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Outcome monitoring study on members of abstainer clubs in Poland

Summary

Evaluation study (outcome monitoring of rehabilitation) was conducted on a national sample of 329 active members of the abstainer's clubs. Clinical – type interview method has been used. The average period in between the first surveying and the control was 14 months. For controls 77% of tests were direct interviews, the following 15% were interviews with somebody close to the club member, 8% of the sample were not available or refused to cooperate. The sample consisted of 95% alcohol dependent persons. The remaining 5% were co – alcoholics and club personnel.

Study results show, that clubs create an environment which successfully maintains sobriety; the percentage of person with yearly or longer abstinence has grown around 8% in the period from the first evaluation and in the control study was 73,4% .

Some factors of the club programme related to abstinence were identified. The crucial role of the Alcoholic Anonymous programme for remission of alcohol dependence has been confirmed. There were both the current participation at the AA, as well as accepting the opinion, that an alcoholic is not able to return to controlled drinking. Thus abstinence remains the aim most required when rehabilitating persons dependent on alcohol.

One of the factors, which presumably prevents relapses seems to be abstinence or not abusing alcohol by the marriage partner of the alcoholic. When the relation is confirmed in future studies, club programmes should also be directed towards sobriety of family members.

It has been found, that amongst the active club members health problems are common, which could indicate the occurrence of chronic withdrawal syndrome. Around 18% of the sample can be named „chronic fallers”. Due to this, it is of importance to improve and expand club programmes, aimed at planning the prevention of relapses.