

ILLCIT DRUG USE AMONG CZECH AND EUROPEAN ADOLESCENTS

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Objectives: This study aims to describe the trends in drug use in the Czech Republic and other European countries, and to discuss the contextual background of addictive behaviour of young people. Method: The results presented in this study are based on data from the European School Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs carried out in 1995 and 1999. Subjects are sixteen-year-old students of the participating countries. Results: Cannabis was the most frequently used illicit substance among European adolescents. Lifetime prevalence was 12% in 1995 and 16% in 1999. The respective figures for the Czech Republic were 22% and 35%. As far as drugs other than cannabis are concerned, the European figures were 4% and 6% and the Czech ones were 4% and 9% respectively. By the end of the 1990s, there markedly increased the use of the so-called dance and/or recreational drugs (the MDMA and the LSD). Analyses of the context of drug use indicated that prior regular smoking of cigarettes and drinking of alcohol led to an increase of the value of relative risk of use of marijuana as well as other drugs. As regards psychosocial variables, higher scores on scales for depression and anomie were found in adolescents with a history of drug use. Conclusions: The response of the society to growing health and social problems connected with drug abuse lies partly in establishment and further development of a network of specialised facilities. The importance of paediatricians in early detection and early intervention will increase in the near future.

