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# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DELINQUENT ADDICTS IN RELATION WITH DIRECT AND INDIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUGS RELATED CRIMINALITY

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## SUMMARY

*There is a number of possible hypothesis that explain connection between criminality and drugs, but the authors elaborate the one stating that criminality precedes and causes the drugs abuse. Their study had for its purpose to examine what is the criminal career like and which type of drugs the young delinquent addicts abuse in regard to whether the crime offence, that brought them into the sample, had for its goal acquisition of resources for obtaining the drugs (indirect criminality).*

*The sample was made of 268 subjects of both sexes, younger than 35 who, during the six-year period, were registered in six Police Administration in the Republic of Croatia because of the committed offences, and who are, at the same time, the drugs addicts.*

*Connection between a variable dealing with a question whether the subjects committed a crime with a goal to acquire resources for obtaining the drugs, and the variable describing their previous delinquent and criminal behaviour, and the type of the abused drugs, was tested on the basis of the  $\chi^2$  (hi-quadrant) test. Although the obtained results confirm the above mentioned hypothesis, the authors draw attention to the fact that connection between criminality and addiction is not unambiguous.*

*Although there are significant differences between ethiology of the delinquent behaviour and the drugs abuse, the fact is that manifestation of one form of behaviour significantly increases probability of the other form of behaviour to develop with the same individual.*

**Key words:** drugs, addicts, crime

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have been attempting to discover whether individuals involved into the drug related crimes show criminal behaviour before they started abusing drugs, and whether the drugs abuse results into commitment of the criminal acts. Relation between drugs and criminality

can be simply divided into three hypothesis:

- drugs abuse causes criminal behaviour,
- criminality causes abuse of drugs, and
- criminalisation of drugs causes criminality.

The first hypothesis, stating that drugs abuse causes criminality has two derivatives: 1 / pharma-

ecological effects of a certain drug can cause violent (criminal) acts, 2/ prohibitive price of certain drugs causes commitment of the crime acts as a source of income. Researches conducted during the first half of the 20th century indicate the finding that addiction leads to a criminal activity (Dai, 1937; Pescor, 1938; Tappan, 1960). Drugs abuse destructively affects the control mechanisms, abilities to make judgments and the motivation processes of individuals, which all contribute to the phenomenon of the criminal behaviour. The drugs addicts also requires large financial resources to purchase drugs which they can not obtain exclusively in a legal way. Finally, in purchasing the drug, an addict is forced to communicate with individuals belonging to the criminal subcultures. In a short, they by time evade common mechanisms of the social control which brings them closer to the criminal activity.

The second hypothesis, stating that criminality causes the drugs abuse is based on an argument that involvement in a criminal activity enables a contact which contributes to the drugs abuse (Watter et al., 1985).

The third hypothesis, stating that criminalisation of drugs causes criminality is focused to explanation that a criminal justice is responsible for deterioration of the drugs situation, and also for creation of the link between the drugs and criminality (Schur, 1962; Nadelman, 1988). Derivative of this hypothesis is a systematic model which implies that violence is in its essence significant for abuse and distribution of illegal drugs (Goldstein, 1985).

Considering the theme of this study, a larger attention will be dedicated to the second hypothesis in terms of verification or rejection.

Namely, evaluations indicate that in the second half of the 20th century there occurred significant changes in criminal activities related to the drugs addiction. Even Chein and Rosenfeld (1957: 60) made evaluations that showed that three fourth of the heroin addicts in New York had become delinquents before they became addicts. In the sample of 3.500 addicts, almost all of them belonged to the delinquents groups, and also had delinquent friends and interests. Chein, Gerard, Lee and Rosenfeld (1964) concluded that individuals with criminal past are attracted by the drugs abuse, which leads them deeper into the criminal subculture, with a purpose to maintain their expensive habit.

O'Donnel (1966:380) studied 212 addicts in Lexington and he found out that 37% of them were arrested before they became the addicts. However,

a detailed analysis showed that a crucial variable was the year in which they became addicts. The author concluded that the younger age in which a persons becomes an addict is, the larger is a possibility that such a person would be arrested before he/she develops the addiction. For all this, it is necessary to distinguish various types of addiction. Most of the researches had in their samples the addicts on opiates. Their results show that a significant number of the subjects had a criminal record before the first abuse of the drugs (Nash, 1968; Ball, Chambers and Ball, 1968:175; Chambers and Moffet, 1969; Voss and Stephens, 1973:195; Lukoff, 1973; Morgan, 1995:9).

