

# **SOCIAL - MEDICAL APPROACH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION**

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**Summary:** Drug addiction is a significant medical and social problem. It deeply affects the physical, emotional and social well-being of dependent individuals and their families.

Bulgarian society has been attracted more and more by problems related to the abuse of narcotic drugs in recent years. There is a huge epidemic of abuse of a wide range of narcotic substances in the history of Bulgaria, which covers a significant part of the young generation.

This leads to a serious increase in the percentage of people abusing drugs, both in the general population of young people and in particular among students. The collision with narcotic substances at an age when the person is still unformed leads to the rapid development of severe dependence and early social disorientation as well as risky sexual behaviors.

The goal we have set is to support healthcare reform in the area of drug abuse and its negative health and social consequences for the young generation in Bulgaria.

This targeted intervention in the real public health risk is mainly focused on the prevention for limiting the problems related to the abuse of narcotic substances.

Preventive activities are the most important because it is obviously better to make an effort to prevent a health problem than to heal and restrict it.

In the context of above mentioned, we focus on the following key areas of intervention and approaches:

1. Prevention of drug abuse among young people in Bulgaria - formation and promotion of a healthy lifestyle free of narcotic substances.

2. Rehabilitation activities and programs that support the efforts of the young drug abuser to return fully to the society to which he/she belongs.

3. Reducing the health and social harm caused to society and the individual by the abuse of narcotic substances.

4. Information and infrastructure providing – development of an institutional sustainable network in the field of prevention as well as research on the problems of drug abuse.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the implementation of such a broad - based and science - based approach will ensure the achievement of the target and will lead to concrete results related and focused on limiting the further spread of drug abuse among young people in Bulgaria.

**Key words:** social - medical approaches, prevention, drug addiction

The current view of the dangers of drugs and the implementation of legislative, administrative and social countermeasures has not accidentally become a key element for discussion at the meeting of the highest level held at the end of September in the structures of the UN - New York.

The complexity and versatility of the problem, as well as its relevance and significance, outline the conceptual framework of preventive messages that have a synergistic effect in reducing the use and abuse of narcotic substances.

It is clear that drug addicts are a priority medical-social problem. They deeply affect the physical, emotional and social well-being of dependent

individuals and their families. The number of psychoactive substance abusers is rising steadily. The age limit for initial use is reduced.

There is an unprecedented epidemic of abuse of a wide range of narcotic substances in the history of Bulgaria, which covers a large part of the younger generation. According to the National Center for Addictions, at present almost all the spectrum of illicit drugs is available in our country. This leads to a serious increase in the percentage of drug abusers.

The dominated drug is marijuana - 24.0% of students in the Secondary Schools in Sofia have at least once tried cannabis. This is 3 times more than in 2005 (9.2%).

The most danger narcotic substance is heroin. It has caused more than 90% of cases of seeking treatment in specialized units in recent years.

The early onset of abuse of this serious drug is especially dangerous. The average age of first heroin use dropping from 21.4 to 18.8 years over the past 10 years. The worry is that the increased percentage of hepatitis C virus carriers leads to the development of an AIDS epidemic as well as progressive somatic injuries and the need for comprehensive health care for these people.

Prevention is therefore the most important and cost-effective method for reducing the abuse of psychoactive substances.

The prophylaxis of drug addicts is dealt within a classical framework - primary, secondary and tertiary.

The primary prophylaxis goal is non-admission or reducing the frequency of addiction, key aspects characterizing the removal or reduction of risk and increasing the protective factors.

Secondary prophylaxis is related to early detection and appropriate treatment for reducing the long-term and secondary effects of abuse of psychoactive substances.

Tertiary prophylaxis aims at preventing or slowing the development of disability. It includes various forms of rehabilitation and social adaptation.

The success of prophylaxis is invariably linked to the outpatient system by general practitioners, which plays an important role in improving medical and other care for drug addicts. Their education and training in prevention, early detection of abuse, and interventions with the individual and family will contribute to improving the quality and expanding the reach of health services to the people in need.

The goal we have set is to support healthcare reform in the area of drug abuse and its adverse health and social consequences for the younger generation in Bulgaria.

This targeted intervention in the real public health risk is mainly positioned in the priority areas, which we have identified, within the framework of prevention and their effective implementation.

It is better to make an effort to prevent a health problem than to cure and restrict it.

In the context of the above mentioned, we place a special emphasis on the following key areas of intervention and approaches:

1. Prevention of drug abuse among young people in Bulgaria - formation and promotion of a healthy lifestyle free of narcotic substances.

2. Rehabilitation activities and programs that support the efforts of the young drug abuser to return fully to the society to which he/she belongs.

3. Reducing the health and social damage caused to the society and the individual by the abuse of narcotic substances.

4. Information and Infrastructure Provision - Development of a Sustainably Functioning Institutional Network in the Field of Prevention as well as research Activities on the problems related to drug abuse.

Modern strategies for the implementation of appropriate preventive measures using multi-component approaches based on training on the personality and social skills of drug abusers and on the other with the following main principles:

1. Improving the development and implementation of a balanced and active drug-social policy in the field of drugs.

2. Establishing strategic coordination of activities between state, non-governmental institutions and civil society.

3. Improving information exchange based on situation analysis and needs assessment and creating public intolerance to drug addiction.

4. Implementation of health and education policies at central, regional and local level with clearly allocated responsibilities, rights and obligations.

The effective implementation of such a philosophy of complementary principles and intertwined approaches reveals the integral nature of the problem and is becoming a reliable tool in the fight against drug addiction. It is clear that it can not be solved by fragmentary, one-sided or temporary prophylactic measures, but must be effectively attacked in a complex way through multi-functional interventions within broad cross-sectoral co-operation.

Finally, we would like to point out that logical reasoning for such a broad-based and science-based approach will ensure the achievement of the stated objective and lead to concrete results linked and focused on limiting the further spread of drug abuse among young people in Bulgaria.

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