

Social perception of factors impeding chances for natural recovery from addiction – a cross-cultural qualitative perspective

Abstract – So far, the individual aspect of natural recovery from addiction – that is change without professional intervention or self-help groups – has been

the focus of research in this area. However, individual self-change processes are also influenced by macro-societal conditions and social perception of addiction such as access to addictive substances and addiction stereotyping in the general population.

First results from the international SINR study (Societal Images of Natural Recovery) based on a rapid ethnographic assessment approach including brief interviews with 15 key persons each from the cities of Frankfurt (Germany), Warsaw (Poland), Bern (Switzerland) and Stockholm (Sweden) will be presented.

The most often mentioned barriers to self-change were social ones. In particular lack of social capital (such as family and friends support, work, home and stable social life). SINR respondents believe that changes both on societal and on the individual level are important to promote self-change by increasing the “recovery capital” of addicted people.

Key words: social perception, dependence, natural recovery