

Social-Cultural Influences and Personality Disorders Favoring Drug Consumption

Oana Chicoș

Dunărea de Jos University of Galați
Strada Domnească 47, Galați, Romania
Phone: 0336 130 108
oana_koh@yahoo.com

Domenico Perri

S. Giuseppe Moscati Hospital
Viale Antonio Gramsci, 81031 Aversa CE, Italy
Phone: +39 081 500 1111

Liliana Capriș

Elisabeta Doamna Psychiatric Hospital, Galați, Romania
lilianacapris@yahoo.com

Andra Irina Bulgaru Iliescu

Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy
Strada Universității 16, Iași 700115, Romania
Phone: 0232 301 600
andra_irina_ai@yahoo.com

Kantor Cristina

Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy
Strada Universității 16, Iași 700115, Romania
Phone: 0232 301 600
cristina.kantor@umfiasi.ro

Abstract

Due to the fact that crime is a social phenomenon, we consider necessary to analyze it as an individual action committed by a real person in an actual circumstance. We mention that crime is a human action, determined by certain psychological elements, necessities, reasons, purposes. In Romania, the evolution of the crime phenomenon is a consequence of the impact of severe socio-economic issues, characteristic of the transition period, as well as of the authority crisis transited by the competent state institutions. The defective legislation and the overburdening of the criminal justice system, associated with the lack of staff and logistics, have limited the effect of preventive and repressive measures. Therefore, people who consume substances submitted for national inspection are called drug addicts or drug abusers. According to the World Health Organization, narcomania is “the state of constant or chronic intoxication, harmful for the individual and for society, caused by the repeated consumption of a certain drug (natural or artificial) – *it is characterized by the following* – an irresistible need to continue consuming it and acquiring it by all means, a tendency to increase its dosage and a psychical, sometimes physical addiction for the effects of the drug”. Drugs of all types have been considered “magic” pills the molecular structure of which is well known by chemists, physicians and pharmacists. In literature they are also called “millenary fragile molecules”, which from ancient times were “glorified”, but in fact they do not have supernatural powers, but deceive people, being in fact a “two-faced coin”. The first face is the one which creates appeal and the second is the one which creates addiction, making us change our behavior and avoid our family and lose our friends. Thus we can state that one of the highest challenges of humanity is represented by drug consumption. The multiple environmental changes and the set of social, economic, and psychological changes are aspects which negatively influence people.

Conclusions: As a general conclusion, we can state that presently, illicit drug trafficking and consumption is the most successful business. The illicit drug market is considered the most “dynamic”

crime market. Regarding the facts previously mentioned, we want to show that the citizens of the European Union spend over 24 billion lei a year on drugs.

Keywords: Social Phenomenon; Personality Disorders; Socio-Cultural Influence; Crime; Intoxicating State.

1. Introduction

Drug abuse has a particular impact on the consumer, his/her family, the community he/she belongs to and society in general. Therefore, the illegal use of drugs is directly dependant on the increase in crime and health problems (affecting the nervous, circulatory, respiratory, reproductive system etc.). “The illicit manufacturing, distribution and consumption of drugs, with billions in business profit, contribute to the corruption setting and even to the destabilizing of governments; this traffic implies not only the breach of laws and conventions, but also many criminal activities, tax evasions, illegal fund transfers, breaches of law regarding import and export, crimes, terrorism. Narcotics are often used as currency in purchasing weapons and the drug dealer networks get to have power and control over certain parts of the world” (Abraham, Baconi, & Bălălu, 2008) (our translation).

Acknowledging the spread and danger of drug consumption in Europe “is also reflected by the fact that the European Union is the main international donor which supports the activity of the United Nations Organization Office for fighting against drugs and crime” (European Observer for Drugs and Toxicomania, Annual Report, 2007).

As also mentioned in the abstract, people who consume substances submitted for national inspection are called drug addicts or drug abusers. Therefore, coming back to the aspects which are related to drug consumers, according to the World Health Organization, narcomania is “the state of constant or chronic intoxication, harmful for the individual and for society, caused by the repeated consumption of a certain drug (natural or artificial) – *it is characterized by the following* – an irresistible need to continue consuming it and acquiring it by all means, a tendency to increase its dosage and a psychical, sometimes physical addiction for the effects of the drug” (Annual Report of the World Health Organization, 1957).