On the basis of these data, Morgan makes a conclusion that addiction is a product of the delinquent life style, rather than a cause of the criminal behaviour. Wardlaw (1978) deems that his research confirmed a hypothesis stating that a criminal life style *per se*, more significantly contributes to the criminality of an addict than the very drug, which substantiates a flow of time between the first sentence not related to the drugs abuse and the sentence for a crime act related to the drugs abuse (from 2 to 5 years). Namely, a large part of this criminality is, in fact, an increase of the previous criminal activity and therefore cannot be unambiguously attributed to involvement in the drugs addiction. Addicts perform criminal deeds, but a number of them was involved in the criminal acts long before they became seriously involved with the drugs abuse. For all this we do not intend to challenge the fact that certain, unknown number of addicts is forced to commit property delicts just due to the drugs market economy and prohibitive social politics. Percentage of addicts with criminal activity records before they started with the drugs consumption has been increasing because there is a risk that they would, just because of their addiction, commit double more criminal offences than before (Wardlaw, 1978:8). The fact that the age limit for drugs addiction is growingly lower, significantly affects implications for the politics of intervention. An increase of the number of addicts with past criminal career is of extreme importance. Relation of addiction of the drugs subculture with criminal associations, as well as the lower age of the addicts, implies a thesis that contemporary addicts have less chances to return in the conventional life style than the addicts twenty years ago. In fact, numerous addicts of today never led a conventional life style to which they might return. This opens a serious problem for the treatment programmes development, which primarily refer to the addicts behaviour and are contrary to the desired

life style that would recognise them. Accuracy of this prediction is derived from the studies on the methadone programme addicts conducted in New York (Hayim and assoc., 1973). The starting age of addiction in this sample significantly correlates with criminal behaviour during the treatment course. Previous addiction was just proportional to a higher range of criminal behaviour during the treatment course. Most of the above mentioned studies was used in official police statistics.

Researches pay a big attention to examination of the links between various types of the abused drugs and the types of the criminal offences.

Stating that prohibitive prices of the narcotic drugs contributes to more frequent commitment of the criminal offences, some authors explain why the opiates addicts have been traditionally known by their larger involvement in the property crimes than the non-addicts (Inciardi and Chambers, 1972; Newmayer, 1972; Gould, 1974; Wardlaw, 1978; Goldstein, 1981; Fields and Walters, 1985; Collins et al., 1985; Johnston et al., 1987; Parker and Newcombe, 1987; Faupel and Clockars, 1987; Nurco et al., 1988).

The authors have established that connection between the drugs abuse and this kind of criminality is on a significantly high level. Furthermore, they showed that connection between those arrested for the property crimes and the criminal offences related to the drugs abuse is more than double larger than it is a connection between those arrested for the property crimes and the arrested ones not involved in the drugs abuse. Therefore, the studies indicate that a number of addicts are engaged in thefts. However, these researches do not show what percentage of the addicts should be engaged in these crimes in order to be able to maintain their habit, and how many property crimes should they commit to be able to finance their addiction. Apart from this, there arises a question what percentage of perpetrators of the property crimes does not include the addicts. One of the problems with these researches is in that they normally use a sample of notorious, hard addicts, who are very often already in jails or in the treatment programmes, which is then one-sided sample.

Also, the data are mainly obtained through interviews and, therefore, it opens a significant possibility that self-statements could be, from various reasons, exaggerated.

On the other hand, results obtained from the researches conducted by Hughes, Crawford, Baker, Schuman and Jaffe (1971), show that 33% of addicts are engaged in drugs trafficking as a primary

source of gains, and 38% of them are involved in other types of illegal activities. Many of the addicts find that the most accessible way of gains is the drugs dealing, or related illegal activities. Gould (1974:41) points out that, if we exclude illegal drugs import and its wholesale (which is closed for addicts), there are still huge profits in the streets drugs dealing - so, that half or even more than a half of money spent on heroin is earned through re-sale of the heroin, and a half of the addicts can finance their habit by re-selling the heroin to the second half of the addicts.

