
THE FAMILY, THE SCHOOL AND THE GROUP OF ENTOURAG IN DRUG CONSUMPTION AMONGST TEENAGERS

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*Abstract: The article proposes to identify, on the basis of the consultation of the specialty literature, the factors which influence the consumption of drugs amongst teenagers, as well as the sense in which their main dimensions act. The studies performed on teenagers (Rascanu R (2008) *Addiction and Drugs-theoretical and ameliorative clinic aspects*, Bucharest, Publishing House Universitatii, p. 26.) highlighted amongst the internal causes of drug consumption: the curiosity, the temptation in the form of the “forbidden fruit mechanism”; the desire of high sensations; the lack of maturity/responsibility; personal problems, troubles, despair, loneliness, the lack of friends; boredom; the lack of some interesting preoccupations; emo girls /the need to stand out; and the external causes are: the ill-fated influence of the entourage, of the “fishy” group of friends, of the unfavorable family climate, the reduced educational and cultural level; the lack of information or skewed information with regard to drugs; the imitation of film models, from newspapers or magazines. The drug consumption is tightly related to life problems, to the questions and searching of the teenagers and young. The most important social entourages are: the family, the school and the group of entourage(friends, spare time).*

So the drug consumption amongst teenagers represents one of the challenges with which the humanity has to confront, its direct and indirect effects designing it as a worrying phenomenon.

Keywords: drugs, teenagers, risk, family, friends, school, spare time.

The role of the family in drug consumption

In the last decades, in the life of the families, deep changes took place generated by various factors: (unemployment, low incomes, crisis situations provoked by the high number of divorces, etc.) which contributed/can contribute to the growth of the number of persons who find their shelter in drug consumption.

On the one hand, the ordinary functions of the family have changed. More and more tasks are picked up by different social institutions. As a result of the changed social relations, the role of the social sphere has increased, and its tasks have multiplied. On the other hand, the function of protection of the family is diminishing because the parents have less time for children, both of them being engaged in extra familial tasks. Thus the education of the child its formation is not guided in the familial surroundings, instead the school can not assume the family role.

Changes took place in the size, structure and lastingness of the family. In the place of the large families which included many generations, ample kinship relations, the nuclear families have appeared composed of parents and children. Along with the growth of the number of divorces the number of the monoparentale families have also increased in which the place of the mother or father remains unoccupied. The number of marriages has decreased drastically (6/7 marriages at 1000 inhabitants). In the interior of the family the relation between its members is changing. The “modern” life style and the loss of harmony have made the decrease of problem solving in the family. (Georgeta Ghebrea, *Social and Political*

Regime and Private Life (family and family policies in Romania)
<http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/StiintePOL/ralu/10.htm>).

The changes in families are the consequences of the social modifications. Modernization, urbanization, industrialization, education all these contribute to the transformation of the role of the family. The social structure and the traditional way of life have fallen apart, the order of conviviality has changed nowadays the consumer society and the individualist point of view become more powerful. This meant also the change of the order of social values. The modification of the way of life and occupation have broken the cultural and social continuity. (Formoso,D.-Gonzales,N.A.-Aiken,L.S. (2000): *Family conflict and children's internalizing and externalizing behavior: Protective factors*. American Journal of Community Psychology, 28: 175-199).

The primacy of the family as group represents an important link between the individual and society. In the ideal case, the family is intact structurally and functionally: respectively the parents are living together and they are able to provide for their children spiritual, moral and material safety. The family spreads values, example of behavior, spreads lived experiences, fulfills at the same time also social functions. (Fitzpatrick, K. M. (1997): *Fighting among America's youth: A risk and protective factors approach*. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 38: 131-148).

The national and international researches highlight the existence of more strata at the level of parental influence. (Dekovic, M. (1999): *Risk and protective factors in the development of problem behavior during adolescence*. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 28:667-685). In the life of families can exist events which can lead to drug consumption. Evidently, this doesn't mean that in any disbanded family the child will become drug consumer.

Also, the parental monitoring was associated with behavioral problems. If the children feel themselves neglected or ignored the possibility that they imply themselves in risky behavior is amplifying because the monitoring of the behavior is missing. This fact will contribute to the appearance of some behaviors that will generate problems related to drugs. (Blume, A. (2011) *Drugs Consumption and Dependency. Practical Guide of Evaluation, Diagnosis and Treatment*, Iasi, Polirom, p.75-76)

The researches of the familial medium of teenagers have analysed more indicators: *the family structure,deviations in the interior of the family,disharmony in their interior*

The role of friends in drug consumption

People use frequently the concept of friendship, beginning from the relations in groups, to fellows and to best friends. The studies (Pikó B. (2000), Idem, 35: 617-630) show that the number of friends is decreasing in every social category and increases the number of those who haven't got friends at all. In our country the grown ups have few friends that is to say that there are few persons with whom they can discuss the problems of their lives.

Probably the situation is other at the level of teenagers, who even live the moment of detachment of family and attract them to the group of friends. However, the statistical data about friendship don't refer to teenagers too. (Ibidem, 35: 617-630).

Besides the familial influences in the formation of the self at teenagers an important role has got the friends. The role of the parent can't detach from the group of friends because the two are conditioning each other. The parental influence can modify significantly the influence of the group of friends.

It would be necessary a distinct research related to the way in which the so called friend relationships are formed. In my opinion the base of these relations is not always the friendship in many cases can be observed the disposition of association in groups of those who have the same social condition. In other situations the personal notes can become defining criteria. But it happens often that at the beginning of the organization of the group the negative features of the members become dominant criteria of acceptance in the group, which will make that the members of the group will be "defeated" from the beginning.