In terms of the facts mentioned above, people who consume substances submitted to national inspection are included “in a vast majority, among people with personality disorders. Personality disorders are the result of an immature, insufficient or unbalanced personality development or of certain elements of it, characterized by a distorted way of perceiving reality, of thinking and relating to the world” (Holdevici, 1997).

In general, these cases reflect “personality disorders if the personality features are inflexible and unable to adapt, with consequences on the social functioning and occupational performance as well as on the subjective physical state, in terms of personality disorders. They are considered individual entities different from the classic psychiatric syndromes, among the most important for the phenomenon of illicit drug consumption being: the borderline personality, the antisocial personality (psychopathic or sociopathic), the cyclothymia personality, the depressive personality etc.” (Holdevici, 1997).

The need for a complex study in this field is high even more so as presently, due to the existing economic situation in our country, some of the moral and legal standards have suspended their operation, contributing to a reluctant quivering of the young people’s behavior between extremely conflicting educational and normative references.

The experience of nongovernmental and governmental organizations with the help of their information, education, assistance, guidance and counseling programs and by actually involving in the prevention and intervention for solving certain cases in which children are the victims of different forms of neglect in the family and society and the fact that many minors surrender to drug consumption and crimes, many of them ending up in reform centers and penitentiaries for minors and young people following their crimes, justifies once again the importance of the social delinquency phenomenon.

M. Golu considers that “the individual from a group suffers, in terms of the internal psychical setting and external behavioral manifestation, the moderation, guiding influence of the controlling

entirety of the group” (Golu, 2000). The quoted author mentions a series of premises of group integration:

- “These are part of the genetic filiation categories (kindred relations) or physical phenomena such as:
- necessities, internal needs of the individual (such as the need for social acknowledgement and appreciation – which directs the individual to the need for value or rise or the opposite, the need to be submissive, obedient),
- psychical mechanisms (*imitation* – mechanism by which the individual imitates behavior means perceived by another individual, *emotional resonance (consonance)* or *compromise and conciliation* – as mechanisms by which discrepancies and animosities are toned down and similarities and proximities are highlighted),
- personality features, such as sociability”.

In the development period, when the personality is in a full structuring and organizing process and especially at puberty and adolescence, young people are highly exposed and present increased vulnerability. Due to common actions performed by the main special instances with the role of socializing (family, school, work group, other educational aspects), most teenagers conform to the requirements of the group manifesting according to social values and standards. However, there are teenagers who move away from the desirable conduct patterns, adopting deflection, nonconformist behaviors (whose number is considered to have increased in the last years).

According to certain psychologists (Răşcanu & Zivari, 2002), the prevention of illicit drug consumption and juvenile delinquency should be practiced in the following ways:

- primarily (for all citizens);
- secondarily (minors who consume drugs and/or occasional delinquents);
- tertiary (minors with persistent addictive and delinquent behavior).

2. Social-Cultural and Legal Implications of Drug Consumption

Besides the special features of each type of “particular-pathological personality which is characterized by the specific style of interpersonal-social relation by behavior and expressivity in general, in most cases there can be also identified a set of characteristics which indicate precisely the vulnerability of the subject, interpreted as imbalanced development, noting that the list below does not have sufficient objective evidence, lacking *operational definitions* and quantity evaluation means for the meaning of *good* or *sufficient*, acceptable” (Cohen, 1986).

These personality features which indicate the person’s vulnerability are:

- “Not performing and the presence of a sufficient psychical autonomy (with regard to independence associated with good intercommunication, mutual identification, interpersonal collaboration);
- self-identity and also self-esteem in relation to the opening and dialogue towards other people and which are imbalanced;
- reduced tolerance to frustration in terms of subjective living and reactivity;
- insufficient spontaneity and intentionality in terms of the proximate climate towards others, with difficulties in relating to others;
- reduced ability in solving practical issues and in the attempt to face inevitable stressful life circumstances;
- reduced ability for self-controlling the impulses and action plans, such as perseverance and finalization;
- reduced ability to relax, acquire life satisfaction, to ability to be happy;
- imbalanced moral consciousness in the cultural and ideological given context” (Gheorghe & Giorgescu, 2011).

