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**BRID SOCIAL CAUSES OF DRUG CONSUMPTION
AMONGST TEENAGERS**

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Social Causes of Drug Consumption amongst Teenagers¹

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Abstract

The article proposes to identify, on the basis of the consultation of the specialty literature, the factors which influence the consumption of drugs amongst teenagers, as well as the sense in which their main dimensions act. The studies performed on teenagers (Rascanu, 2008) highlighted amongst the internal causes of drug consumption: the curiosity, the temptation in the form of the “forbidden fruit mechanism”; the desire of high sensations; the lack of maturity/responsibility; personal problems, troubles, despair, loneliness, the lack of friends; boredom; the lack of some interesting preoccupations; emo girls / the need to stand out; and the external causes are: the ill-fated influence of the entourage, of the “fishy” group of friends, of the unfavourable family climate, the reduced educational and cultural level; the lack of information or skewed information with regard to drugs; the imitation of film models, from newspapers or magazines. The drug consumption is tightly related to life problems, to the questions and searching of the teenagers and young. The most important social entourages are: the family, the school and the group of entourage (friends, spare time).

So the drug consumption amongst teenagers represents one of the challenges with which the humanity has to confront, its direct and indirect effects designing it as a worrying phenomenon.

Keywords:

drugs, teenagers, risk, family, friends, school, spare time.

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Introduction

We consider that one of the most alarming compulsions to the address of the population's health and integrity constitutes the growth of drug consumption. Daily, on the whole Earth, millions of people use drugs. The drug consumption isn't happening only in modern societies. Some drugs are used in medicine as remedies against pain for example: the opium, the heroin and the morphine, or for the improvement of the state in different affections, as well as in the actions of detox of drug consumers. Thus some drugs can be used for: the treatment of insomnia and anxiety as "sleeping pills" or "soothing", but also for persons who are too restless or anxious all the time (barbiturates), as anesthetic (narcotic drugs, alcohol) against poisonings and to stop the effects of heroine (methadone), in the treatment of Epilepsy (benzodiazepan); for the treatment of coughing, and to determine a state of psychological indifference (opium), in the treatment of persons with mental diseases, junkies, alcoholics, (halocinogens); to treat narcolepsy and hyperacidity at children, producing a calming effect (apsathas); to make anesthesia in throat, nose surgery, to reduce bleeding in surgeries (cocaine); as antidiarrhoeal, analgesic, cough suppressant (codeine) (Chipea, Stanciu, 1997).

The drug consumption starts from psychic effects, a bliss state, a high perception of sounds and colors and it ends with catastrophic physical, psychical and social effects. The drug removes the person from a state of normality or of disorder and puts him/her into a world of false joy and after this throws him/her brutally in big pain affecting as much the soul as the body. The invoked reasons for the consumption of psychoactive substances are varied, can be multiple and can modify by the course of life of a patient. These include: search for a „high”; a search or the repeating of the pleasant effects; cultural norm in some under cultures; self-medication for states of anxiety, social phobia, insomnia etc.; self-medication for negative symptoms of mental diseases; to prevent the installation of withdrawal symptoms (Blume, 2011)

The risks associated with the consumption of psychotropic substances varies depending on the taken substance, the dose and the route of administration, as well as depending on the status of the patient. These include: acute toxicity, psycho behavioural effects (for example the consumer jumps from a height believing that he can fly), the toxic effects of the substances associated to drugs; secondary medical affections; secondary psychiatric disorders due to drug consumption; the risk of developing dependency; negative social effects; professional difficulties; intra familiar problems; medico legal consequences; (Dragan, 1994).

Some variables were studied which can predict drug consumption. These can be conceptualized as reflecting many domains: the cultural/social

medium; interpersonal forces (school, colleagues, family); psycho behavioral factors (personality, attitude, activities); biogenetic influences, the individual being exposed to risks because of some factors or forces from each of these domains.

