

Abstract:

Background: At the point, when injecting still seems to be the most common use among problem drug users and there has been no change in the long term, despite the long tradition of harm reduction services in the Czech Republic, it is important to examine the context of this issue and try to understand it more closely, and therefore understanding the phenomenon of needle fixation.

Aims: The paper seeks to address whether the risky behaviour level of the needle-fixated drug users differs from those who are not needle-fixated. The second aim is to examine a possible connection between the injecting users psychopathological characteristics and the phenomenon of needle fixation. The third intention of the work is to find out whether and possibly how the level of risky behaviour differs among needle-fixated drug users in the context of their psychopathological characteristics.

Methods: The chosen method of data collection was a battery of questionnaires: IN-COME questionnaire, BBV-TRAQ, SCL-90 and NEFPRO. The battery of the questionnaire was administered with the participation of the researcher. In addition to descriptive statistical methods, the Mann-Whitney test (4 tests), the Chi-square test (11 tests) and the Spearman correlation coefficient were chosen as methods for testing based on research questions. The research sample consisted of 60 participants.

Results and conclusion: There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the risk behaviour level. Psychopathological characteristics appear in the group of needle-fixated users. The following are prevalent to the greatest extent: Hostility (16 participants; 69.6 %), Paranoid ideation (15 participants; 65.2 %), then the dimensions of Obsession - Compulsion (14 participants; 60.9 %) and Depression (13 participants; 56.5 %). The overall rate of distress above the limit of psychopathology is present in 52.2 % (12 participants). There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in any of the tested dimensions of the SCL-90. It can be stated that the mentioned characteristics do not differ in compared groups. The needle-fixated ones, the dimensions of somatization, interpersonal sensitivity, and additional items did not show a correlation between given dimension and the overall level of risk behaviour, in either positive or negative directions. In contrast, the Phobic anxiety and Psychoticism dimensions showed a weak positive correlation between the dimension and the overall level of risky behaviour. For the Obsession, Depression, and Anxiety dimensions, even a moderate degree of positive correlation was proved. At the same time, the results show the overall degree of distress also moderately positively correlates with the overall level of risky behaviour. Based on the results, I conclude that in terms of harm reduction interventions, it is not necessary to distinguish needle-fixated users from other injecting drug users.

Keywords: needle fixation – psychopathological characteristics - risk behaviour – injecting drug users - harm reduction