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1. A typology of frequent cannabis users in Spain – A latent class analysis

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Keywords: cannabis, frequent users, latent class analysis, patterns of use, motives, supply sources, psychosocial outcomes

Abstract

Background and Aims: Daily or near-daily users of cannabis vary considerably in their daily dosage and frequency of use. This study aimed to classify frequent cannabis users by their consumption patterns and to identify predictors of class membership.

Design: Cross-sectional survey and latent class analysis.

Setting: Spain.

Participants: Non-probability sample of 400 Spanish residents who had used cannabis at least three days weekly throughout the past year. Participants were recruited through chain referral and cannabis social clubs.

Measurements: Associations between class membership and socio-demographics, patterns of cannabis use, motives, supply sources, adverse outcomes, and other substance use were measured using ANOVA and chi-squared tests. Multinomial regression was used to identify the factors associated with latent class membership.

Findings: We identified three latent classes (low-intensity: 23%, medium-intensity: 67.5%, high-intensity: 9.5%) with mean cannabis intakes of 2.3, 5.6, and 18.3 grams weekly. Age, education, years of use, outdoor cannabis use, buying cannabis in a club, Cannabis Abuse Screening Test (CAST) score and alcohol use emerged as predictors of the intensity of cannabis use. The most intensive users were older, with less education and had been using cannabis for more years. The proportion of individuals with CAST scores \geq 9 (indicating Cannabis Use Disorders, CUD) and \geq 12 (denoting dependence) increased through the classes. Cannabis was usually obtained from a club by 38.1% of medium-intensity and 60.5% of high-intensity users. The percentage of cannabis-alcohol concurrent use was lower in the high-intensity users.

Conclusion: This study suggests that frequent cannabis users are not a homogeneous group but present several classes depending on the intensity of their use. Intensity of use increases cannabis-related risks and harms but may decrease the probability of alcohol co-use. This study provides insights into the most at-risk sector of cannabis users on which adverse health and social outcomes concentrate.

Funding sources: This research was supported by the Research Project # 2017 | 52, "Intensive and frequent cannabis use in Spain" (CIRCE), funded by the Government Delegation for National Plan on Drugs, of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, Spain.

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Biography: Arturo Alvarez-Roldan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Granada, Spain. His research is currently focused on three related topics: dual cannabis-tobacco use, cannabis policy, and illicit drugs markets. His latest publications in this field (with J. Gamella and I. Parra): (2018). The legalization of cannabis. An American experiment with global consequences. *Revista Española de Drogodependencias*, 43(4), 22–38; (2016). (2017). The legalization of cannabis derivatives in Spain: Hypothesis on a potential emerging market. *Adicciones*, 29(3), 195-206; Cannabis cultivation in Spain. A profile of plantations, growers and production systems. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 37, 70–81.

2. Youth perceptions on non-medical use of psychoactive medications

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Keywords: Nonmedical use, Psychoactive medications, Prescription drugs, youth perceptions

Abstract

Background: There are increasing concerns about the nonmedical use of prescription drugs. Nevertheless, this trend has received little attention in scientific research in Europe (e.g. Casati et al., 2012). The purpose of the current study was to better understand young Belgian people's (18-29 years old) views on their nonmedical use practices and associated harms, as well as the sources of information nonmedical users consult. We defined "nonmedical use" as the use of prescription sedatives, analgesics or stimulants without a prescription or differently than prescribed.

Methods: We used a mixed methods approach, combining an online survey (N=574), in-depth interviews (N=63), and a rapid analysis of online forums.

Results: The findings show that NMUPD mainly occurs in a context of self-medication and performance enhancement, and less often in recreational contexts. Many respondents obtained prescription drugs for nonmedical use via friends and family members. Purchasing via internet and dealers appears to be less common. Furthermore, respondents consider NMUPD to be morally acceptable and involving a smaller risk than illegal drug use because it serves a 'functional goal'. Information about prescription drugs used nonmedically was mostly sought online.

Conclusions: Our findings extend previous research by suggesting differences in young people's perceptions associated with the different types of prescription drugs. These findings provide useful implications for the development of prevention and harm reduction interventions.

Funding sources: The Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO)

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Biography: Frédérique Bawin has been working at the Institute for Social Drug research, Ghent University (Belgium), since 2015 and currently holds the position of post-doctoral researcher. In 2020 Frédérique completed her PhD, which examined self-reported medicinal cannabis use. Her research interests include the use of illicit drugs and the nonmedical use of psychoactive medicines.

3. Country, City and Cannabis: Riga Resident Cannabis Use Settings in Latvia

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Keywords: Cannabis, Users, Setting, Culture, Latvia



Abstract

Background: While historically numerous Western countercultures have settled in rural spaces, in recent decades rural spaces are losing their appeal as people migrate to cities in search of financial stability. However, rural spaces may still be appealing for short term escapes for the urban dwellers.

Methods: Using 27 semi-structured interviews with cannabis engagers in Riga, Latvia, the appeal of short term escapes to the country is uncovered.

Results: Unlike, for example the 1960s hippie detachment from society into their own countercultures, participants in Riga are motivated to hold onto their socially integrated urban lives. However, they do discuss a preference to spend their leisure time away from the socially accepted alcohol dominated urban nightlife scenes. It is social weekend or evening get-alongs with friends or relatives to rural settings that is positioned as the preferred leisure form.

Conclusions: The results indicate a fluid interplay between rural and urban spaces in this post-Soviet state. The observed preference to use cannabis recreationally in rural social settings may also exemplify a trend of displacement away from recreational alcohol use of the urban night-time economy.

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Biography: Kristiana Diana Bebre is a Sociology PhD student and Lecturer at the University of Latvia. She holds scholarships from the Advanced Social and Political Research institute and the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World organisation. Her PhD explores the ways in which punitive cannabis policy in Latvia effects cannabis engagers. Her research interests lay in comparatively exploring the interplay between insider and outsider narratives of drugs and drug engagers, placing focus upon the role of class and national political histories in Post-Soviet capitalist transitioning states.

4. Identifying best-practice amongst health professionals who work with people using image and performance enhancing drugs (IPEDs) through participatory action research.

Martin Chandler¹

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Keywords: Human enhancement drugs, Needle & syringe programmes, Action research

Abstract

Background: The use of image and performance enhancing drugs (IPEDs), such as anabolic-androgenic steroids to grow muscle mass, is a growing public health concern in the UK and across the globe. An important indicator is the rapid rise of people who inject steroids accessing needle and syringe programmes (NSPs). However, NSP workers and other health professionals often report having a lack of knowledge regarding IPEDs, and not feeling confident when engaging with this group. Adding to this is a lack of evidence-based educational/training materials, making it difficult for health professionals to improve their skills in this area.

Methods: Using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, we collaborated with health professionals who had experience in working with this client group (n=52), particularly NSP staff, to address this knowledge gap. Consistent with our PAR approach, health professionals were involved in all stages of this research, from establishing the research questions through to disseminating the findings. To identify current best practices, a workshop was organised to collaboratively determine approaches to improve professional development in this area and to ultimately facilitate better engagement with people who use IPEDs.

Results: The participating health professionals described issues and solutions in relation to the collection of clinical data, staff training, client contact and service provision; with community engagement being mentioned as a key element to improve and create awareness of health services, and to strengthen community partnerships. Consensus was established on examples of best practice, which were then developed into printed infographics to be distributed amongst relevant services as information resources for practitioners.

Conclusions: By adopting a PAR approach, with experts in the field from both academic research and health practice, we have co-produced guidance on effective engagement with people who use IPEDs that is both evidence-based and experience-informed. Lessons learned from this approach can inform future work aiming to meaningfully connect research and practice.