One single factor can't predict if a person becomes a drug consumer or dependent. The global risk of dependency is influenced of the biologic matrix of the individual and this can be influenced by genus or ethnicity, his/her state of development and the social medium (for example the conditions at home, at school and in the neighbourhood).

In terms of the reasons why the young consume drugs, Ruxandra Rascanu affirms that: 'the reasons why some people are attracted by drugs are extremely different and hard to explain, what seems easy to accept is the fact that they represent a major danger for the body, a real trap for the targeted ,especially for the uninformed' (Rășcanu, 2008, p. 11) The most important social mediums are: the family, the school, and the group of entourage (friends, spare time).

The socialization of the young, their personal development is taking place in the limits of different mediums (family, school). If the development of the personality is blocking from diverse causes, or appear soul crisis, different mediums of correction take the place of the primary social mediums.

The way of development of the young willing to different traumas, fighting with some social disturbia or being in an unfavorable situation can follow several directions. A part can stagnate at different sectors of development (states, physically, intellect etc.) and another part provisional, (as a response to traumatic situations) begin to search divers critical situations, building on it the way of life. The illicit drug consumption represents one of these critical ways of adaptive behavior. Behind drug consumption (especially in teen-age) can stand the most variable problems, causes. As result of the figure below "the social factors, respectively the social attitude, social beliefs, the availability of the drug, the relation with the family, social pressure, the urbanization and the unemployment influence the decision of the psychoactive substance consumption: alcohol, tobacco, and later cocaine, heroin. These factors are those which will determine to carry on the consumption of psychoactive substances, besides the biological and psychological ones.

In this article we will insist upon the following subjects:

- The role of the family in drug consumption
- The structure of the family
- Deviances in the interior of the family
- Disharmonies in the framework of the family
- The results of some studies concerning the role of the family in the consumption of forbidden substances

- The role of friends in drug consumption
- The role of spare time in drug consumption
- The role of school in drug consumption
- Conclusions

The role of the family in drug consumption

In the last decades, in the life of the families, deep changes took place generated by various factors: (unemployment, low incomes, crisis situations provoked by the high number of divorces, etc.) which contributed/can contribute to the growth of the number of persons who find their shelter in drug consumption.

On the one hand, the ordinary functions of the family have changed. More and more tasks are picked up by different social institutions. As a result of the changed social relations, the role of the social sphere has increased, and its tasks have multiplied. On the other hand, the function of protection of the family is diminishing because the parents have less time for children, both of them being engaged in extra familial tasks. Thus the education of the child its formation is not guided in the family surroundings, instead the school cannot assume the family role.

Changes took place in the size, structure and lastingness of the family. In the place of the large families which included many generations, ample kinship relations, the nuclear families have appeared composed of parents and children. Along with the growth of the number of divorces the number of the monoparenting families have also increased in which the place of the mother or father remains unoccupied. The number of marriages has decreased drastically (6/7 marriages at 1000 inhabitants). In the interior of the family the relation between its members is changing. The “modern” life style and the loss of harmony have made the decrease of problem solving in the family. (Georgeta Ghebrea, *Social and Political Regime and Private Life (family and family policies in Romania)* <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/StiintePOL/ralu/10.htm>).

The changes in families are the consequences of the social modifications. Modernization, urbanization, industrialization, education all these contribute to the transformation of the role of the family. The social structure and the traditional way of life have fallen apart, the order of conviviality has changed nowadays the consumer society and the individualist point of view become more powerful. This meant also the change of the order of social values. The modification of the way of life and occupation have broken the cultural and social continuity. (Formoso, Gonzales, Aiken, 2000: 175-199).

The primacy of the family as group represents an important link between the individual and society. In the ideal case, the family is intact

structurally and functionally: respectively the parents are living together and they are able to provide for their children spiritual, moral and material safety. The family spreads values, example of behaviour, spreads lived experiences, fulfils at the same time also social functions. (Fitzpatrick, 1997: 131-148).

