

# **How to treat drug using youngsters: the under treated vulnerable population**

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Ljubljana, 12 - 14 December 2011.**

# Drug use among youngsters in Europe

- The research shows increasing trends in drug use among youngsters and the lowering age of drug initiation .
- Although the number of youth who use drugs is increasing, it seems that relatively few seek professional help.
- Such results suggest that either young people do not yet need specialist treatment or young people in EU do not have access to services designed for them and adjusted to their needs.

[1]

# Drug use among youngsters in Macedonia

- According to the ESPAD results from 2009 the use of cannabis is 5,5% in total.
- The total number of male students who had experience with cannabis is 7,3% while total number of female students who had experience with cannabis is 5,3%.
- The number of students who take ecstasy is 3,2% .
- Experience with amphetamines is 1,7% in total

# The use of other illicit drugs are below one percent:

- LSD 0,8%;
- Crack 0,7%;
- Cocaine 0,9%;
- Heroin 0,8%;
- Magic mushrooms 1,2%;
- GBH 0,6%;
- anabolic steroids 0,9%;
- drugs by injecting 0,9%) .
- **Male students use drugs more than female students.**
- **The first experience with drugs is usually at the age of 14 and 15.**[\[2\]](#)
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[\[2\]](#) ESPAD Report 2008: Republic of Macedonia

# Drug use among youngsters in Macedonia and capital Skopje



It is estimated that there is 1000-2000 “kids on the street” in Macedonia.

- They are most at risk vulnerable group.
- The total number of kids from 0-18 years old, “on the street” in capital Skopje is 508.
- Gender distribution of this kids is almost equal (267 males and 241 female)
- From 267 males- 24 are drug users witch are 12 to 16 years old.
- From 241 females- 8 are glue users witch are 7-12 years old. [3]

# Kids “in social risk ” in 2 other cities in Macedonia

- In two cities in R. Macedonia, Prilep and Bitol 102 (51+51) kids are identified as kids “in social risk ” in 2009 . [\[3\]](#)



# Age, gender and national distribution of the kids “ in social risk ”

Table 1. Gender, national and age distribution of the kids at risk in Prilep [\[3\]](#)

Age in years	Number of children	Male	Fimale	Roma	Macedonian
4	5	2	3	4	1
5	1	/	1	1	/
6	10	7	3	9	1
7	5	1	4	4	1
8	3	1	2	3	/
9	7	2	5	6	1
10	5	2	3	4	1
11	8	4	1	8	/
12	3	2	4	3	/
13	3	/	3	3	/
14	1	1	/	1	/

# Drug use among youngsters from Roma populations in capital Skopje

The research carried out by HOPS at the beginning of 2011 for Roma population in the capital city Skopje has shown that practice of using opioids between Roma populations has the tendency to grow, and the lower age threshold is very low.

# Drug use among youngsters from Roma populations in capital Skopje



- Children as early as eight years age, and even earlier, use marihuana and or heroin.
- The most frequently use psychoactive substance among Roma people in Skopje is heroin and most frequent way of using heroin and methadone is by injecting.

[4] Vanja Dimitrievski. Improving drug using Roma's right to access to social and health services. Healthy Options Project Skopje, April 2011:12-31

# Age of first use

There is example of two year old child with the habit of inhaling glue.(5 siblings drug users + father in MMT)

Drug using children usually start with evaporators (glue, benzene) and marihuana, but there are children whose first experience with drugs is with heroin. [4]



[4] Vanja Dimitrievski. Improving drug using Roma's right to access to social and health services. Healthy Options Project Skopje, April 2011:12-31

# Out-come of the situations in Europe

- The data from the Overview of the treatment system in 22 Pompidou Group countries in Europe shows that services for treatment of young people are not as developed as other services. [5]

[5] Richard Muscat and members of the Pompidou Group treatment platform. Treatment systems overview. Council of Europe, October 2010:18

# Out-come of the situations in Southeast Europe

In countries of Southeast Europe in general treatment services for young people are still insufficient in all countries in the region:

- treatment of young drug users are organized in Serbia in capital and in big cities, but there are no organized services for drug users under 16;
- there are no specific treatment services available for young addicts in Macedonia;
- there are no hospital units specialized for the treatment of addicts under 18 years of age in Montenegro. [6].

# Treatment

- Treatment has to be specific and adapted to youngster's needs.
- Detoxification has to be residential or out-patient and has to be followed by long term residential or out- patient treatment for rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Opioid substitution has to be included in treatment of some youngsters opioid users but there is age limitation( 15 years old).
- Other pharmacotherapy as
  - antidepressants,
  - mood stabilizers can be useful for co-morbid disorders.
- Behavior therapy, family therapy and education are very important components in treatment of young drug users.

# Treatment of drug using youngsters in Macedonia

# Psychiatric clinic- department for youngsters

- 16 year old- boy- Roma population
- Live with parents
- Substance: glue and evaporates
- Age on onset 9-10
- First hospitalization 2008, then again in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011
- Symptoms: impulsive, aggressive, glue use, involved in criminal.
- Treatment: Risperidon a 3mg, Diazepam a 5 mgr 3x1.
- Hospitalization - about 2 weeks.
- Outcomes: relapses.

# Pediatric clinic

- 12 year old injecting heroin user
- Hepatosplenomegalija
- Acute abdomen
- Oseomielitis
- Duration of treatment at Pediatric Clinic  
2,5 mounts
- Th. for addiction: symptomatic

# Centre for prevention and treatment of drug use and addiction

- 4 kids from Ranka Milanovic- educational and correctional facilities in capital Skopje
- 10-12 years old
- Substance: evaporates
- Psychosocial support
- Outcome: relapses

# Limitations and barriers for treatment of youngsters with problematic drug use come from:

- Limited access to certain services based on age,
- lack of specific and controlled studies for the treatment of youngsters,
- lack of registered medicines.
- There is the clear need for medications which are effective in adult addicts to be studied also in young people.[1]

# Limitations and barriers for treatment of youngsters

- Very few systematic scientific studies have focused on the drug treatment on adolescent and young adults (13-18 years old) with substance use problems (Minozzi S, Amato L, Davoli M. Detoxification treatments for opiate dependent adolescents. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2009)

Detoxification:

-Buprenorfin

Buprenorfin-naloxon

-Clonidin

Maintenance

-Buprenorfin

# Limitations and barriers for treatment of youngsters

- lack of in/out patient specific services for youngster,
- lack of therapeutic community and residential care for youngsters

# Limitations and barriers for treatment of youngsters

- lack of knowledge and educated staff,
- lack of guidelines for treatment of youngsters

This led to unmotivated staff to work with this vulnerable group and lack of cooperation between responsible agencies.

# NIMBY phenomenon

The NIMBY phenomenon (not in my backyard) is often seen in cooperation between the different agencies.

# Outcome!!!

- Limited access to services designed for youngsters with problematic drug use and adjusted to their needs limited possibilities for treatment and increase drug demand and drug use.

# What we are doing for this situation in Macedonia?

- Protocol for treatment of youngsters
- Red cross and City Skopje project for **5 kids** problematic drug users???
- May be this will be beginning and this will brake barriers.

# What should be done!

- Education of medical students
- Education of doctors on specialization on psychiatry
- Education of medical staff , social worker and psychologies et cetera.
- Braking barriers for treatment of youngsters based on age
- Studding also in young people medications witch are effective in adult addicts
- Registration of medicines for treatment of problematic drug use youngsters.
- Establishing specific services for needs of the youngster, not for needs of the ideology and moralistic views.

Thank you for attention!

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