

Department of Hygiene, Skubiszewski Medical University of Lublin

MONIKA SAŁAGA-PYLAK, ANNA PIKUŁA,
KATARZYNA KUŚMIERCZYK, ANDRZEJ BORZĘCKI

The occurrence of addictions among high school students

Together with the development of civilization during the last decades, many new health threats appeared, and among them considerable spreading of bad habits and addictions. What is really alarming is that such phenomena as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and taking drugs relate to children and teenagers of younger and younger age. It influences their organisms in the time of intense growth and development, frequently leaving far-reaching health consequences that emerge in the subsequent stages of life (1, 14, 15, 17, 19).

The paper is aiming at the assessment of the frequency of smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and taking drugs among students of secondary schools.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted on 600 students of high schools on the territory of Chełm. The group under investigation consisted of 333 girls (55.5%) and 267 boys (44.5%). Among the examined students 348 (58%) persons lived in the rural area and 252 (42%) persons lived in the city. The method of investigation employed was the questionnaire consisting of 28 questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the group under examination, 252 (42%) admit smoking, 243 (39%) – drinking and 117 (19.5%) – taking drugs. The important fact to mention is that there is a preponderance of girls in the group admitting drinking alcohol regularly (Table 1). Moreover, the students disclosing that they take the above psychoactive drugs usually live in cities (Table 2). The outcome of research confirms the tendency in Poland over the last several years, namely the systematic increase of percentage of teenagers, especially girls (3, 13), smoking, drinking and having contact with drugs (3, 12, 13, 18, 19). What is more, the age of alcohol and tobacco initiation lowers significantly (3, 12, 13). Accessibility of drugs is also easier for teenagers. There are the drugs contraband trails through Poland and drug dealers have appeared

Table 1. The use of psychoactive substances vs. sex

	Girls		Boys		Total	
	count	%	count	%	count	%
Smokers	105	31.5	147	55.1	252	42.0
Drinkers	135	40.5	99	37.1	234	39.0
Drug users	57	17.1	60	22.5	117	19.5

Table 2. The use of psychoactive substances vs. the place of living

	Urban area		Rural area		Total	
	count	%	count	%	count	%
Smokers	138	54.8	114	45.2	252	100
Drinkers	129	55.1	105	44.9	234	100
Drug users	78	66.7	39	33.3	117	100

in schools. The experiments with narcotics became common on parties and discotheques (12,13). Examinations conducted by CBOS in 1996 among high school pupils disclosed that 56% knew or could tell about places where one could get drugs and every third tried narcotics (13).

The reasons why teenage students smoke, drink and take drugs are various, numerous and mutually related to each other. The important role is that of personality traits and other things associated with it like poor self-esteem, willingness to improve the way they feel, ability to tackle their problems, the level of fear, the aspiration for feeling like an adult, as well as environmental conditioning, such as the structure and emotional relations in family, material and social status of family, intellectual level of parents and the ideals they pass on, contacts with contemporaries, ability to get on at school (12, 18, 19). The research of the problem of addictions among teenagers that was conducted in many countries showed that smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol is more common among teenagers and children from the families of low material status with parents that have poor education, whereas taking drugs is more common for children from families of high material status with parents having a good education (5, 18, 19). Our analysis also confirms this phenomenon. The greater percentage of students admitting smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol come from the families of low material status, and whose parents have primary or technical education, while students admitting taking drugs come from families of high material and intellectual status (Table 3, Table 4).

Table 3. Education of parents whose children use psychoactive substances

	Primary education	Professional courses	Higher education	University education
Smokers	28.6%	29.5%	23.0%	18.9%
Drinkers	29.8%	24.7%	26.3%	19.2%
Drug users	21.1%	23.6%	21.6%	33.7%

Table 4. Financial status of families where children use psychoactive substances

	Low income	Moderate income	High income
Smokers	38.2%	34.7%	27.1%
Drinkers	37.3%	32.7%	30.0%
Drug users	25.2%	24.4%	50.4%

CONCLUSIONS

1. The problem of smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and taking drugs can be related to a considerable percentage of population of teenagers.

2. The occurrence of addictions among teenagers is connected with family situation, socio-economic situation and the conditioning of life in general.