The national and international researches highlight the existence of more strata at the level of parental influence. (Dekovic, 1999: 667-685). In the life of families can exist events which can lead to drug consumption. Evidently, this doesn't mean that in any disbanded family the child will become drug consumer.

Also, the parental monitoring was associated with behavioral problems. If the children feel themselves neglected or ignored the possibility that they imply themselves in risky behavior is amplifying because the monitoring of the behavior is missing. This fact will contribute to the appearance of some behaviors that will generate problems related to drugs. (Blume, 2011: 75-76)

The risk factors as regards to the family (predictive) are: (Lorion, 1991: 31-45):

- manners of education of the parents (exagerrated kindness or the contrary);
- the destroyed family structure (divorce, new formed families, mnoparental families etc.);
- bad relation with parents (the non-existence of a strong relation);
- hardships, soul problems, sentimental poverty in family relations;
- tainted familial environment (violence in family, physical and sexual violence);
- the use of psychoactive substances by parents and their attitude towards them.

The researches of the familial medium of teenagers have analysed more indicators: the family structure, deviations in the interior of the family, disharmony in their interior

The structure of the family

One of the causes of drug consumption represents the disorganization of the structure of the family. The family which is not complete represents a risk factor for drug consumption amongst teenagers, with mentioning that sometimes in the complete families there is no harmony all the time. (Formoso, Gonzales, Aiken, 2000: 175-199).

The value of life prevalence of forbidden substances consumption is decreased among teenagers raised up in whole families instead it is increased among those who live in restructured families.

The recent studies of the HBSC (HBSC Overview. <http://www.hbsc.org/overview.html>) (Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children)

from 2006 show that a quarter of the teenagers are living in monoparental families in a great part in families characterised by the absence of the father. A part of these teenagers don't live with their biologic parents but with relatives adoptive parents. The percentage of families composed of more generations is reduced.

For the young who are living with both biologic parents, the probability that they will resort to the consumption of forbidden substances is lower. The point of view of the investigators is different in terms of the teenagers who are living with one parent, respectively when to one of the biologic parents is attached a step parent. Some studies show that the customs of consumption of some teenagers from a monoparental family are similar to the ones from a newly formed restructured family. When after other researches the monoparental families present a high risk factor instead the reorganization of the family presents a bigger risk. (Ackerman, D'Eramo, Umylny, Schultz, Izard, 2001: 288-300).

After R. Campbell, the divorce provokes in the child a break, a disappointment which he can't face alone.

The percentage of the teenagers who consume drugs is over medium and also in the case of teenagers who don't live at persons who are not their relatives or those who have step mother.

Analysing the role of the structure of the family in the consumption of forbidden substances by young it can be kept the idea according to which the complete family in which every parent practices the family role in normal conditions, practices a protective role against the consumption of forbidden substances, while the teenagers who are living in families from which one of the biologic parents is missing are more exposed to danger.

Deviations in the interior of the family

The consumption of substances by parents constitutes also a risk factor in trying to consume forbidden substances. The alcoholism of one of the parents is frequent, or other chronic diseases. The deviations from the interior of the family respectively the harmful habits of consumption increase the probability of consumption of substances. The statistical data (Pikó, 2000: 617-630) show us that for a large portion of high school pupils' families the problematic behaviours are not unusual. (tobacco, regular alcohol consumption, attempted suicide, prison sentences, drug consumption, etc.)

The consumption of forbidden substances is the most widespread in the circle of those teenagers in whose family are consumed such substances. The harmful habit of substance consumption not just by parents but also by the elder brother it is in a significant relation with the consumption of substances by teens. (Pikó, 2000: 617-630).

Smoking in families influences the least the habit of consumption of the teenagers but in a lesser extent, any deviation increases the probability of forbidden or illicit substance consumption.

Disharmonies in the framework of the family

The quality of relation with the parents is one of the variables which influence the behaviour of the young. The good relations with the parents represent a protecting factor but any nonconformity from this leads to a relation in negative sense and increases the risk of trying illicit substances. That's why it is important that the teenagers discuss their problems with their parents. Therefore it is important the safety of devotion for a teenager. A weaker attachment or the lack of attention of the parents influence the consumption of substances at teens. (Bahr, 2005: 529-551).

