines was adjusted to the Portuguese reality in terms of legal framework, particular contexts and groups. The research follows a methodology of Design-Based Research, and data collection was based on participant observation and qualitative content analysis of participants’ final reflections.

Significant results: This training delivery model achieves good geographical coverage, particularly in remote areas, far from traditional universities and therefore might be particularly useful for 1) Training on the job, for professionals already working in this or related fields, and 2) Large territorial countries, particularly in the Portuguese speaking world.

Conclusions: The findings show that Specialized Training Course in Prevention of Addictions is an adequate answer to the needs of professionals working in prevention in Portuguese speaking countries. In this pedagogical virtual model students are integrated in a learning community within which critical thinking is developed, as a result of participation and collaboration in the joint construction of learning, and in sharing knowledge and expertise. This training course also highlights the need of public policy directed to prevention interventions science-based and to the prevention professional development of practitioners.

Keywords: Prevention; Training prevention professionals; EUPC - European adaptation of the Universal Prevention Curriculum; online specialized training; Design-Based Research

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¹ http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/11364/20191724_TDAT19001ENN_PDF.pdf

² The European adaptation of the Universal Prevention Curriculum, ©HoGent and the UPC-Adapt consortium

Assessing drug use and treatment needs – rural perspective

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Aims: Digitalization has increased availability of different substances also on rural areas. However, data concerning the actual situation and treatment needs is lacking on many rural areas. The current study aims to assess the usefulness of different data collection methods in addressing substance use and treatment needs on rural areas in Finland and Pakistan.

Methods: Five types of tools have been used: a multilevel assessment including a desk-review on relevant documents and interviews of policy actors and health providers concerning the target district, short structured interview protocol for village people, in-depth interview protocol, focus group interview protocol and community needs assessment protocol.

Results: The data collections revealed large local variation depending on availability of substances and cultural issues. A combination of different data collection methods provided useful information from different perspectives. On local level, social mobilizers were important facilitators during data collection in identifying key persons and reaching participants.

Conclusions: Using a combination of multiple methods provided valuable data from several perspectives on substance use issues. Data collection on substance use and treatment needs is important to be carried out in target areas prior to any intervention, however, evaluative pre- and post-data collections on a rural area affect the community, and thus, need to be planned as part of the intervention. Ethical issues need to be carefully considered on rural areas; drug issues are sensitive, and anonymity is more difficult to maintain in scarcely populated areas.

Keywords: Rural areas, data collection, community needs assessment

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