

Pupils' Opinions and Experiences with Drug Addiction and Tobacco Addiction

Abstract

The contribution is presenting the results of research realized with a sample of 744 respondents from the Banska Bystrica region. It is possible to deduce from the obtained answers that cigarette smoking – even despite anti-smoking education – is still attractive and popular. This is proved for example by 38% of pupils aged 10–11 who have already tried smoking as well as 25% of pupils who repeatedly smoked. Out of the whole sample of respondents, up to 65% of them tried smoking and 56.5% smoked again. Concurrently with the raising age of pupils there increases also the number of those who repeated smoking, so that in the category of 17–18 years of age it reaches as many as 71.5%. The numbers of pupils smoking on a daily basis are alarming (13–14 years of age 69.8%, 17–18 years of age 63%), and they are higher than those reported by other authors. The most frequent reason for first cigarette smoking was curiosity, around 75%. Pupils in most cases judge that sports can be a proper tool against smoking. Only 15.4% of them answered negatively. A relatively low percentage of respondents think that a sportsman must not smoke (55.6%); we assumed that there would be a larger number of them.

Key words: drug addiction, smoking, physical education and sports, prevention

Introduction

In professional and scientific publications we can find a sufficient number of literary genres monitoring recent situation of the use of legal as well as illegal drugs by pupils and students in both our and international schools. We can mention for instance works by the authors: L. Končeková (2001); L. Nagyová (1996); O. Oros-

ová (2004); J. Hroncová (1996); M. Valihorová (1997); M. Pétiová (1998); J. Přerovský (1995); N. Perkovič, I. Lovrekovič (2003); M.F. Stuck (1985); M. Brynin (1999); J. Hrčka, J. Michal, P. Bartík (2004).

In our contribution we are focusing smoking which, due to its extent and consequences, reached corporate character long ago and it directly touches all people in society (both smokers and nonsmokers, those older and younger ones, men and women, sportsmen as well as those who do not practice sports). Despite the fact that the majority of smokers are aware of the negative or even catastrophic influence of smoking on their health, smoking remains attractive for both women and men. The reasons for it are various. Some say that they turn to a cigarette at a time when they solve complicated stress situations, when they are ill-conditioned, nervous, disappointed, disordered, and the like. O. Orosová (2004) also mentions that the results of numerous investigations bring knowledge on the meaning of the relation between smoking and extroversion, neuroticism, impulsivity and stronger anti-social tendencies. For regular smokers, unlike sporadic smokers, smoking is more important in reducing tension as well as gaining positive stimulation.

T. Kollárik and V. Bajčík (1998) think that a significant group (mainly heavy smokers) is made up by persons who are not able to properly adapt to the conditions and situations, they judge them and respond to them inconveniently. According to smokers' expressions, a cigarette has something in itself that objectively helps in complicated situations. If so, how to explain the meaning of a cigarette and of smoking in friendly situations (such as following lunch), when there is no need to remove tension, or problems?

We may deduce out of the investigation results that a more important role in the phase of the beginnings and experimenting with smoking is played by social phenomena (family, friends), while in the phase of smoking regularity and permanence emotional conditions, constitutional-genetic factors and dispositions are more important.

The intention of the study

The intention of our contribution was to find out the opinions of pupils in various age categories as to smoking as well as to sports as a proper tool to be used in smoking prevention.

The research method

We realized the research at the elementary and secondary schools in the Banska Bystrica region. We administered an inquiry to 744 pupils and students.

212 pupils aged 10–11, 224 aged 13–14 and 308 aged 17–18 took part in the research.

The research was implemented as part of the Faculty research task: GÚ no. 5/2003 “Sport activity as a form of specific primary drug addiction prevention of youth.” The investigation was jointly done by: doc. PaedDr. Jiří Michal, PhD., prof. PhDr. Jozef Hrčka, DrSc., doc. PaedDr. Pavol Bartík, PhD., PaedDr. Robert Rozim, PhD., doc. Mgr. Naďa Novotná, PhD., PaedDr. Rastislav Kollár, PhD. from the Department of Physical Education, Pedagogic Faculty MBU in Banská Bystrica as well as by some colleagues from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Croatia.