The family conflicts, the negative relations with the parents or between the parents the lack of trust in the family all these correlate positively with the problematic behaviour. (Fitzpatrick, 1997: 131-148).

The percentage of dissatisfaction for the mother is the same at the level of those who consume legal or illicit substances while the dissatisfaction for the father is lower among those who consume illicit substances. (Dekovic, 1999: 667-685).

A cohesive family characterized by high interest of the parents for their own children with strong feelings of love and an education based on respect diminish the probability of the appearance of some antisocial behaviours. On the other hand the exaggerated exigency, the violent punishments and the lack of love stay behind many unwanted forms of behaviour.

Besides the negative social climate the rigid style of education and the exaggerated protection destroy the stages of adaptability of the teenagers. (Jackson, Henriksen, Foshee, 1998: 321-339).

The role of friends in drug consumption

People use frequently the concept of friendship, beginning from the relations in groups, to fellows and to best friends. The studies (Pikó, 2000: 617-630) show that the number of friends is decreasing in every social category and increases the number of those who haven't got friends at all. In our country the grown-ups have few friends that is to say that there are few persons with whom they can discuss the problems of their lives.

Probably the situation is other at the level of teenagers, who even live the moment of detachment of family and attract them to the group of friends. However, the statistical data about friendship don't refer to teenagers too. (Pikó, 2000: 617-630).

Besides the familial influences in the formation of the self at teenagers an important role has got the friends. The role of the parent can't detach from the group of friends because the two are conditioning each other. The parental influence can modify significantly the influence of the group of friends.

It would be necessary a distinct research related to the way in which the so called friend relationships are formed. In my opinion the base of these relations is not always the friendship in many cases can be observed the disposition of association in groups of those who have the same social condition. In other situations the personal notes can become defining criteria. But it happens often that at the beginning of the organization of the group the negative features of the members become dominant criteria of acceptance in the group, which will make that the members of the group will be "defeated" from the beginning.

Certainly the influence of the group of friends it is not negative because the group plays an important role of the teenagers' identity development. C. H. Cooley proposes a theory of interactional style "the mirror self theory" according to which the self of the individual is formed only in interaction with others and these "others" being like some mirrors in which the individual perceives himself. For Cooley and for the other interactionalists it is not important the functioning of the social just the way in which the other social actors build and represent the social reality. Thus it is imposed the idea of constructing the social by the social actors more than that it is about a subjective construction which determines a certain course of evolution of the objective reality. (Bădescu, Dungaciu, Baltasiu, 1996: 103-109).

In this case it is defining the measure in which the problematic behavior represents a modality of strengthening of the group's conformity because the consumption of substances can become an instrument of adaptation. In this case it has to be mentioned that the parental relations generally as well as the influence of the group of friends together define the behavioural direction. Thus the influence of the group of friends becomes a risk factor when the relations with the parents deteriorate.

The environment of the group of age of friends represent an important factor in drugs consumption by teenagers. (Kandel, 1985: 139-163), which action especially on the following dimensions.

- The use of psychoactive substances by the group of friends and its attitude towards it
- The identity given by the group of age which plays the role of a model ("you are somebody when you take drugs")
- The influence of friends in the sense that they want to try anything without limit they don't have the sense of responsibility (the pressure exercised by the group of friends)

The group of age, of friends or the “gang” disposes of features, own habits and culture which form the base of its own identity consciousness. This prescribes the expectations to his members who have to cope with, to adapt, if the teenager wants to belong to that group.

That’s the reason why in one friend group the main form of spending time is marijuana, it is very hard to remain in the group for someone who refuses to consume the substance. In a group the drug attempt, consuming the drug together, can be designed as a form of initiation. The frequency of marijuana consumption is determined significantly by the internalization of some norms. The attitude of respecting the norms of the group constitutes a principal risk factor. The recent researches have demonstrated that the influence of the group of friends on the consumption of drugs is bigger than the influence of the parents. (Windle, 2000: 98-110).