Funding sources: The workshop was funded as part of the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty International Workshop Fund of the University of New South Wales.

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Biography: Martin Chandler is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham, having previously worked there as a Research Fellow in Performance Enhancing Drugs. Prior to joining the University of Birmingham, Martin was a Research Fellow in Human Enhancement Drugs, based at Liverpool John Moores University and has been studying the use of Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs (IPEDs) since 2006. He has contributed to local and national government guidance on service provision for IPED clients and delivered training for healthcare and law enforcement audiences around IPED use.

5. The earnings model for illegal drugs and the prescient view of the Hulsman Commission

Peter Cohen,

Former retired (2007) director of Centrum voor Drugs Onderzoek (CEDRO), Univ of Amsterdam

Keywords: A critique of the Grand Drug Inquisition



Abstract

Background: Shifting the paradigm for drug harm reduction from prohibition of 'drugs' to regulated access to all 'drugs' like we already have for alcohol and -slightly different- for coffee and aspirin

Methods: Application of common sense

Results: The obsolete 19th century method of suppressing drug use has resulted in phenomenal violence, social damage, and the creation of a highly successful and lucrative global illicit production and distribution system for some drugs. It also generated a parasitic Inquisition that continuously searches for 'drug offenders' without any chance of impacting the prevalence of drug use and drug production. A 1970 report written by the Dutch criminologist Louk Hulsman predicted the ever expanding drug Inquisition that would feed on drug myth and itself. The Hulsman perspective on drug policy (cultural integration /rule formation of drug consumption) is compared with the current world wide system of the enforcement of a policy of suppression: The Drug Inquisition as defended by the authors Tops and Tromp in their book "Nederland Drugland" 2020. This book functions as the source of some quotes that are used to show both the damages and the impotence of the Inquisition.

Conclusions: Save the rule of law, stop creating an ever larger Drugs Inquisition. Reflect on the history of the -once impossible- freedoms of religion or sexual orientation; institutionalise freedom of drug access and consumption for adults in sync with a system of managing potential or inevitable harms drug consumption may bring for some.

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Biography: Peter Cohen, born 1942, studied social psychology and sociology at the Univ of Amsterdam, dissertation Drugs as a social construct, Univ of Amsterdam 1989: <http://www.cedro-uva.org/lib/cohen.drugs.toc.html>. Thesis: some humans may develop very strong bonds to psychotropic compounds, bonds they should be allowed to have and maintain. Former retired (2007) director of Centrum voor Drugs Onderzoek (CEDRO), Univ of Amsterdam.

6. Building cultures of participation: involving young people in contact with the criminal justice system in the development of drug interventions in the UK, Denmark, Italy, and Poland

Karen Duke¹

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Keywords: young people, participation, co-production, drug interventions, policy

Abstract

Background: The participation of young people in the design and development of interventions and policy has been a neglected area in youth justice and drugs policy and practice. Existing research in other policy areas demonstrates that involving young people improves policy and practice, incorporates their unique perspectives and ideas and highlights issues that adults and policy makers may have overlooked. Drawing on qualitative interviews with young people and practitioners, this paper explores the challenges and opportunities for the participation of young people in contact with criminal justice systems in the development of drugs interventions.

Methods: Interviews were undertaken with 160 young people (aged 15-25 years) in contact with the criminal justice system who use illegal drugs and with 66 practitioners involved in the delivery of interventions for our target group working across the criminal justice, youth justice, social services and substance use treatment sectors in Denmark, Italy, Poland the UK. The young people and practitioners were selected from a broad range of interventions (including prevention, treatment and harm reduction approaches) which aimed to prevent the onset or escalation of drug use, polydrug use and use of NPS for young people in contact with the criminal justice system.

Results: Most of the interventions in the study did not routinely involve young people in wider organisational engagement or the design and implementation of the service or initiative. We analysed the key challenges in involving young people in the development of interventions. The difficulties involving people related to a number of structural, organisational and individual factors including: the wider youth justice and drug policy frameworks in each country; resources; training and professional culture issues; and that the target group is often trauma-experienced and has complex and multiple needs which need to be prioritised.

Conclusions: We argue that these barriers can be overcome by strategically prioritising young people's involvement, providing dedicated resources and fostering flexible models of participation which identify the most meaningful and appropriate approaches for involving young people at different stages and in different initiatives which consider socio-cultural contexts.

Funding sources: This paper is part of the project 768162/EPPIC which received funding from the European Union's Health Programme (2014-2020)

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Biography: Karen Duke is Professor of Criminology and Co-Director of the Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at Middlesex University. Her research interests are in the areas of drugs policy, criminal justice, prisons, young people and harm reduction.

7. Challenging the structures of expertise on drugs: The rise of NPS, scientific uncertainty, and the increasing value of user knowledge

Luca Elisa Lindner

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Keywords: NPS, drug use, expertise and experience, scientific uncertainty, drug policy, public health



Abstract

Background: With the ongoing illegalization of established drugs and an increase in biochemical expertise and skill among drug producers and dealers, the production, sale, and use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) has been growing steadily throughout the past years. NPS are substances that chemically resemble existing drugs with only minor modifications, usually indicated by composite names like 1-P-LSD or 2CB-fly. They are often sold legally as Research Chemicals or alike before being covered by national drug law, which makes them more easily available than their illegal counterparts. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this development increased yet again due to the reduced availability of street drugs. As new NPS are created continuously, there is only few to none research on these novel substances, which is why people are commonly advised against the use thereof. This lack of scientific research makes it hard for facilities that give advice to drug users to share clear information about the risks, effects, and dosages of NPS.

Methods: The paper is based on the research I pursued in the context of my master thesis at the drug checking facility Z6 in Innsbruck. I conducted 8 qualitative interviews with clients of that service, drug checkers (social workers) at the facility and the chemist leading the group that performs the chemical analysis of the drugs. I analyzed the interviews using a grounded theory approach and coded the material with the software atlas.ti.

Results: My analysis shows that the growing relevance of NPS, for which there is only limited scientific knowledge available, challenges the established relationship between the clients of the drug checking service in Innsbruck and those working there. I argue that within this context of scientific uncertainty, the experiences and expertise of drugs users are increasingly considered as valuable sources of information. More specifically, the drug checkers at the facility in Innsbruck regarded clients who had used or read about specific NPS as experts and would refer to their knowledge in their drug counselling and the issuing of public warnings. This is interesting as it runs counter the common structures of expertise performed at the drug checking facility, in which the social workers/ drug checkers take on the role of experts and are the ones to distribute information on substances, their effects, and risks. Both the clients, who could share their knowledge on and experiences with NPS, and the drug checkers were happy about this reciprocal dynamic, which diverged from the conventional structures of expertise and power in the context of drug use.

Conclusions: NPS play an increasing role on the drug market and within personal drug use in Austria due to the ongoing illegalization of established drugs as well as increasing skill and knowledge on the production of substances with new, and thus often legal, chemical configurations. Interestingly, these changes impact the relationship between (experienced) drug users and those working at harm reduction facilities like the drug checking facility in Innsbruck. My findings indicate that the lack of scientific information on NPS increases the interest in and need for expertise grounded in the experiences of drug users, which is commonly not considered valuable or trustworthy knowledge. My research thus points to interesting developments in how expertise on drugs is defined as the drug market and user habits are changing, which opens up interesting epistemic and political questions; including who counts as expert and which knowledge as valuable in this context, and how to pragmatically deal with scientific uncertainty regarding the effects and risks of underresearched drugs.