3. Under these circumstances the essential thing to do would be to carry out the study of this pathological phenomenon among the population of children and teenagers and to get acquainted with the causes to be able to use efficient prophylaxis.

REFERENCES

1. Allen S. F. et al.: Alcohol-related problems among adolescents. *J. Okla. State Med. Assoc.*, Jul. 96, 7,320, 2003.
2. Anderson K.: Young people and alcohol, drugs and tobacco. WHO Regional Publications, European Series No 66, 1995.
3. Bolzan A., Peleteiro R.: Smoking during early adolescence – a study in school children from Argentina. *J. Pediatr. (Rio J.)*, Sep.-Oct. 79, 5, 461, 2003.
4. Cuijpers P.: The effect of preventive interventions targeting the use of stimulants. *Ned Tjdschr. Geneesk.*, Jul. 5,147, 27, 1305, 2003.
5. Droomers M. et al.: Occupational level of the father and alcohol consumption during adolescence, patterns and predictors. *J. Epidemiol. Community Health*, Sep., 57, 9, 704, 2003.
6. Eisenberg M. E., Forster J. L.: Adolescent smoking behaviour measures of social norms. *Am. J. Prev. Med.*, Aug., 25, 2, 122, 2003.
7. Gas Z. B.: Uzależnienia – skuteczność programów profilaktycznych, WsiP, Warszawa 1994.
8. Gritz F. R. et al.: Predictors of susceptibility to smoking and ever smoking: a longitudinal study in a triethnic sample of adolescents. *Nicotine Tob. Res.*, Aug., 5, 4, 493, 2003.
9. Jakubowska H.: Promocja zdrowia i profilaktyka uzależnień. Przewodnik nauczyciela szkoły podstawowej i gimnazjum. PWN, Warszawa 1999.
10. Johnson J. L.: Smoking and adolescence: Narratives of identity. *Res. Nurs. Health*, Oct., 26, 5, 387, 2003.
11. Kamińska-Busko B.(ed): Zapobieganie uzależnieniom uczniów. Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej MEN, Warszawa 1997.
12. Macdonald D. I.: Drugs, Drinking and Adolescents. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago 1984.
13. Młodzież a używki – komunikat z badań Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa 1996.
14. Raitakari O. T. et al.: Cardiovascular risk factor in childhood and carotid artery intima-media thickness in adulthood: the cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study. *JAMA*, Nov. 5, 290, 17, 2277, 2003.
15. Ross A.: Drug and alcohol work in child and adolescent mental health. *Nurs. Times.*, Jul., 22, 99, 29, 26, 2003.
16. Snow P. C., Bruce D. D.: Cigarette smoking in teenage girls: exploring the role of peer reputations, self-concept and coping. *Health Educ. Res.*, Aug., 18, 4, 439, 2003.
17. Spear L. P.: Alcohol's effects on adolescents. *Alcohol Res. Health*, 26, 4, 287, 2002.
18. Woynarowska B. (ed): Uczeń a narkotyki. Instytut Matki i Dziecka, Warszawa 1991.
19. Woynarowska B.: Zdrowie i szkoła. PZWL, Warszawa 2000.

SUMMARY

The usage of psychoactive substances can be related to a vast percentage of teenage population. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol or taking drugs during the stage of growth and development can lead to detrimental health effect and, frequently, to serious addictions. The aim of this paper was the evaluation of the spreading frequency of mentioned habits among the high school students. The precise

analysis of causes of these pathological phenomena, as well as elaboration and actual usage of broad-scale educational and prophylactic programs seem indispensable.

Występowanie nałogów wśród młodzieży szkół licealnych

Palenie papierosów, spożywanie alkoholu i stosowanie narkotyków zwłaszcza w okresie wzrostu i rozwoju pozostawia trwałe skutki zdrowotne i może prowadzić do uzależnień w wieku późniejszym. Przeprowadzone badania wykazały, że te patologiczne zjawiska dotyczą znacznego odsetka młodzieży uczęszczającej do liceów ogólnokształcących. Wskazuje to na konieczność opracowania i wdrożenia skierowanych do szerokich rzesz młodzieży działań edukacyjnych i profilaktycznych.