The progress recorded in the field of biological and psychological research from the middle of the last century have determined most researchers to focus on the aspects which contribute to the formation and development of the human being, transforming from its biological to its social stage:

- heredity;
- environment;
- education.

The difference between these researchers represents the acknowledging or highlighting of a certain aspect or another.

Education is the decisional factor of the psycho-individual development of a person (Gheorghe & Giorgescu, 2011). It systemizes and organizes the environmental influences. It has a social function, being the intermediate between man and environmental conditions.

Through education, the child acquires standards, values, and patterns which are afterwards manifested in personal options in his/her behavior. The formation and development of the human personality is thus a process oriented, organized and acknowledged through education. In this way, E. Surdu shows that: “Education tracks down the hereditary dispositions, differentiates, alters them, urges their functioning, consolidates the power, making them qualities”. Moreover, “the unorganized environmental influences are directed by education, rendered to man in academic form in order to make them lasting and constant” (Gheorghe & Giorgescu, 2011).

It is rightfully claimed that one of the defining elements of modern society is change. However, the new millennium we have entered has inherited many social, economic and political issues which, although highly marking the last half of the 20th century, are far from finding solutions. Among these issues we mention: international terrorism, racism, **drug trafficking and consumption**, the increase in poverty, illiterate and unemployed people, etc.

If we were to compare this to the general population, in terms of delinquent people, there were recorded high levels of drug consumption and especially problematic drug consumption. We underline the fact that the relation between drug consumption and the actions related to crime is not at all linear and universal. Not all backslider delinquents are involved in drug consumption and not all people who consume drugs commit crimes. “A specific distribution of aspects and conditions makes delinquents and drug consumers follow a series of directions which may lead (or not) to the connection between **drugs** and **crime**. It’s important to distinguish between the causal connections between crime and drugs, which refer to a generic influence on the lifestyle and circumstantial connections, which refer to specific circumstances in which a crime was committed. The need to reduce the level of crime related to drugs is an important objective in Europe. Still, there are many meanings of the term *crime related to drugs* among the different subjects and scientific streams” (Downes, 1966).

In most cases, when we discuss about personality disorders, when “personality features are inflexible and unable to adapt, with consequences on the social functioning and the occupational performance as well as on the subjective physical state, in terms of personality disorders. They are considered individual entities different from the classic psychiatric syndromes, among the most important for the phenomenon of illicit drug consumption being: the borderline personality, the antisocial personality (psychopathic or sociopathic), the cyclothymia personality, the depressive personality etc.” (Downes, 1966).

If the definition of crime related to drugs may be considered a reductionist endeavor and cannot cover the complexity of this phenomenon, we must mention the most frequent meanings in which it has been and is analyzed, as follows:

Crime in the drug system. Breaking the law which limits the use of drugs generates, of course, crime. This category of crime may include: consumption of illicit substances, possession, growing, producing, import and trafficking, but also crime related to the drug system, such as producing drug follow-ups, money-laundering or driving vehicles under the influence of drugs (Baciu & Radulescu, 2002).

The research performed concluded that this data and information regarding the first three categories of crimes are rarely monitored. There is a series of regional or local studies which try to explain these phenomena, but the data acquired is almost impossible to extrapolate. In the same time, we underline the fact that on Romanian territory these types of data lack completely.

An attempt to longitudinally analyze the dynamics of the criminal reasons instrumented by the courts between 2001 and 2009 highlights a constant increase of the percentages of the main indicators, with a tendency to relatively stabilize in the last three years.

Internationally, the treatment for drug consumption applied to consumers in terms of the criminal sanctioning was introduced gradually. In the last decades, in most modern societies, according to many humanist paradigms from the law and from the criminal justice system as well as with many psychosocial patterns and medical patterns for treating addictions are based on international, European and state regulations.

Therefore, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, art. 36.1 let. (b) provides the following: “if these crimes were committed by people who abusively use narcotic drugs, instead of convicting them or ruling against them a criminal sanction or as a supplementary punishment to the conviction or to the criminal sanction, the parties may subject the people to treatment, educational measures for curing, readapting and social reintegration”.