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Biography: Luca Lindner is a research assistant at the Department for Science and Technology Studies (STS), University of Vienna, where she is currently working in the EU Horizon 2020 project *Smart4Health* and finishing her master's degree. She writes her master's thesis on the different enactments of illicit drugs and drug use at and through a drug checking facility in Innsbruck. Her research interests lie at the intersection of (scientific) expertise, civil society/ citizens, and policy making, particularly in relation to health structures and practices, encompassing themes like drug use and policy, reproductive rights, and public health more generally. In doing so, she is primarily interested in the perspective, experience, and knowledge of the user, patient, and/or citizen.

8. Neutralizing health issues: an ethnographic analysis of medical services on a Russian cryptomarket

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Keywords: online counselling, cryptomarkets, harm reduction, self-regulation and coordination practices



Abstract

Background: Telemedicine and e-health approaches have become more popular and affordable for patients and healthcare providers in the past years (Ebad & Jazan, 2013). Along with global trends, in 2018 Russian cryptomarket Hydra added free-of-charge substance related medical services on the forum threads and began providing emergency health support via Telegram. These innovations were presented the same year Hydra accomplished an expansion campaign resulting in the growth of user base and whole platform restructuring.

Since 2012 Russian Ministry of Health has obligated healthcare workers to report to law enforcement those patients whose health issues are caused by the intake of illegal psychoactive substances. It seems that an introduction of medical services on Hydra coinciding with audience growth was made to reduce the overall amount of drug misuse traces leading to Hydra, which appears to be the largest platform for shadow marketing in Russia. Our aim is to study why Hydra hosts a telemedical facility, describe its main functions and features, and explain how patient-doctor communication is further established the context of anonymous darknet forums.

Methods: The data for this study has been collected since 2018, the year when Hydra offered its users the first medical consultations. Data collection, analysis and research ethics for this study are guided by the main principles of netnography and its adaptation to the study of darknet (Kozinets & Gambetti, 2020; Maddox, 2020; Martin, 2021).

Results and Conclusions: Our study is still in the process of data analysis. However, current findings show that medical services on Hydra function as a preliminary mediator between users and legitimate offline healthcare providers. We believe that aside from helping people resolve their issues, one of the goals pursued by Hydra is to decrease the general probability of users contacting state healthcare providers and redistribute users' concerns so that they would remain within the digital space of the cryptomarket. Medical personnel employed by Hydra work with patients' complaints, prompting dangerous cases that require immediate intervention to result in calling an ambulance. In other words, the daily routine of Hydra medical service consists not just of healing and supporting users but also of keeping within Hydra as many health complaints as possible, without putting users' health at risk.

Another purpose of medical service is inner monitoring that includes gathering statistics of the most popular complaints, overdoses, health issues, et cetera. This statistic is publicly available on the designated forum thread but only covers a two-year period (2018-2019), after which Hydra, this time in accordance with local Russian trend, has stopped gathering data or publishing it for everybody to see. Nevertheless, smaller-scale monitoring is still conducted by Hydra's healthcare personnel, who post articles with general observations and recommendations regarding various topics from giving up drugs to the safest possible combinations of drugs. The community that revolves around such forum threads is strongly integrated into discussions and often advises complaining users and personnel.

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Biography: Anastasia Meylakhs: PhD student, a researcher at the Higher School of Economics, senior lecturer in Research Methodology. Research Interests: internet studies, drug supply and demand, drug policy, self-treatment and self-enhancing practices

9. Models of Recovery: influence of psychosocial factors on substance use recovery

Antonio Molina Fernández¹

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Keywords: Substance use, profiles of users, models of recovery, quantitative methodology.

Abstract

Background: The aim of this study is to analyse several psychosocial factors such as gender, legal or illegal substance use (alcohol and cocaine use), age, employment and social support to determine models of recovery.

Methods: quantitative research. Data from 2179 people receiving recovery treatment were extracted from EuropASI surveys, collected from the PH Nemos and Minerva databases. A two-factor multivariate and two univariate analysis of covariance were performed. The dependent variables were alcohol and years of cocaine use, the factors were gender and leisure social network, and the co-variables were age and number of people in the social network. Post-hoc tests were performed to analyse the differences among the five different leisure social network categories, and alcohol and cocaine use.

Results: Variables with the biggest influence on recovery are age, gender, and leisure social network. Two models of recovery with significant differences can be identified (Model 1/alcohol use, Model 2/cocaine use); for the alcohol model, individual leisure was the most important risk condition, while for the cocaine model individual leisure was the most important protective condition.

Conclusions: Personal and social recovery adapted to the different characteristics of the people is essential to increase social integration and participation.

Ethics: This study received approval from the UCM Deontological Research Commission; the ethical approved project identification code is UCM PR2019_20_043

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10. 'Cuckooing' as a variable and evolving form of exploitation in street level drug markets

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Keywords: drug dealing, addiction, heroin, vulnerability, exploitation

Abstract

Background: A form of criminal exploitation rarely mentioned in the academic literature has recently emerged, evolved and taken meaningful hold in the UK. Hundreds of cases of 'cuckooing' have been reported, where heroin and crack cocaine dealers associated with the so-called 'County Lines' supply methodology have taken over the homes of local residents and created outposts to facilitate their supply operations in satellite locations. Dominant narratives surrounding this practice have stressed its exploitative nature and the vulnerabilities of those involved.

Methods: In this paper, we do not seek to downplay the serious harms that have and continue to be experienced by those affected. However, we do aim to take a step back to highlight and provide insight into the 'varied' and nuanced experiences of cuckooing by developing a typology. Drawing on two distinctive yet complementary studies comprising ethnographic research and in-depth interviews, a key overarching research aim for both studies was to develop a greater understanding of the realities of this form of drug market exploitation.

Results: Four typologies of cuckooing are constructed, including 'Parasitic Nest Invading', 'Quasi Cuckooing', 'Coupling' and 'Local Cuckooing'. Our research illustrates the ways in which notions of complexity, culpability and compliance are also compounded within the broader drug market milieu where problematic drug use, social exclusion and conceptions of 'vulnerability' abound.

Conclusions: Though cuckooing is offered as a practice that is uniquely distinctive of the County Lines supply methodology, we have attempted to complicate this narrative, both through identifying its antecedents and contextualising what may first appear as a parochial crime model. Our data suggests that exposure to the practice of cuckooing was highly likely to exacerbate heroin and crack user's vulnerabilities and social exclusion, as well as heighten their risk of criminalisation. Findings also signal cuckooing to be a growing method of criminal exploitation beyond drug supply, with a possible burgeoning presence being realised internationally.

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Biography: Leah Moyle is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Sociology at Royal Holloway, University of London. Leah's research interests focus principally on illicit drug supply; she has published widely in this area with recent work spanning the policing of street-level drug markets, the sentencing and punishment of low-level drug dealers, and the use of social media in recreational drug markets.

11. Integrating self-regulation theories with the life-course perspective to study patterns in the use of khat

Amanti Baru Olani,

Ghent University

Keywords: self-regulation, rituals, life-history calendar method



Abstract

Background: One of the key theoretical propositions in Zinberg (1984) is that there are rituals and rules that serve as key determinants of drug use self-regulatory process. Zinberg (1984), nevertheless, did not make explicit the existence of life-course related different patterns of self-regulatory process and the underlying causal factors for such variability. Similarly, traditional control theories are overwhelmingly static. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), for instance, contend that once established by ages eight to ten, self-control remains relatively stable over the life-course. Notwithstanding, there are recommendations to integrate self-regulation theories with the life-course framework to understand the dynamics of both continuity and change in behaviour over time (Sampson and Laub 1997).

