

Przyjmowanie leków psychoaktywnych a używanie innych substancji odurzających przez młodzież

Prescription drugs and illicit drugs use by adolescents

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Abstract – Introduction. Prescription drugs (like pain relievers and tranquillizers), after alcohol and cannabis are the psychoactive substances most frequently used by adolescents. However, only limited number of studies was designed to explore this problem.

Presented article aims at exploring causes, patterns and consequences of non-medical use of prescription drugs by teenagers.

Method. Data from 96 adolescents (13–19 years old, from 40 settings in Poland) who at least several times in the past year used prescription drugs were analyzed. Data was collected in individual interviews conducted by drug specialists and reported in a structured form.

Three groups of respondents were distinguished those who: (1) used prescription drugs as a main drug, (2) were in the same phase of medicines and illicit drug(s) use, (3) used prescription drugs “additionally” to illicit drug(s).

Results. Benzodiazepines dominated among drugs explicitly named by respondents. Adolescents took drugs from family members, frequently without their consent, from friends or

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physicians. They also bought drugs on black market. In some cases, antidepressants were prescribed to adolescents addicted to illicit drugs. Various reasons of prescribed drugs use given by adolescents may be divided into two categories: (a) to deal with problems, emotions, disorders, (b) to have more fun. Negative consequences of prescription drugs use consisted of cognitive impairment, loss of self-control and risk of overdose, especially when taken together with alcohol.

In adolescents' perception prescription drugs are less dangerous than illicit drugs.

Conclusion. Prescription drugs abuse is a serious social problem deserving more concern from researchers and prevention specialists.

Key words: adolescents, prescription drugs, abuse, poly-drug use