A goal of our research is to investigate what is a criminal career and what kind of drugs are consumed by young delinquent-addicts, establishing whether a criminal offence, because of which they were brought into the sample, had for a goal to obtain money for buying drugs (indirect criminality).

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. A Sample

A sample involved 268 subjects of both sexes (8.1 % females), above 35 (Table 1). They were, in a period from 1.1.1988 to 21.12.1993., registered in six Police Administrations in the Republic of Croatia, on charges for the last crime offence they committed, and who are also drugs addicts.<sup>1</sup>

	age 14-16	age 17-18	age 19-21	age 22-25	age 26-30	age 30-35	Total
aps	4	10	61	59	93	41	268
%	1.5	3.7	22.8	22.0	34.7	15.3	100

Criminal offence, because of which they were chosen for our sample, in 48.5% of cases, was a property crime, and in 45.1 % of cases, it was a crime against some other social values. Among all property crimes, the most frequent was robbery (81.5%), after which follow thefts (10.5%) and brigandage (aggravated robbery) (4.5%). Among all delicts against other social values, the most frequent was unauthorised production and trafficking with narcotic drugs (55.9%), as well as creating possibilities for the narcotic drugs consumption.

More than one third of the subjects (32.8%) committed a crime under influence of drugs. More than two thirds (66.8%) committed an offence individually, and 27% of them did it in an organised

<sup>1</sup> Out of 20 Police Administrations in the Republic of Croatia there were selected six of them in which, according to the police statistics, more than 90% of addiction criminality was registered.

group. About two third of the subjects, besides a crime that brought them into our sample, was previously involved in criminality (Table 2).

	The last one	two	three	More than three	Total
aps	80	35	33	120	268
%	29.8	13.1	12.3	44.8	100

The subjects consume more than one type of drugs at the same time (Table 3), most frequently these are cannabis, barbiturates and opiates. Consumed drugs are equally of domestic (53.1%) and foreign origin (46.9%).

	opiates	psycho-stimulus	hallucinogens	cannabis	Organic solvent	barbiturates
aps	199	105	106	239	66	217
%	74.2	39.2	39.5	89.2	24.6	81.0

## 2.2. Variables

This study is a part of a more comprehensive research for which a questionnaire containing 168 variables was developed. A key variable that is analysed here is "A subject commits a crime in order to acquire resources for obtaining drugs" (No, Yes). It was studied in relations with variables describing a type of the crime offence and a previous criminal and violation activity of a subject (16 variables), and also with variables describing types of drugs consumed by the subjects (31 variables).

## 2.3. Collection of data

The data were collected from several sources, as follows:

- records from six Police Administrations in the Republic of Croatia (criminal and penal records and written documents within the police scope of work),
- records from the public attorney's offices and courts, social care services and hospital wards for addicts treatment programmes, and
- from structured interview conducted with each individual subject from the sample.

2 The research has a title "Social-demographic, behavioural and characteristics of the delinquent addicts personality in the Republic of Croatia", and it is the only one of this kind ever conducted in Croatia, conducted by the authors under auspices of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the Special-education college of the Zagreb University.

## 2.4. Methods used for data processing

Chi-square test was used for the data processing. An error probability (P) lower than 0.05 % was used as a critical value of the statistics significance.

## 2. RESULTS

In 60.1 % of cases, the subjects committed a crime offence that brought them into our sample, with a purpose to acquire money for buying drugs. With regard to the type of a committed offence, criminal career and a type of the consumed drug, statistically significant differences between them and the subjects who did not commit a crime with the same purpose was established, or could be reliably interpreted only in three cases: in cases of previous criminal records or punishment for the crimes, punishments for violations and for abuse of opiates.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate it, we shall mention the results that show a relation between a variable describing a type of the offence because of which the subjects were included in our sample, and a variable explaining whether an examinee committed the offence in order to acquire resources to obtain drugs (Table 4). Because of small frequencies, it is meaningless to interpret statistical significance of this inter-connection, but polarisation of the subjects is interesting in a sense of the property crimes and crimes against other social values committing. A share of other types of delicts is negligible. Perpetrators of the property crimes are three times more often represented among the subjects who wished to get resources for buying drugs, than it is among those who did not have such a goal.

Table 5 shows that subjects, who committed an offence in order to get resources for buying drugs, significantly more frequently were previously registered or punished for the crimes, as well as for violations (Table 6), than those who did not have the same intention during committing of a crime that brought them into our sample.