Objectives: The first objective of this presentation is to make a discussion of conditions which necessitate integrating self-regulation theories with the life-course perspective. The presentation also looks into the potential utility of the life-history calendar method for generating qualitative data on the life-course trajectory of self-regulation in drug use. The presentation also highlights how the hybrid of self-regulation theories and life-course perspective is employed in my ethnographic study being conducted on khat use in Ethiopia.

Methods and Results: I will present an example from my study of how life-history calendar method is generating qualitative data on the trajectories of khat use overtime. I am using time cues and domain cues to elicit life-course related qualitative data in the life-history calendar method. The trajectories in khat use (e.g., initiation, escalation/decrease, moderate use, cessation, relapse) identified by the study participants are used as time cues. Concerning domain cues, participants of the study are allowed to list vertically significant life events that might have influenced each pattern of khat use.

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12. The Politics of Imagining and Building a World for Legal Psychedelic Drug Use in Europe and the United States

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Keywords: psychedelics, drug policy, decriminalization, medicalization, imaginaries



Abstract

Background: After an almost complete research standstill for several decades, psychedelic drugs such as psilocybin, LSD, and MDMA are scientifically examined for their potential to tackle mental health conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, or addiction. The first psychedelic drugs are expected to be turned into regulated medicines in the United States (U.S.) and Europe within the next few years. To generate even faster and more inclusive access, a burgeoning grassroots drug decriminalization movement has formed in the U.S. since 2019. It has successfully deprioritized the enforcement of laws against those using, possessing, and sharing psychedelic plants and fungi in a growing number of cities. In addition, drug reform policy initiatives to decriminalize all drugs (similar to Portugal and The Netherlands) and establish legal centers for the supervised use of psilocybin have passed in the state of Oregon. Psychedelic drugs are poised for their legal societal reentry but how this will turn out is still largely in-the-making. In this presentation I inquire into how a world for legal psychedelic use is imagined and built in contemporary Europe and U.S.

Methods: The talk draws on qualitative empirical material that was collected in the U.S. and Europe from 2018 to 2021 and analyzed with grounded theory. The material includes 35 semi-structured interviews with researchers, therapists, drug policy advocates, psychedelic users, activists, among others; participant observations at psychedelic (science) conferences and other public psychedelics-focused events (both offline and online); media coverage from newspaper and magazine articles and social media discourse; as well as drug policy reform documents.

Results: The concept of socio-psychedelic imaginaries was developed to capture collective visions articulated and enacted as to how to reintegrate psychedelics legally and responsibly into society to move beyond the current prohibitionist reality. The evolving landscape of socio-psychedelic imaginaries consists of the (bio)medicalization imaginary, decriminalization imaginary, regulation/legalization imaginary, and sacramental imaginary. I argue that in the realm of psychedelics the (bio)medicalization imaginary dominates in both the U.S. and Europe, and that the other imaginaries, while gaining traction in the U.S., are still rather marginal in Europe. I also provide a nuanced analysis of the tensions, divergences, convergences between these different imaginaries and the politics inscribed in them.

Conclusions: Contemporary socio-psychedelic imaginaries function as societal corrective to the prohibition of psychedelic drugs that has dominated international drug policy since the early 1970s. Yet the four socio-psychedelic imaginaries embody a different potential to transform or reproduce existing societal structures. A balanced psychedelic ecosystem includes a multiplicity of socio-psychedelic imaginaries that compete and co-exist with each other, with newer imaginaries seeking to rectify the shortcomings of the older ones.

Funding sources: This presentation draws on work from a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 788945.

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Biography: Claudia Schwarz-Plaschg is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Science and Technology Studies at the University of Vienna. She currently holds an EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship, in which she explores re-emerging research on and attempts towards medicalizing psychedelic substances in the United States. Her broader research interest with regard to psychedelics lies in how the responsible reintegration of psychedelics into Western societies is fostered through the production of scientific knowledge, drug policy movements, and capitalist dynamics. Claudia studied media and communication science, English and American studies, and sociology with a specialization in science and technology studies at the University of Vienna, and was recently a visiting researcher at Harvard and MIT.

13. The role of Internet and mobile phone in cannabis and stimulants transactions: A survey among users from seven European countries

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Keywords: cannabis, stimulants, retail markets, supply

Abstract

Background: This research examined retail-level drugs dealing, and investigated the role of the Internet and mobile phones in drugs distribution (cannabis and stimulants).

Methods: A survey was conducted among 1,225 last year cannabis users, aged 18-40 years. Participants came from seven European countries, and they were recruited and surveyed in the Dutch coffeeshops.

Results: In the last year, 75% of total sample had bought their own cannabis and one fifth had bought their own stimulants (cocaine or/and ecstasy). The popularity of purchasing on the Internet remained quite low among cannabis and stimulants buyers in our study. The option of purchasing using a mobile phone/delivery service was chosen by one fifth of cannabis buyers, and by one third of stimulant buyers. Buying cannabis on the Internet or using a mobile phone, varied significantly between countries, while it was not the case when purchasing of stimulants was examined. Most of Dutch participants reported buying cannabis from coffeeshops.

Conclusions: The findings indicate that drug markets may vary not only between countries, but also by the types of drugs being distributed, particularly stimulants are more popular than cannabis to be purchased on the Internet or using a mobile phone. This study concludes that mobile phones have been emerged and developed into popular retail drug supply methods alongside with traditional sources of supply such as street dealers, home dealers, and friends.

Funding sources: This study is an extension to the IDPSO-project (ERANID). The Dutch part of the IDPSO-project was supported by the Dutch Organization for Health Research and Development NWO/ZonMw (# 63200000106).

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Biography: Kostas Skliamis is young researcher in the field of social drug research. His first research was on the innovative topic of cannabis festivals and their impact in cannabis normalization. Later, he worked for the IDPSO (ERANID) research project and alongside he has been conducting his PhD studies focusing on cannabis related stigmatization and normalization.

14. Investigating experiences of COVID-19 for individuals in recovery

Emma Smith¹,

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¹ University of Worcester

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Keywords: -



Abstract

Background: ... This research explores how enforced forms of social isolation arising from the first COVID-19 lockdown influenced experiences of problem substance use, relapse, and coping strategies for recovery in individuals engaging with substance use services in the United Kingdom. This research also considers the similarities and differences between the recovery context and service provision in the UK and Europe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

Methods: A qualitative semi-structured interview design was adopted for this research. Seven participants were recruited from a harm reduction recovery organisation in the UK. During their initial interview, participants volunteered information regarding their experience of the first lockdown due to emerging concerns of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants completed a second semi-structured interview at the end of the first lockdown regarding their experience of enforced isolation during this time.

Results: Three themes identified from the analysis were (1) Isolation resulting in hindered Human Capabilities, (2) Adjusting to a new normal: an individual experience, and (3) Unexpected benefits to recovery resulting from isolation.

Conclusions: ...These findings illuminate both negative, neutral, and positive aspects of recovery throughout the COVID-19 lockdown as well as highlighting the complex and individualized role that social connectedness plays in relapse occurrence. This research also sheds light on the practical implications of a hybrid service model as services throughout Europe increase their virtual support options. While not all participants reported that the pandemic adversely affected them, it had particularly negative effects on others leading to theoretical implications for the effect of social isolation on recovery. For this reason, individuals with a history of problem substance use should be considered potentially vulnerable to the effects of enforced isolation and should be supported accordingly.