The research results

Table 1: Tobacco cigarette smoking

Have you tried cigarette smoking?					If so, have you repeated smoking several times?				
Age category	Yes		No		Age category	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%
10–11y.(=212)	81	38.2	131	61.8	10–11y. (=140)	35	25.0	105	75.0
13–14y. (n=224)	163	72.8	61	27.2	13–14y. (n=187)	111	59.4	76	40.6
17–18y. (n=08)	240	77.9	68	22.1	17–18y. (n=260)	186	71.5	74	28.5
Total(n=744)	484	65	260	35.0	Total(n=587)	332	56.5	255	43.4

Out of the results we may deduce that cigarette smoking – in spite of anti-smoking education – remains attractive and popular. This is proved by, for example, 38% of the pupils aged 10–11, who have tried smoking and by 25% of them who repeated smoking.

If we compare this finding with the results by L. Nagyová that are more than ten years older (1994), we can state that the percentage of our smokers is high. L. Nagyová (1996) found out that 5.85% of 2nd stage elementary school pupils occasionally smoke while 94.15% have not smoked yet. The difference between her results and ours can appear even more distinctive if we emphasize that the sample of her respondents was made up by slightly older pupils. There also emerges a question whether the difference could have been made also by the shift of time (1994–2003).

Whilst in our sample cigarette smoking was tried by totally 65% of the respondents, according to N. Perkovič and I. Lovrekovič (2003) it was 42.46%. Smoking was repeated in our country by 56.5%, while in Croatia by 51%. A growing ten-

dency of the number of smokers parallel to the rising age of pupils seems to be understandable. However, what is bewildering is the percentage difference between age categories. While from among those 10–11 years of age 25% of the respondents repeated smoking (and they most probably are repeating), from among those 17, 18 years of age it is 71.5%.

T. Kollárik with V. Bajčík (1998) also prove that the age limit of the first contacts with cigarettes continually decreases and they show that there are frequent occurrences of children at the age of 5–7 tasting cigarettes.

O. Orosová (2004) found out among the elementary and secondary school pupils the most numerous group being made up by smokers (up to 38%). Out of it, 27.27% of the pupils come from elementary schools and 43.79% from secondary schools. The biggest growth of the number of smokers was found among 9th graders and the highest number of smokers was found among the students of the Apprentice Training Centres.

Table 2: In case you smoke systematically, then how many times a week?

Frequency	Age category							
	10–11 (n=14)		13–14 (n=39)		17–18 (n=96)		Total (n=149)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
1 time	7	50	5	12.8	9	9.4	21	14.0
2 times	1	7.1	4	10.3	6	6.3	11	7.3
3 times	2	14.3	2	5.1	5	5.2	9	6.0
4 and more times	2	14.3	3	7.7	9	9.4	14	9.3
Daily	2	14.3	25	64.1	67	69.8	94	63.0

It is clear from the table that out of those pupils stating they smoke, those reveling cigarettes once a week, the highest percentage can be found among those youngest ones, up to 50% of them. It may be explained also as a starting stage that changes in due time. When comparing all three age categories we may judge that with rising age, out of this number of “smokers” one part stops smoking while the other increases weekly smoking frequency. This guess-work is also supported for example by the percentage of the pupils smoking on a daily basis: while for those aged 10–11 it is 14.3%, for those aged 13–14 it is already 64.1% and for those aged 17–18 it is up to 69.8%. This does not include the number of cigarettes smoked over the week.

The number of pupils smoking on a daily basis is alarming (63%), and it is higher than what L. Končeková (2001) mentions, according to which 31.2% of the pupils of the Apprentice Training Centres smoke daily – out of it boys almost 40%. On the basis of an investigation in three consecutive grades M. Pétiová (1996) mentions that the number of smokers, not only occasional but regular ones, is growing.

She found out that the majority of occasional smokers can be found at the age from 15 to 17, and the majority of regular smokers belong to the age category 18 to 26. Similarly L. Nagyová (1996) mentions that considering the rising age, the percentage of smoking pupils gradually increases, and she states that among university students there are 19.2% of those regularly smoking and 23.5% of those smoking occasionally.

Table 3: In case you smoke daily, then how many cigarettes a day?