The subjects who committed a crime in order to get resources to buy drugs are found to be more frequently consumers of opiates than those who did not commit the crime with the same goal (Table 7).

Indirect drugs related crimes	Crime against property	Crime against life & body	Crime against dignity & morale	Crime against public order & traffic	Crime against traffic safety	Crime against other social values	Total
No	24 (22.4%)	4 (3.7%)	5 (4.7%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.9%)	71 (66.4%)	107 (39.9%)
Yes	106 (65.8%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.2%)	50 (31.1%)	161 (60.1%)
Total	130 (48.5%)	5 (1.9%)	6 (2.2%)	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.5%)	121 (45.1%)	268 (100%)

Chi-square=14.3004 P=0.01

Indirect drugs related crime	No	Yes	Total
No	52 (48.6%)	55 (51.4%)	107 (39.9%)
Yes	31 (19.3%)	130 (80.7%)	161 (60.1%)
Total	83 (31%)	185 (69%)	268 (100%)

Chi-square=12.9702 P=0.00

Indirect drugs related crime	No	Yes	Total
No	42 (39.3%)	65 (60.7%)	107 (39.9%)
Yes	31 (19.3%)	130 (80.7%)	161 (60.1%)
Total	73 (27.2%)	195 (72.8%)	268 (100%)

Chi square=12.9702 P=0.00

Indirect drugs related crime	No	Yes	Total
No	48 (44.9%)	5 (55.1%)	107 (39.9%)
Yes	15 (9.3%)	146 (90.7%)	161 (60.1%)
Total	63 (23.5%)	205 (76.5%)	268 (100%)

Chi-square=45.1606 P=0.00

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Results of our research showed that the subjects are multiple addicts mainly to the cannabis products, barbiturates and opiates. They are also predominantly recidivists, and according criteria of the last crime offence which brought them into the sample, they are categorised into perpetrators of the property delicts and to the illegal drugs trafficking category. Other delicts are represented insignificantly.

These data are in accordance with those obtained by contemporary authors (Wardlaw, 1978; Watters et al., 1985; Johnston et al., 1987; Parker and Newcombe, 1987; Nurco et al., 1988; Morgan, 1995).

Differences established between the delinquent addicts who commit the crime offences in order to acquire resources for obtaining drugs and other subjects, are very significant. They far more often commit the property crimes, they are more frequently punished for crimes and violations, and they are more frequently addict to opiates. This indicate that the opiates addicts are not firmly integrated into the addicts subculture in a sense of accepting the regulations of the illegal drugs market. They adopted quite different delinquent life style than the addicts who finance their addiction exclusively through the drugs re-sell. Most probably it implies individual commitment of thefts, that makes more difficult for the police to learn that it is about a perpetrator-addict, and for the very perpetrator it reduces a risk to be detected. Finally, such reasoning confirms cognition obtained from the police practice as well.

Observed as a whole, the results offer a sufficient level of indicators that could confirm a hypothesis stating that the delinquent activity precedes the drugs abuse.

## 5. CONCLUSION

At first sight, it might be concluded that this work was oriented exclusively to confirm the above mentioned hypothesis. Although the results suggest the tendency of the addicts to be perpetrators of the crime offences with a purpose to acquire resources to buy drugs, primarily delinquents, speaks on behalf of that hypothesis, the fact that connections between criminality and addiction are not unambiguous, cannot be neglected. Namely, in one situation the drug can be a generator of crime, while in the other one, it can be its consequence. Etiology of those connections can be a result of the fact that both of these socially negative phenomenon, are motivated by the same factors. As many authors conclude, both the delinquents and the addicts exercise specific life habits, system of values and a ways of supporting themselves. Although, certainly, there are among them very important differences in the life style characteristics, they have very determined mechanisms of self-justification and rationalisation, a way of thinking and rituals, which are clearly connected. Also, although there exist significant differences between etimology of the detinquent behaviour and the drugs abuse, the fact is that manifestation of one of those forms of behaviour considerably increases probability of the other form, in the same person. Therefore, we agree at one point with majority of the researchers: regardless to the time or causative course of the drugs abuse and involvement in the crime, frequency and the social danger from criminality increases with increase of the addiction level. Therefore, the drugs abuse do not have to cause criminal behaviour but it can increase or reinforce it.

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