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Biography: Emma Smith is a third year PhD student and associate lecturer from the University of Worcester. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Emma graduated with a BA in Anthropology in 2014 from the University of Georgia and a Master of Public Health from the University of Dundee in 2018. Emma is currently in the process of finishing her PhD "Investigating the experiences of individuals in recovery from problem substance use using digital Photovoice". Her research interests include substance use, recovery, mental health, visual research, and participatory research methods.

15. A trendspotter study of drug supply and associated violence and exploitation of vulnerable groups in Denmark

Thomas Friis Søggaard¹

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Keywords: Drug markets, Criminal exploitation, Trendspotter study, Denmark



Abstract

Background: In recent years, research on county lines drug supply in the UK have brought new attention to the issue of exploitative relationships within drug markets. This in turn has spurred a growing international interest in and awareness of the need for a better understanding of the links between drug markets and the exploitation and violent victimisation of vulnerable populations. Against this background, we present finding from an EMCDDA-commissioned ‘trendspotter study’, mapping dominant supply models in Denmark, and related violence and exploitation of vulnerable groups.

Methods: To generate data we used a modified trendspotter methodology, including a mapping of available literature and monitoring data, an online nationwide survey of professionals and stakeholders (n=331), expert interviews (n=16), and the collection of data at an expert seminar (n=16).

Results: The study found that the Danish retail market for illegal drugs is still dominated by locally centred supply models. Thus, we did not find evidence of a prevalent county lines supply model, equivalent to the one described in the UK. Nevertheless, drug market exploitation of vulnerable young people and adults seems to be growing in Denmark. Findings indicate that this development has been fuelled by increased competition between growing numbers of criminal gangs, the proliferation of more labour-intensive supply models, and the increased technological mediation of drug transactions, the latter process creating new ways in which vulnerable persons are being exploited.

Conclusions: The study illustrates the importance of mapping national- and local variations in drug market exploitation, and points to the need for future research into how the increased digitalisation of drug markets is coupled with new modes of exploitation.

Funding sources: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Lisbon.

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Biography: Thomas Friis Søggaard is PhD and Associate Professor at the Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University. Thomas is mainly a qualitative researcher, but has in recent years also conducted quantitative research on drug-related issues. His research interests include drug markets, drug policy, night-time economy and policing. He has published widely on these issues, and has recently edited a special issue on the onto-politics of cannabis in Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs.

16. The prevalence of and associated factors with self-reported naloxone carrying among people who inject drugs (PWID) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland



Christiane Spring¹

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Abstract

Background: Overdose mortality remains a major health concern across Europe. In 2018, an estimated 8,300 overdose deaths occurred in the European Union (EU), with 39.6% (3,284) recorded in the UK alone. In 2015, UK-wide regulations were introduced enabling drug treatment services to offer take-home naloxone (THN) without prescription to people at risk of opioid overdose, with the aim of expanding availability. Despite this legislative change, record-high numbers of drug-related deaths have been reported in 2019-2020 across the country. Meanwhile, little is known about naloxone accessibility among people who inject drugs (PWID)—a population with one of the highest risks of overdose—to meaningfully guide the public health response. This study seeks to determine the prevalence and correlates of naloxone carrying among a sample of PWID attending drug treatment and community services in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Methods: Data was analysed from the 2019 Unlinked Anonymous Monitoring (UAM) survey, a cross-sectional, bio-behavioural survey of PWID in the UK (excluding Scotland) recruited through approximately 60 collaborating agencies, including substance-use treatment programs, community drug and alcohol services, and needle and syringe programs (NSPs). During their study visit, participants self-complete a questionnaire that collects socio-demographic, drug use, service use and other data relevant to the health of PWID, including non-fatal overdose and naloxone carrying. Participants were included in this study if they reported injecting drug use during the preceding year. Using the Gelberg-Andersen Behavioural model of health-care access among vulnerable populations as a framework, we investigated predisposing, need and enabling factors associated with current naloxone carriage. Analyses included univariable and multivariable logistic regression.

Results: Participants (n = 2,139) were predominantly male (72.4%, n = 1549), the mean age was 40 (SD = 8.1) and 92.9% (n=1,988) were born in the UK. Between 2018-19, the prevalence of naloxone carrying within the total sample was 61.1% (n = 1,307), although this figure varied regionally. In the multivariable model, gender was the only predisposing factor independently associated with naloxone carrying. Compared to males, females were more likely to report carrying it (adjusted odds ratio (AOR): 1.54, 95% confidence interval (CI): 1.22 -1.93). Poly-drug use (injecting two and three or more different drug types), a marker of need, was also found to be associated with naloxone carrying (AOR): 1.88, 95% confidence interval (CI): 1.48, 2.38) and (AOR: 2.40, 95% CI: 1.69, 3.43) respectively. Among enabling factors, being currently engaged in drug treatment (AOR: 1.85, 95% CI: 1.31, 2.60) and past-year contact with NSPs (AOR: 1.79, 95% CI: 1.43, 2.25) were associated with naloxone carrying.

Conclusion: Our findings indicate that nearly two-thirds of PWID attending services in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland carry naloxone and that recent contacts with drug treatment and needle and syringe programs may be important in enabling access. These findings are encouraging, and they highlight the importance of the 2015 UK-wide policy change aimed at improving naloxone distribution. At present, THN is available in fewer than ten of the twenty-eight EU member states, and urgent action is needed to improve THN availability given the compelling evidence of its effectiveness. Future research should seek to understand reasons why PWID do not carry naloxone in the UK and include PWID who are not in contact with services.

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Biography: Christiane Spring (BSc (Hons) Geography) is currently pursuing an MSc in Public Health at the University of Bristol, with a research interest in population health sciences. She has previously worked in collaboration with the University of Bristol and South West Dementia Brain Bank to model the association between air pollution and Alzheimer's disease in South West England, which was awarded the [2020 National Quantitative Methods Research Group Best Undergraduate Dissertation Prize](#). Her current research focuses on naloxone and injecting drug use. This October, she will start her role as a GIS analyst within the South Central and West Commissioning Support Unit at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

17. Chemsex – how far can too far go

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Keywords: erotically motivated drug use; chemsex; sexual subculture; stigma; normalisation



Abstract

Background: Epidemiology of erotically motivated drug use; sexual physiology; theories of sexual subcultures; queer theory

Methods: professional observation and interviewing; use of statistics; literature study on erotically motivated drug use (Physiology; History; Literature)

Results: Types of erotically motivated drug use can increasingly be observed in many European countries. In the current reading, the phenomenon in its manifestation called chemsex is mainly assigned to the lifestyle components of MSM. On the one hand, it is recognised as a health risk for the individuals concerned and for the community, triggering moral panic and preventive demands; on the other hand, it leads to fundamental reflections on the significance of such needs and behaviours for subcultural identity and functionality.

Conclusions: In critical reflexions on the phenomenon and its representation there is a call for more diverse works on national and regional differences in chemsex culture, as well as how the framework can be adapted to the needs of women and trans and non-binary people. It is pointed out that these populations are under-represented in the current observations, reports, and interpretations.

From historical documents from literature and science we can deduct that erotically motivated drug use is not a phenomenon that can be assigned to a specific subcultural orientation, but that this motivation belongs to the need structure for drug use and may even be a major incitement for general social drug use. In fact, the problem of erotically motivated drug use cannot be limited to practices and needs of a specific group or subculture. There has always been a fundamental and complex connection between drug use and erotic needs. Drugs, depending on their pharmacological classification in a differentiated way, can modify sexual desire, sexual experience, type, intensity and duration of sexual union and other sexual practices, intensity, and duration of the orgasmic experience and finally, as in the case of psychedelics, the existential meaning of the sexual act. Unfortunately, there is both a considerable research deficit and a high propensity for myth-making in this area.