Number of cigarettes a day	Age categories							
	10-11 (n=15)		13-14 (n=34)		17-18 (n=87)		Total (n=136)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
1	3	20	1	2.9	7	8	11	8.0
2	2	13.3	4	11.8	8	9.2	14	10.2
3	7	46.7	3	8.8	16	18.4	26	19.1
4	1	6.7	4	11.8	19	21.8	24	17.6
5 and more	2	13.3	22	64.7	37	42.5	61	44.8

It cannot be logically explained why in the youngest category the highest percentage is reached by pupils who smoke 3 cigarettes daily (46.7%). It is partly satisfying to see a significant decrease of those smokers among them who smoke 5 and more cigarettes a day, but it is a high percentage anyway (13.3%). The highest percentage of the pupils who smoke 5 and more cigarettes a day can be found in the age category 13-14 (64.7%), and it is remarkable that in the top age category this percentage significantly decreases (42.5%). It may be assumed that those more adult are more influenced by rational cognition of the negative influence of smoking on the human being. Nevertheless, it is alarming that 5 and more cigarettes a day are smoked by 44.8% of the respondents. The numbers in the table also point to the percentage growth (except for those aged 10-11) of the daily smoked cigarettes from one to five and more. A similar tendency is shown by the results obtained by N. Perkovič, I. Lovrekovič (2003). According to them even more cigarettes than 5 daily were reported by up to 64.63% of the respondents.

Table 4: Who offered you the first cigarettes?

Who offered	Age categories							
	10-11 (n=81)		13-14 (n=169)		17-18 (n=243)		Total (n=493)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nobody, I took it myself	26	32.1	35	20.7	74	30.5	135	27.3
A friend	38	46.9	114	67.5	147	60.5	299	60.6

Who offered	Age categories							
	10–11 (n=81)		13–14 (n=169)		17–18 (n=243)		Total (n=493)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
One of parents	3	3.7	5	3.0	5	2.1	13	2.6
Different person	14	17.3	15	8.9	17	7.0	46	9.3

Based on the results of current investigations it was to anticipate in our country that the most frequent answer would be “a friend” (60.6%). This answer reached the highest value in all three categories. Similar results among the pupils of Apprentice Training Centres are also mentioned by L. Končeková (2001), namely 53.8%. T. Kollárik, V. Bajčík (1998) emphasize that we cannot omit adherence to certain groups with their norms, where the non-written condition is most frequently to use alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes.

Our co-researchers from Croatia (N. Perkovič, I. Lovrekovič, 2003), however, mention that their most frequent answer was: nobody, I took it myself – up to 42.76%. Nevertheless, the answer “a friend” also got a high percentage (36.82%). In our research it was 27.3%.

Table 5: Is smoking harmful to health?

Answer	Age categories							
	10–11 (n=194)		13–14 (n=220)		17–18 (n=302)		Total (n=716)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Yes	166	85.6	191	86.8	261	86.4	618	86.3
No	6	3.1	2	0.9	2	0.7	10	1.3
Partly	11	5.7	26	11.8	38	12.6	75	10.47
I don't know	11	5.7	1	0.5	1	0.3	13	1.8

86.3% of the respondents is sure smoking has a negative influence on health, whilst in all three age categories this percentage is approximately identical. A similar result was also found by N. Perkovič, I. Lovrekovič (2003), namely 87.11%. This finding is positive, though it does not correspond with the high percentage of smokers among pupils. Perhaps in those percents there are involved also those pupils who smoke but they are sure smoking is harmful to health. What is noteworthy is the remarkable percentage of those thinking that smoking is harmful to health only partly (10.47%). This serves as a suggestion for intensifying educational activities at schools.

It results from the table that the most frequent answer is “curiosity” (74.6%), similarly as by N. Perkovič, I. Lovrekovič (2003) almost consistently 73.68%. The opinions that curiosity is a very strong motive for the first contact with a cigarette

Table 6: What has led you to smoke the first cigarette?

Reason	Age categories					
	10–11 (n=80)		13–14 (n=167)		17–18 (n=240)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Curiosity	58	72.5	128	76.6	179	74.6
I wanted to become more adult	5	6.3	3	1.8	15	6.3
Feeling of friendship (with smokers)	7	8.8	8	4.8	7	2.9
Loneliness	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
Stress situation	0	0	10	6.0	23	9.6
An endeavour to reach relaxation	2	2.5	6	3.6	6	2.5
Another reason	8	10.0	12	7.2	9	3.8

are quite frequent. A relatively high percentage is mentioned at the “stress situation” (9.6%); this might be in accordance with the opinions by T. Kollárik and V. Bajčík (1998): “The reasons or grounds for smoking are several, and smokers often mention that they turned to the first cigarette in a situation of seeking a problem solution, in a complicated burdening situation.” A satisfying effect of smoking is also mentioned as a dominant reason for smoking by S. Bónová (1984) namely by 57.4% of studying teenagers of the Zvolen district. Surprisingly low is the percentage of those stating they “wanted to be more adult” (only 6.3%), because this is theoretically considered as the most frequent reason.