In the life of the young it is very dangerous the period of teen-age because this represents a critical point of transformation. At the same time appears the endeavour for autonomy and the necessity for intimacy. In this period of life predominate the processes of individualization which structure the framework of some adequate relations with the group of friends.

If in the stage pre teen-age the opposition is characteristic, the rebellion against parents, that is to say the model of the group is stronger than the parental one, after a time appears a balance in which both types of relations will fulfil their specific role.

This period of life especially the one between 15-17 years is characterised by the desire to try noxious experiences.

An American sociologist Robert K. Merton (1968), who took over from Durkheim the concept of anomie, analyses the deviant behaviour starting from the premise that the social balance is due to a general consensus upon a set of values. Two social structures are central in the explanation of deviant manner of life: the culturally defined goals and the institutionalized resources for achieving them. Between the two social structures there is not a constant relation, may be societies in which are allowed a multitude of resources for the achieving of the important goals and societies in which the general aspirations are forgotten becoming the central idea of respecting the limited resources made available. Between these two extremes exists a diversity of types of society with a higher or lower balance between the two structures. Thus sometimes discrepancies appear which make place for the aberrant behaviour defined by Merton as a „symptom of dissociation between the culturally prescribed aspirations and the structured social pathways for the achievement of these aspirations” (Merton, 1968).

The friends in quality of group of reference prescribe the drug consumption as an ideal norm of behaviour being able to practise strong

pressure in the transmission of drug consuming models. A large part of the teenagers for example under the influence of friends light the first cigarette or consume alcohol for the first time but they also try illicit drugs together with the friends. The researches show that the number of nights spent with friends is in relation with the consumption of substances. (Aseltine, 1995: 103-121).

Initially the drug is consumed in group because ulterior the toxicoman will want to be happy for the „dose” alone. The most frequent way of consumption remains the consumption in group for many reasons: the purchase of the drug is made more easily; the doses can be divided between the members of the group in the conditions when some of them don't have money; they can share their impressions. The social context and the group of friends can be triggers in any toxicomanie. (Rășcanu, 2008: 196).

The specialty literature assigns a raised influence of the consumption habit of the elder brother. The specific studies carried out the existence of some significant relations of drug consumption between brothers. (Stormshak, Comeau, Shepard, 2004: 635-649).

If the family doesn't fulfil its function/works dysfunctionally, doesn't offer to the child human values then the child doesn't feel the importance of family links. Because it is not attached to family searches in other places the linking points, human relations. If the parents are working day and night in order to offer the teenagers the material and financial resources considering that these solve everything then the child feels that he is not important for his parents. Thus the child, the teenager is attracted to the group of friends being in the same situation because he identifies himself with them.

The international researches show that the influence of the group of friends, the pressure of the group even if it doesn't belong to the most powerful risk factors is associated to the consumption of drugs. (Gilvarry, 2000: 55-80).

The role of spare time in drug consumption

In the life of teenagers the activities of their spare time represent the basic element of their way of life. The most important effect of modernization constitutes in the fact that the time granted to work and the spare time have changed. The time spent with studying has increased. Larson and Verma assigned social significance to time. (Larson, Verma, 1999: 701-736). The spare time has its own socializing role. The varieties of activities of spare time contribute to the development of the teenagers' identity. In the last decades new ways of spending the spare time have appeared.

There exist varieties of spending the spare time which have an increased risk effect, respectively activities which have a protective role.(creative activities, religion, intellectual activities).

The researches (Hendry, Shucksmith, Love, Glendinning, 1993) show that amongst the teenagers who go to disco the weight of those who consume drugs is higher. The drug consumption has recreative orientation it is linked to enjoyment in group. The teenagers who go to pubs, discos, represent the most active part which for the others represent models, especially by the way of life and the manner of spending the spare time. The amphetamine consumption, LSD and ecstasy it is connected to places for dancing.