It seems timely to reconsider the phenomenon from the perspective of social drug use. The challenge is to avoid possibly stigmatising classifications, to identify this behaviour and these needs as a specific general dimension of social drug use and to deal intensively with this neglected aspect. The task is to grasp the general meaning of chemsex-oriented behaviour, to investigate this meaning in differentiated social structures and to distinguish individual, resp. group-related self-destructive or transgressive needs from general use motivations.

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Biography: Medical degree; Univ. Prof., specialist training in psychiatry and neurology; training in psychoanalysis, member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association. Head of the interdisciplinary Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Addiction Research in Vienna from 1974-2010. Regular lectures on drug use and sexuality. Currently also lecturer at the Sigmund Freud Private University in Vienna. Special interests: Research on the cultural representation of drugs and drug use in popular media; subculture research, gender related studies.

18. Drug abusing family characteristics in terms of internal and external shame, guilt and stigmatization

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Keywords: stigmatization, parental substance abuse, treatment policy, children from drug abusing parents



Abstract

Background: Approximately 25% of all individuals with serious drug problems and about one-fifth of all entrants to drug treatment in Europe are women. While some studies mention that women access treatment because of needs arising from pregnancy or parenting more likely, other studies find the opposite because of stigma. Women who use drugs are stigmatized more than men because drug use is seen as a violation of their role as mother and caregiver. Stigma can increase feelings of guilt and shame. If drug or alcohol addicted women experience discriminatory and unsupportive services, this can discourage them from seeking help (EMCDDA). Not only the drug using caregivers but also their children tend to avoid seeking help because of either experienced or internal feeling of shame, guilt and stigmatization. As Easta (1994) already pointed out: don't talk, don't trust and don't feel are the three cardinal rules dominating households where drug addiction or alcoholism is present. Some clinicians or prevention experts, due to a lot of publications in this field, tend to assume psychopathology in COA's. This may have negative effects, not only labeling and stigmatizing the child but also including them in intervention programs that can lead to adverse, not desirable, outcomes. Children of drug abusing families are frequently distressed by their parents' substance use. They are often required to take on parental roles, due to their parents' incapacity. Since they usually blame themselves for their parents' behavior and feel responsible for their well-being (Smith & Wilson, 2016), they tend to keep the situation secret, not showing their discomfort in public (Hoffmann & Su, 1998; Morrison et al., 1996). They also tend to self-stigmatize and live-in fear of "failing" the same way their parents did (Matthews, Dwyer & Snock, 2017). The self-interpretation of an addicted person has been described as both failing in life competences and not living up to their own normative standards, which lead to low self-esteem and self-efficacy, and a whole set of negative self-regarding attitudes - central to these being shame and guilt. Self-stigma also resulted from public stigmatization of people with substance use disorders as dangerous or incompetent, as judged to be responsible for their disorder (Matthews, Dwyer & Snock, 2017).

Methods and results: In my presentation I would like to draw a picture of a work in progress qualitative observational study of drug abusing parents, seeking help in an outpatient clinical setting by showing descriptive data to describe the population as well as client reports of their experiences of stigmatization in daily life. Also I would like to give an insight into the work with children from drug abusing families, living in foster care and their way of dealing with stigma, shame and guilt.

Conclusions: Giving an insight to the experiences of drug abusing family members as well as their children should help to inform about whether or not there has been a change in stigmatization by comparing their experiences with literature from the last decades since there have been a lot of anti-stigma campaigns like information about harm reduction and special universal addiction prevention programs.

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19. Handling the challenges of not having a real life: Drug using and selling among unaccompanied refugee minors in Malmö, Sweden

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Keywords: Unaccompanied minors; drug scene; Malmö, Sweden; residential status; functions of using and dealing



Abstract

Background: Sweden constitutes the European country that received the relatively greatest number of underage refugees seeking asylum during the major “migration wave” in 2015, of whom the majority were boys of Afghan origin. While international research literature hitherto barely acknowledges the topic of substance use and dependence among URM, Swedish researchers and authorities highlighted the risk of using legal and illegal drugs as strategy to cope with psychological stressors and adversities, unmet needs, and a lack of protection factors already in 2016/17. Still, the scientific knowledge and especially qualitative research in the context of URM and drugs in Sweden is very limited and no investigations have been conducted yet on drug dealing in this group.

Methods: This study, based at the social work department of Malmö University, explores the motivations and functions of drug using and selling in URM in Malmö. We carried out in-depth interviews with six URM with current and previous experience of drug using and selling and 12 professionals working with URM in Malmö. Even though the originally aimed for number of interviews with URM could not be reached yet due to the pandemic situation since the beginning of 2020, the existing data material is of very rich and expressive nature as it stands.

Results: Interview analysis according to the principles of grounded theory revealed “not having a real life” of in particular URM without residence permits as a central motivator to sell and/or use illicit drugs in Malmö. Using and selling can serve the function of strengthening feelings of self-medication, self-efficacy, social belonging, and financing living expenses, respectively.

Conclusions: Practical recommendations derived from the findings include targeted peer interventions and participatory policy strategies.

Funding sources: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond

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20. Theorizing intersectionally with material gerontology and critical drug studies

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Keywords: aging, critical drug studies, drug use, intersectionality, material gerontology, older adults



Abstract

Background: Aging with long-term drug use has been under-theorized in both age and drug studies. Rethinking old age and what aging means within the context and materiality of drug use, the paper asks, ‘how does drug use matter in old age?’ and follows a series of conceptual arguments to link aging studies and critical drug studies with material gerontology in an intersectional literature review. In this paper, age is explored through its biological, subjective, and socio-material representations and situated within intersectional and material gerontological thinking. This paper also argues that the body and bodily experiences are important in an intersectional approach to drug use and old age.

Methods: To situate social and critical studies of drug use in age studies and conceptualize related issues such as healthcare inequalities and marginalization, this paper develops several key areas of interest or potential research directions that are eventually discussed in an integrated conceptual model.

Results: The article first shows the understanding of aging as entangled with drug use and the conceptual framing of age and aging within critical drug studies and pursues to develop a materialist ontological thinking about old age and drug use. It then discusses the merits of a research direction that looks beyond marginalization of single social phenomenon such as ‘old age’ or ‘drugs’ and instead takes an intersectional approach to better expose multiplicities, complex social-material entanglements, and political discourse. Conceptual results suggest an integrated model approach exemplified as a working concept under ‘embodied-drugged-aging’ name, which seeks to neither categorize nor abstract aging with drug use from its social and material contexts.

Conclusions: Older adults who use drugs are more vulnerable to the harms of drug use, especially harms related to social marginalization, as opposed to other cohorts who also use illicit drugs. Further theoretical and empirical research is needed to tackle the specific intersection of material and social relations in developing the concepts of age and drug use, as well as the inequalities leading to the marginalization of their intersection points. Research studies exploring the ways in which policies and researchers handle these issues are needed to address the current gap in the literature overlapping practice, policy, research and need to address the resulting marginalization (Brown & Wincup, 2019).

Funding sources: Minerva Center for Intersectionality in Aging

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Biography: Aysel Sultan studied psychology, social work, and educational sciences in Baku State University (Azerbaijan), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), and Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany). She is a postdoctoral researcher with a focus on drug use, recovery, and international drug policy at the Institute for Addiction Research in Frankfurt and received a postdoctoral research fellowship by the Minerva Center on Intersectionality in Aging from Haifa University in Israel. Aysel Sultan works within Science and Technology Studies, ‘new’ materialisms, and posthuman theory. Her research interests also include care practices and healthcare policies and related marginalization of older people who use prescription drugs.