In the same context, the UNGASS statement provides the following: “Member states should develop within the criminal justice system assistance skills for people who abusively use narcotic drugs through educational services, treatment and rehabilitation. In this general context, the close cooperation between the criminal justice system, the health and social system is required and must be encouraged” (UNODC, 2019).

3. Social Deflection, Misbehavior and Delinquency

A series of theories consider the social issues to be the direct consequence of the social development involved by the change and development processes. Deflection occurs following social disorganization, certain institutional structures lose their functionality, social control decreases and the *anomy* state becomes predominant. Deflection becomes thus a public issue which involves political decisions and not only therapy procedures of control organizations.

Therefore, deflection is a widely used term in social psychology, in sociology and criminology and it generally means straying or deviating from the social standards and values.

In terms of misbehavior, M. Cusson (Cusson, 1997) divides this behavior in eight categories, namely:

1. Crime and offences including: murders, theft, rape, juvenile delinquency;
2. Suicide;
3. Drug consumption with disorganized implications of psychosocial type;
4. Deflective sexual conducts include: prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography;
5. Religious deflections which through fanatic characters encourage religious cults, heresies, witchcrafts;
6. Mental illnesses have also been analyzed in terms of social misconduct;
7. Political extremism;
8. Physical handicaps.

In the same time, certain theories also claim the fact that social issues represent an immediate effect of normative conflicts between different social groups and organizational obstructions to accede to status, power and/or wealth. Due to the fact that certain social groups cannot acquire by legal means what they want, in order to achieve their purpose, they use illegal means which come in conflict with the social conduct standards.

A general feature of the *personal history of young delinquents* is the fact that “in the crucial moments of the creation of the self-identity occurred circumstances which negatively oriented the socialization and structuring of the personality (disorganized families incapable of meeting the

educational function or hostile family environments, school abandoning, adhering to delinquent subcultures, etc.). Because the teenager personality is in the process of formation, it also has weak control mechanisms; therefore most behaviors are often aggressive, demonstrative, based on a weak tolerance to frustration. In this context, the punitive measures may be perceived as having unfair or exaggerated features and launch violent reactions” (Reckless & Smith, 1932).

Moreover, it is important to mention that “*the social reintegration process of minor offenders*” is doomed to failure despite the efforts to alter the law, to improve the conditions for detaining or recovery in terms of education, if the social (institutional) assistance network which should collect them from the streets does not exist. In most cases, the role of the assistance network cannot be interpreted only by the minor’s family, because one of the reasons for juvenile delinquency is exactly the lack of involvement of the family in educating and monitoring the evolution of the minor, in some cases the negative behavior patterns offered by the family members is decisive for the further evolution of the minor in terms of crime. The only institution which provides assistance after the minor’s release from the penitentiary is the Probation Service, but this type of assistance is made only at the request of the minor by concluding a form for assistance and counseling and the mentioned institution has limited capacities, without being able to monitor and inspect on one hand the efforts of the minor and on the other hand of the state institutions in order to integrate the minor in society.

In the issue of juvenile delinquency, it is very important that the penitentiary does not only take the role of separating the delinquent minors from the rest of the society and location which performs the psycho-educational recovery of the minors, but must also actively get involved in the activities for preventing this phenomenon.

After placing a minor in the penitentiary, the damage has already been done and it is highly unlikely that the minor will become a positive element of society following detention, regardless if he/she is placed in reform centers, penitentiaries for minors and young people or for grown-ups. Detention represents most of the times the minor’s exposure to negative life patterns, his/her direct contact with a corrupt environment and mostly to physical and psychical traumas which will mark him/her for the rest of his/her life.

With regard to the facts mentioned above, we consider advisable to remark the fact that although society sanctions and convicts illegal drug consumers, it is tolerant with regard to tobacco and alcohol (Ciubara et. al., 2015; Ciubara et. al., 2018) consumption, not considering that young people today do not distinguish between tobacco, alcohol and light illegal drug consumption.

Toxicomania is reflected in cancer which suppresses not only the body of the drug consumer, but also/especially his/her mind by severely disorganizing the human personality (Banciu et. al., 1985).

Moreover, we conclude that deflection cannot be interpreted as a phenomenon or behavior detached from the social background.

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