The studies (Hendry, Shucksmith, Love, Glendinning, 1993) show that in the last years the number of teenagers who spend their free time with sports has increased. The sport has a protective role in trying substances.

On the basis of the modes of spending the free time by teenagers 4 styles of spending the free time were identified (Hendry, Shucksmith, Love, Glendinning, 1993)

- Style of spending free time oriented towards consumption and friends: distraction, visiting malls or commercial centers, discussions, TV viewing, video.
- Intellectual and artistic style: cinema, theatre, concerts, reading, discussions
- Style which seeks experiences, technical: computer, internet, sport, hobby, music
- Conservative-traditional style: housework, participating at religious events, reading

The style of spending free time oriented towards consumption and friends correlates with all the noxious passions while the other 3 have negative relations with the forms of substance consumption.

The structure of the teenagers' spare time is influenced by the social statute of the teen's family. The intellectual style and the one which seeks experiences is characteristic to the educated teens and with a better material situation. The one which is oriented towards friends and the traditional conservative are characteristic to children whose parents have a lower level of education. The style oriented towards friends correlates with negative output at school.

The Espad researches distinguish 3 factors of spare time: active, in motion, (distractions, disco, rides) active, individual, (reading, sport, hobby), passive (they don't read, don't have hobbies, don't participate at distractions, instead they spend a lot of time in front of the computer). (Liteanu, Ștefan, Stoica, 2005.) All the researches have a common idea according to which those activities of spending the free time which are connected especially to the group of friends encourage the attempt of legal or illicit substances. The activities which need creativity drop the inclination to drug consumption but the searching of sensational can increase the probability of trying drugs.

The research data show that the young junkies don't participate at valuable cultural activities.

The young who consume drugs highlight a weaker relation in the framework of the family identify themselves with the deviant friends and they often participate at unconventional forms of manifestation. (Lopez, Lourdes Martin, 1989: 1065-1082).

Conclusions

According to R. Rășcanu (Rășcanu, 2008: 26), the internal causes of drug consumption are: curiosity, „the forbidden fruit” temptation, the desire for high sensations, the lack of maturity/responsibility, personal problems, troubles, despair, loneliness, the lack of friends, boredom, the lack of some interesting preoccupations; territorialism/the need to stand out; while the external causes are: the bad influence of the environment, of the group of „dubious” friends, the unfavorable family climate; the low cultural and educational level; the lack of information or denaturated information with regard to drugs; the imitation of models from films, magazines, newspapers.

The researches carried out on drug consumers have certified the fact that drug consumption is closely related to life problems, of the questions, searchings of the teenager or the young. The most important social environments are: the family, the school, the group of entourage, (friends, spare time). These social environments determine the drug consumption through some specific characteristics: the family by its structure, by the deviances and disharmonies of its framework, by the promoted style; the group of friends, by their own system of values, by the identity given by this, by the pressure of the group, by the ways of spending the free time; while the school with low school efficiency, failure, learning difficulties, settling-in problems, behavioral difficulties, (pupil's failure to get his remove, missing classes, expulsion), through the inadequate relation between pupil-teacher, pupil-pupil, through dissatisfaction towards school.

If a teenager doesn't find the expected support in the two fundamental environments-family and school-seeks other groups which support him, accept him, give him the sensation of success surpassing the frustrations and dissatisfaction. The social group which in most of the cases offers the teenager such an environment which increases his self-esteem is the group of friends, the group of age, principally with the conflicting values in relation to the ones promoted by the family and school.

On the basis of the identified ideas I will formulate some assumptions which will be tested through an extensive study achieved in the high schools from the county Satu Mare. This study will be an instrument of measurement of the risks of drug consumption to which are exposed the teenagers from the

high schools in Satu Mare. The initiative starts from the observation according to which many some from Satu Mare have tried or have become dependent of drugs.

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