21. It is logically impossible to count the number of indirect deaths

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Keywords: advocacy tools, indirect mortality, premature mortality, methodology



Abstract

Background: Individuals wanting to popularize certain positions typically look for arguments to support their convictions. Claims that evoke emotions in recipients and are presented as indisputable facts by renowned experts are particularly popular as advocacy tools. Several years ago, at another ESSD conference, I pointed out that the enumeration of economic costs of substance use is logically flawed and induces highly misleading conclusions. Today I focus on another popular statistic, the number of individuals who died prematurely due to an exposure, like substance use.

Methods: Enumerations of premature deaths are largely built on observational data, on more or less plausible assumptions, and on simple mathematical calculations. Organizing randomized controlled trials (RCT), as a gold standard, to demonstrate that a certain detrimental exposure induces premature death in humans is of course not feasible due to ethical and pragmatical limitations. Therefore, almost all considerations in this field are based on observational data. This paper is neither concerned with the trustworthiness of the existing empirical data basis nor with inherent basic assumptions but focuses exclusively on the logical structure of basic calculation and their interpretation.

Results: Even if we had a perfect data situation, that is if a perfect randomized controlled trial (RCT) could be conducted to evaluate the effects of harmful exposure on humans – a trial running until all the included individuals have died –, it would be logical impossible to determine the percentage of exposed individuals who until within a longer term perspective died earlier than they would otherwise have died (**indirect fatalities**). To be understood correctly: to claim that assessing the number of indirect deaths in the longer run is logically impossible, does not mean that it is impossible to quantify the number of **direct fatalities**; i.e. individuals dying immediately or shortly after an exposure. Direct fatalities can be assessed quite reliably provided the causal relationship between exposure and death is solidly established and if there is a reliable assessment procedure implemented to document these cases precisely (e.g. deaths caused by drug overdose in Austria). To claim, that estimating the number of indirect fatalities due to a detrimental exposure is logical impossible, may sound surprising for many recipients, since media permanently confront us with such statistics presented by renowned scientists and popularized by international organizations, like WHO, the World Bank, etc.

More specifically, if such an RCT could be performed, we could perfectly calculate the average number of years of life lost (YLL) per individual caused by exposure, but we could not possibly determine the number or the percentage of individuals who died earlier than they would otherwise have died. But since RCTs are not available and since research in this field depends primarily on observational data, statistics on YLL due to a specific exposure need to be analysed critically as well. When using observational data we are confronted with uncontrolled confounders, problematic measurement issues and problems to determine the direction of causal relationships – but this latter problem is not a focus of my presentation.

Conclusions: All popular scientific statistics presented to demand certain policy measures need to be systematically scrutinized even if renowned experts ubiquitously present them as dogmas of common sense and if questioning these statistics is perceived as heresy. Serious scientific research should mean to critically scrutinise all assumptions and conclusions even if results seem to be established beyond doubt. Science can only advance if heretics routinely question all conclusions in order to identify weak spots that were overlooked.

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22. Digital prevention in different cultural contexts – the case of DAPY project in Turkey and Poland

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Keywords: cannabis, prevention, online prevention, stigmatization, normalization



Abstract

Background: Cannabis use undergoes a dynamic redefinition under selected legal frameworks globally. It is also the subject of cultural meanings negotiations stretched between the modernized liberal narratives and more traditional ones that can be described as conservative. Many prevention programmes face the dilemma between delivering abstinence objectives or more nuanced, harm reductionist aims. With contradictory narratives about cannabis, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide universal prevention and to balance between the different types of audiences and targets.

Methods: This paper is grounded in comparative data from Turkey and Poland, two different cannabis culture contexts as regards especially stigmatization of users and the cannabis use normalization. A follow-up study was conducted among the Turkish (N=21) and Polish (N=12) youth participants of a pilot prevention programme 'DAPY', developed by an international group of professionals in the form of an online workshop and video campaign. The participants' reactions and imagined constructions of drug use and drug users were recorded in qualitative interviews (Turkey) and open ended online questionnaires (Poland), as well as the relevance of the intervention to participants' life experiences and their attitudes towards the imagined or actual drug users.

Results: The participants of the programme who had little to no direct or indirect experience with cannabis found the programme irrelevant to them, but were expressing explicit and negative views of cannabis use and its users, deeming them problematic and denying them agency. Whereas those participants from Poland with some experiences with substance use were able to connect to the nuanced presentation of harms (short term consequences) of substance use and evaluate the risks of substance use beyond a moral judgment.

Conclusions: As the digital interventions are subject to the 'context collapse' and resonate with different audiences, these findings contribute to the ongoing discussion of the subcultural character of cannabis use and indicate that it must be taken into account when designing universal prevention programmes. The audiences across the spectrum of drug conservative cultures tend to stigmatize users and cannabis use, and cementing their stereotypes about drug use might in turn further contribute to the distinction (symbolic boundaries) between cannabis culture and the general public and essentially make such prevention unproductive.

Funding sources: The 'DAPY' - 'Drug Abuse Prevention for Youth' is a Strategic Partnerships for Youth Erasmus+ project 2019-3-TR01-KA205-079609, but the study itself is not funded externally.

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Biography: Michał Wanke is a sociologist based at the University of Opole and working in the fields of digital identities (PhD from Jagiellonian University in 2017) and cannabis users. He conducted three national studies funded by Polish National Bureau of Drug Prevention. He was recently involved in Strategic Partnership Erasmus+ project on drug prevention and has been co-editing a special issue of *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy* journal on Cannabis Cultures and Cannabis Markets in Global Perspective. He is also a UO leader of Diversity & Migration Lab in the FORTHEM Alliance of European Universities.

23. Update: Cannabis use and coronavirus– results of a second short online survey during the second/third wave in Germany

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Non-presenting authors: Gerrit Kamphausen¹

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Keywords: cannabis, covid-19, pandemic, patterns of use,



Abstract

Objectives: To gain insights into the situation of regular cannabis users during the corona crisis, with regard to patterns of use, market development and risk behaviour, in connection with individual situations.

Methods: As an extended follow-up to a first survey on the issue between April and May 2020, we put another short mainly quantitative questionnaire online between end-January and end-March 2021, directed to people who use illegally procured or grown cannabis at least occasionally. The results were evaluated using standard statistical procedures and a systematic review of answers to the open questions. With 3455 questionnaires, we reached three times as many respondents as in the first wave.

Results: Respondents were 91% male; the average age was at 27.8 years. The sample is relatively evenly distributed across federal states and urban/rural regions. Around eight out of ten used cannabis at least weekly, 47% daily. For all phases of the pandemic, considerably more respondents claimed to have increased than decreased their cannabis use; particularly a shift from weekly to daily use could be observed. As reasons for increases in use, respondents primarily mentioned enjoying more leisure time, stress relief and boredom. 40% stated that cannabis availability has declined, regardless of region and city size. Most of these respondents could compensate for this shortage by stockpiling cannabis when available or looking for additional dealers.

Conclusions: As in the first survey, at least for this sample of people who predominantly use cannabis frequently, there is an overall tendency towards increased use during the crisis, out of 'positive' (pleasure-related) as well as 'negative' (e.g. compensatory) motives. Still, a significant part observed shortages in supply, which could mostly be compensated. The hypothesis of regional differences in terms of market structures could not be confirmed. Digital modes of drug procurement still play a minor role for this population.