L. Končeková (2001) mentions that some girls reported previous experimenting with cigarettes to their current use of smoking on the basis of boredom, for fun, foppishness, and also because their friends smoke (“my friends smoke therefore I must smoke as well”, “all group members smoke – it attracts me though it does not taste good to me”).

Table 7: Can sports be the proper tool against smoking?

Answer	Age categories							
	10–11 (n=198)		13–14 (n=222)		17–18 (n=306)		Total (n=726)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	78	39.4	92	41.4	106	34.6	276	38.0
No	37	18.7	29	13.1	46	15.0	112	15.4
Partly	26	13.1	73	32.9	137	44.8	236	32.5
I don't know	57	28.8	28	12.6	17	5.6	102	14.0

The answers to this question confirm that in most cases the pupils judge that sports can be a proper tool against smoking as well as that it can be only partly effective. A relatively low percentage of positive answers are surprising and it gives

information on a low knowledge of young people about the significant role of sports in anti-drug prevention. Far better answers were reported by N. Perkovič and I. Lovrekovič (2003), where agreement with the positive role of sports was expressed by 72% of the respondents, while disapproval only by 9%. Also J. Slepíčková et al. (1995) mentions it was repeatedly proved among secondary school students that sports have a significant impact on a lower occurrence of smoking and alcohol drinking, especially of regular one. The role of sports is emphasized many times throughout a special edition of the periodical "Sydney 2000" (2000, vol. IX, no. 7–8), among others: We need not persuade one another that in a broad anti-drug line also sports and motion can be an effective barrier significantly hindering the way of a young man to drugs... A big chance in this direction comes along to the organizers of school sports, especially by means of a well-worked out system of school sport competition...“ J. Přerovský (1995) also recommends publicly accessible and popular sport activities in promotion of combating drug misuse. Similarly L. Nagyová (1996) recommends creation of new conditions for recreational sports at schools, and making known the activities of the movement "Sports for all" as well as promoting humanistic ideas of Olympic movements. L. Petera (1996) denotes school and extra-school physical education as an effective means of prevention against the use of addictive drugs. M.F. Stuck (1985) verifies that persons not doing sports proved a higher tendency to drug consumption. However, he mentions young people accepting doing sports as a sign of a healthy way of life behaving in many cases in contradiction to this opinion. Interesting results were obtained by M. Zuckerman (1979) when summarizing results of numerous investigations and characterizing drug addiction as a personality deviation.

A low percentage of those pupils in our research who are sure sports can be a proper tool against smoking is a challenge for both teachers of physical or health education and of school directors to start acting.

Table 8: Do you think a good sportsman must not smoke?

Answers	Age category							
	10–11 (n=195)		13–14 (n=218)		17–18 (n=301)		Total (n=714)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	105	53.8	130	59.6	162	53.8	397	55.6
No-I don't think so	45	23.1	38	17.4	76	25.2	159	22.2
I don't know	45	23.1	50	22.9	63	20.9	158	22.1

Also the structure of the pupils' answers to this question cannot be considered satisfactory. It demonstrates insufficient and weak knowledge of health education, or in other words, a confused attitude of a juvenile individual (L. Nagyová, 1996),

and it corresponds with the occurrence of the answers to the preceding question. Almost 45% of the respondents do not think, or do not know that a good sportsman must not smoke. This very fact is also alarming and provoking for pedagogues at all types of schools.

Conclusion

It results from this investigation that smoking of cigarettes is still attractive and popular. The number of pupils who smoke on a daily basis is alarming (13–14 69.8%, 17–18 63%). Most frequently, the respondents were offered the first cigarette by a friend (60.6%), and often they took it themselves (27.3%). Those sure about a negative impact of smoking on health are 86.3% of the respondents, while in all age categories this percentage is approximately identical. It may be assumed that in this percentage there are involved also the pupils who do smoke but they are convinced that cigarettes are harmful. In most cases the pupils think that sports can be a proper tool against smoking (70.5%). A relatively low percentage of the respondents think that a good sportsman must not smoke (55.6%). The percentage of the respondents who do not know that sports can be a proper tool against smoking is decreasing with the rising age, which can be a result of the fact that the older the pupils are the better knowledge on the negative impact of smoking on health they have.

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