EPPIC
Exchanging Prevention Practices on Polydrug Use among Youth in Criminal Justice Systems

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Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology
30. August 2018

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Project partners:
1. Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Middlesex University (UK) – project coordinator
2. Change Grow Live (UK)
3. Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University (Denmark)
4. Eclectica (Italy)
5. ISFF - Institut für Suchtforschung, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (Germany)
6. Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology (Poland)
7. European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

Background: Young offenders are considered one of the most vulnerable or at risk groups of developing drug problems and are often affected by numerous health problems and social inequalities

Health System & CJS: Cross sectional project that focuses on social services for health promotion and crime prevention.
Classification of „Prevention“

**EMCDDA**
*European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug-Addiction*

1. **Universal prevention** addresses a population at large and targets the development of skills and values, norm perception and interaction with peers and social life;

2. **Selective prevention** addresses vulnerable groups where substance use is often concentrated and focuses on improving their opportunities in difficult living and social conditions;

3. **Indicated prevention** addresses vulnerable individuals and helps them in dealing and coping with their individual personality traits that make them more vulnerable for escalating drug use.

4. **Environmental prevention** addresses societies or social environments and targets social norms including market regulations
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Objectives:

• Identify innovative drug prevention practices for young people in contact with the CJS
• Study the views of service providers on preventive approaches for this target group
• Research trajectories of young people and crucial turning points in their criminal career / drug career
• Examine the effectiveness of current European drug prevention quality standards for young people and to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange across countries.
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Methods:

• Analysis of prevention programmes in *prison settings* as well as *forms of diversion* (“therapy instead of punishment”) in six European countries: UK, Italy, Denmark, Poland, Germany and Austria

• Laws & statistics

• Explorative interviews with service providers

• Interviews with youth

• Regular correspondence with practitioners in National Advisory Boards (“Mirror Groups”)
Exit strategies from criminal proceedings

| Public health authorities | Diversion by public prosecutor | Prel. closing of proceedings by judge | Sentence on probation | Defering of execution of the sentence | Ex-post probation |

Services and service providers

| In-patient homes and hospitals | Out-patient drug treatment centres | Probation services | Health in prison |

Narratives of health promotion in the CJS

| Onset of consumption | Life events and turning points | Coersion to drug treatment | Health system & CJS |
Summary of statistics (Austria):

1. The police report a constant increase of drug offences in the crime statistics
2. Approx. 50% of all suspects of drug-related crimes are 24 years or younger
3. Approx. 60% of youth drug-crimes are dismissed by the prosecutor, 17% are offered some form of diversion, 23% are forwarded to the court.
4. Approx. 50% of all offers to diversion refer to drug prevention programmes.
5. Juveniles get convicted predominantly for property offences (50%).
   *Convictions for drug-related offences: 13%.*
6. The most frequent penalty for juveniles is *conditional imprisonment.*
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- Probation services
- Health in prison
Austria: Interventions in health promotion („Gesundheitsbezogene Maßnahmen“ §11/2 SMG - drug law)

1. Medical surveillance of health status
2. Medical treatment including substitutional therapy
3. Clinical-psychiatric counselling and care
4. Psychotherapy
5. Psycho-social counselling and care
Forms of Intervention

• Interventions:
  • Cognitive therapy
  • Motivational interviewing
  • Group therapy
  • Systemic psycho-therapy
  • Changing circumstances: job, education, structure of everyday life
  • Holistic interventions: “global care for the person” or “multi-disciplinary integrated intervention”; “partnership approach”.
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Narratives of health promotion in the CJS

- Onset of consumption
- Life events and turning points
- Coersion to drug treatment
- Health system & CJS
Next steps in the project:

Examine the effectiveness of current European drug prevention quality standards for young people and facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange across countries.

International and European guidelines and standards:
UN, Council of Europe, WHO, World Medical Association, EMCDDA
Thank you for your attention

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