

## **Barriers to accessing treatment for women with alcohol dependence**

**Petra Ondráčková, bachelor's thesis**

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Women's alcoholism has generally greater negative impact on women's health, their family and children and therefore it is less tolerated by society and alcohol dependent women are more condemned than men. Women's drinking is negatively perceived by the lay as well as the specialized public thanks to many stereotypes making dependent women's situation worse. Many women stay anonymous because they are afraid to seek specialized help. During treatment from alcohol dependence it is necessary - especially for women - to work with barriers stopping effective treatment.

**Objective:** Main goal of this research was to find out barriers to accessing treatment for women with alcohol dependence. Partial goal of this thesis was an effort to point out to stigmatization of female population using addictive substances in comparison with the male one, which is definitely one of the main reasons why women less often have courage for stepping out from anonymity and using offered services.

**Methodology:** Questionnaire-based research was conducted among patients undergoing treatment from November 2014 to March 2015 at toxic-rehabilitative ward of Psychiatric Hospital Kroměříž where eighty female clients participating in the research were treated from alcohol dependence. All the clients were in treatment during the research. Questionnaires were handled in conformity with preserving anonymity of patients' answers and in conformity with ethical rules of the facility. Evaluation of questionnaire-based study was done using application MS Excel where the data was inserted into and in which the data was assessed afterwards.

**Results:** Five basic factors have been identified representing barriers to starting treatment and barriers during its provision. Here they are in descending order of frequency of answers: 1) Fear of unknown - wide spectrum of fears coming out from practical motives and also from less concrete reasons. 2) Fear of isolation from family - a barrier of family relations - unwillingness or impossibility to break free from their family, social or existential background and to interrupt or loosen functioning relations and relationships. 3) Feeling shame, failure - often resulting from low self-confidence of these women as well as from negative reactions of the public towards addicted women. 4) Fear of condemnation by community - a barrier which

is a consequence of stronger social pressure, stigmatization and condemnation towards women. 5) Responsibility for child care - pregnancy or child care is one of the main obstacles which prevents women from using various types of services for drug users, or starting usage of services itself.

**Conclusion:** The research has brought interesting findings and clarified the most common barriers to accessing treatment for women with alcohol dependence. By defining these barriers it will be possible to minimize them in the future and consequently to use particular services better. The findings could also help the public and community to have a better view of and attitude to these women. Furthermore it could be contributive to particular programmes, dealing with this topic, which should be more distinguished in terms of gender specifics and offer complex services reflecting specific needs of women and develop measures to remove barriers to accessing treatment and consecutive services.