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Biography: Bernd Wersse, Ph.D., senior researcher at the Centre for Drug Research, Goethe University in Frankfurt, since 2002. Numerous social scientific drug-related research projects, e.g. on local drug monitoring, new psychoactive substances (NPS), small-scale drug dealing, cannabis cultivation, open drug scenes, drug use and Covid-19 etc. Co-editor of the German Alternative Report on Drugs and Addiction, board member of the ESSD, "International Journal of Drug Policy" and "Drugs and Alcohol Today", editor of "Kriminologisches Journal" and speaker of the German drug policy network "Schildower Kreis".

24. Ethnographic Drugs Research – Ethical and Moral Challenges of Conducting Observations on Security at UK Music Festivals through an Active-Membership-Role

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Keywords: Ethnography, Participant Observation, Policing, Festivals, Harm Reduction.

Abstract

Description of the Presentation: A 15 minute presentation providing an outline of my PhD topic and methodology, demonstrating my resilience as a researcher by discussing the challenges of designing and conducting an ethnographic study on social gatherings during a pandemic.

Background: Ethnographic studies are a naturalistic form of social enquiry. By allowing the researcher to become immersed in the field, ethnographic research designs have the ability to collect rich and meaningful data by observing the behaviour of participants in their natural environment. Despite the merits, ethnographic studies create various ethical, moral and practical dilemmas for drugs researchers. This presentation is based upon an ethnographic study of the private policing of UK music festivals, and provides a reflexive methodological account of the challenges experienced during the research design and data collection process.

Methods: Through an active-membership-role by occupying a unpaid researcher role as private security at four UK music festivals, the purpose of the observational stage of this study is to observe and analyse the policies and practices of private police as they unfold. The study aims to contribute to existing knowledge regarding contemporary crime and drug issues, develop theories and share guidance of best practice to reduce harm in recreational spaces through effective event management.

Results: This presentation discusses the challenges and triumphs of collecting data through participant observation. It provides an account of the implications of unveiling and overcoming a broad range of ethical, practical and moral issues throughout the research design and data collection process as an active member of a security team working at festivals. It also discusses the complexity of maintaining the integrity of the research findings, whilst simultaneously minimising the risk of danger, distress and deception.

Conclusion: To conclude, this presentation provides advice on satisfying ethics committees, building resilience as a drugs researcher and collecting safe and ethical data through ethnographic methods.

Funding sources: University of Manchester

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Biography: A 3rd year PhD criminology student at the University of Manchester exploring harm reduction initiatives at UK music festivals, with a particular focus on private security and policing strategies. With an interest in drug use and drug policy, I strive to produce a thesis that contributes to existing knowledge regarding contemporary crime and drug issues, and develops a theoretical foundation for increasing safety at UK music festivals through effective event management.

25. From 'Down with this Sort of Thing' to Petrol Bombs: How the 2010 Head Shop Moral Panic Influenced the World's First Blanket Ban on New Psychoactive Substances

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Keywords: New psychoactive substances, head shops, moral panic, folk devil, Ireland



Abstract

Background: In 2010, Ireland passed the world's first blanket ban on new psychoactive substance, the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act (2010). This paper traces the historical processes culminating in the Act.

Methods: All local and national Irish media sources published between January 2000 and December 2010 were systematically reviewed. After filtering, 338 articles met the inclusion criteria and were analysed. The date of each article was recorded to identify the frequency of mentions across 2007 and 2010, as a quantitative indication of public interest. A qualitative analysis was then conducted to identify key themes relevant to the process culminating in the moral panic.

Results: The review found that head shops were largely tolerated when they sold cannabis paraphernalia (2000-2008), possibly indicating the normalisation of cannabis in Ireland. Some mild condemnatory language emerged between 2008 and 2009 when head shops began selling some new psychoactive substances. A moral panic emerged in 2010, driven and managed by a range of moral entrepreneurs and, involving both peaceful and very violent protests. Unlike traditional moral panics, young people were not demonised as the threat (or folk devil) but rather as under threat from a new distribution model (head shops) and new drugs (NPS).

Conclusions: Irish drug policy has historically been relatively conservative, as such NPS's were always going to be prohibited. It is, however, possible that if a moral panic had not emerged then the legislation would have been somewhat less stringent, but still prohibitionist.

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Biography: Dr. James Windle is Lecturer in Criminology and Director of the BA Criminology Programme at University College Cork. He was previously Senior Lecturer of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of East London. His research interests include illicit drug markets, drug policy, street gangs, organized crime and the history of prohibition. He is author of *Suppressing Illicit Opium Production: Successful Intervention in Asia and the Middle East* (Bloomsburg, 2016) and, co-editor of *Historical Perspectives on Organized Crime and Terrorism* (Routledge, 2018) and *Giving Voice to Diversity in Criminological Research: 'Nothing about Us without Us'* (Policy, 2021).

26. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Male Strength Athletes Who use Non-Prescribed Anabolic-Androgenic Steroids

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Keywords: COVID-19, strength athletes, anabolic-androgenic steroids, mental health, exercise

Abstract

Background: One sub-population potentially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic are strength athletes who use anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS). We examined links between disruption in AAS use and training due to the pandemic and mental health outcomes in this population, hypothesising: (a) the pandemic would be linked with reduced training and AAS use; and (b) athletes perceiving greater impact on their training and AAS use would report increases in detrimental mental health outcomes.

Methods: Male strength athletes using AAS ($N = 237$) from 42 countries completed an online questionnaire in May 2020. A sub-sample ($N = 90$) from 20 countries participated again 4 months later. The questionnaire assessed pre-pandemic and current AAS use and training, alongside several mental health outcomes.

Results: At Time 1, most participants perceived an impact of the pandemic on AAS use (91.1%) and/or training (57.8%). Dependent t -tests demonstrated significant reductions in training frequency ($t = 7.78$; $p < 0.001$) and AAS dose ($t = 6.44$; $p < 0.001$) compared to pre-pandemic. Logistic regression showed the impact of the pandemic on training was a significant positive predictor of excessive body checking ($B = 0.35$) and mood swings ($B = 0.26$), and AAS dose was a significant positive predictor of anxiety ($B = 0.67$), insomnia ($B = 0.52$), and mood swings ($B = 0.37$). At Time 2, fewer participants perceived an impact of the pandemic on AAS use (29.9%) and/or training (66.7%) than at Time 1. Training frequency ($t = 3.02$; $p < 0.01$) and AAS dose ($t = 2.11$; $p < 0.05$) were suppressed in comparison to pre-pandemic. However, AAS dose had increased compared to Time 1 ($t = 2.11$; $p < 0.05$). Logistic regression showed the impact of the pandemic on training/AAS use did not significantly predict any mental health outcomes. However, AAS dose was a significant negative predictor of depressive thoughts ($B = -0.83$) and mood swings ($B = -2.65$).

Conclusions: Our findings showed impact of the pandemic on training and AAS use, reflected in reduced training frequency and AAS dose. However, whilst we detected some short-term consequential effects on mental health, these did not appear to be long-lasting.

Funding sources: Economic Social Research Council (ES/P000711/1)

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Biography: N. Zoob Carter has a keen interest in performance enhancing substances, he has focused previous dissertation topics on the use of ergogenic dietary supplements (BSc), the motivations, practices and harms associated with AAS (MSc), and a protocol to assess these through an intensive longitudinal design (MA). Barnaby is presently conducting a PhD at the University of Birmingham, exploring the psychosocial factors that influence the development of dependence amongst those who use anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS). His main research interests include AAS dependence, harms associated with image and performance enhancing drugs, harm reduction, body and muscle dysmorphia, and motivations for IPED use amongst strength athletes.