Certainly the influence of the group of friends it is not negative because the group plays an important role of the teenagers' identity development. C. H. Cooley proposes a theory of interactional style "the mirror self theory" according to which the self of the individual is formed only in interaction with others and these "others" being like some mirrors in which the individual perceives himself. For Cooley and for the other interactionalists it is not important the functioning of the social just the way in which the other social actors build and represent the social reality. Thus it is imposed the idea of constructing the social by the social actors more than that it is about a subjective construction which determines a certain course of evolution of the objective reality. (Ilie Bădescu, Dan Dungaciu, Radu Baltasiu, *The History of Sociology. Contemporary Theories*. Publishing House Eminescu, Bucharest, 1996, p. 103-109).

In this case it is defining the measure in which the problematic behavior represents a modality of strengthening of the group's conformity because the consumption of substances can become an instrument of adaptation. In this case it has to be mentioned that the parental relations generally as well as the influence of the group of friends together define the behavioral direction. Thus the influence of the group of friends becomes a risk factor when the relations with the parents deteriorate.

That's the reason why in one friend group the main form of spending time is marijuana, it is very hard to remain in the group for someone who refuses to consume the substance. In a group the drug attempt, consuming the drug together, can be designed as a form of initiation.. The frequency of marijuana consumption is determined significantly by the internalization of some norms. The attitude of respecting the norms of the group constitutes a principal risk factor. The recent researches have demonstrated that the influence of the group of friends on the consumption of drugs is bigger than the influence of the parents. (Windle, M. (2000): *Parental, Sibling, and Peer Influences on Adolescent Substance Use and Alcohol Problems*. Applied Development Science. Vol. 4. No. 2, 98-110).

In the life of the young it is very dangerous the period of teen-age because this represents a critical point of transformation. At the same time appears the endeavour for autonomy and the necessity for intimacy. In this period of life predominate the processes of individualization which structure the framework of some adequate relations with the group of friends.

If in the stage pre teen-age the opposition is characteristic, the rebellion against parents, that is to say the model of the group is stronger than the parental one, after a time appears a balance in which both types of relations will fulfill their specific role.

This period of life especially the one between 15-17 years is characterised by the desire to try noxious experiences.

An American sociologist Robert K. Merton (1968), who took over from Durkheim the concept of anomie, analyses the deviant behavior starting from the premise that the social balance is due to a general consensus upon a set of values. Two social structures are central in the explanation of deviant manner of life: the culturally defined *goals* and the institutionalized resources for achieving them. Between the two social structures there is not a constant relation, may be societies in which are allowed a multitude of resources for the achieving of the important goals and societies in which the general aspirations are forgotten becoming the central idea of respecting the limited resources made available. Between these two extremes exists a diversity of types of society with a higher or lower balance between the two structures. Thus sometimes discrepancies appear which make place for the *aberrant behavior* defined by Merton as a „symptom of dissociation between the culturally prescribed aspirations and the structured social pathways for the achievement of these aspirations” (Merton, Robert K. (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Enlarged Edition. New York: The Free Press).

The friends in quality of group of reference prescribe the drug consumption as an ideal norm of behavior being able to practise strong pressure in the transmission of drug consuming models. A large part of the teenagers for example under the influence of friends light the first cigarette or consume alcohol for the first time but they also try illicit drugs together with the friends. The researches show that the number of nights spent with friends is in relation with the consumption of substances. (Aseltine, Jr., R. (1995): *A reconsideration of parental and peer influences on adolescent deviance*. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. 36. p. 103-121).

The international researches show that the influence of the group of friends, the pressure of the group even if it doesn't belong to the most powerful risk factors is associated to the consumption of drugs. (Gilvarry, E. (2000): *Substance abuse in young people*. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 41: 55-80).

The role of spare time in drug consumption

In the life of teenagers the activities of their spare time represent the basic element of their way of life. The most important effect of modernization constitutes in the fact that the time granted to work and the spare time have changed. The time spent with studying has increased. Larson and Verma assigned social significance to time. (Larson, R.W., Verma, S. (1999.): *How children and adolescents spend their time across the world: Work, play, and developmental opportunities*. Psychological Bulletin. 125, 701-736). The spare time has its own socializing role. The varieties of activities of spare time contribute to the development of the teenagers' identity. In the last decades new ways of spending the spare time have appeared.

There exist varieties of spending the spare time which have an increased risk effect, respectively activities which have a protective role.(creative activities, religion, intellectual activities).

The researches (Hendry, L., Shucksmith, J., Love, J.G., Glendinning, A. (1993.): *Young people's leisure and lifestyles*, Routledge, London) show that amongst the teenagers who go to disco the weight of those who consume drugs is higher. The drug consumption has recreative orientation it is linked to enjoyment in group. The teenagers who go to pubs, discos, represent the most active part which for the others represent models, especially by the way of life and the manner of spending the spare time. The amphetamine consumption, LSD and ecstasy it is connected to places for dancing.

The studies (Ibid) show that in the last years the number of teenagers who spend their free time with sports has increased. The sport has a protective role in trying substances.

On the basis of the modes of spending the free time by teenagers 4 styles of spending the free time were identified(Ibidem.)

- *Style of spending free time oriented towards consumption and friends*: distraction, visiting moles or commercial centers, discussions, TV viewing, video.
- *Intellectual and artistic style*: cinema, theatre, concerts, reading, discussions
- *Style which seeks experiences, technical*: computer, internet, sport, hobby, music
- *Conservative-traditional style*: housework, participating at religious events, reading

The style of spending free time oriented towards consumption and friends correlates with all the noxious passions while the other 3 have negative relations with the forms of substance consumption.

The structure of the teenagers' spare time is influenced by the social statute of the teen's family. The intellectual style and the one which seeks experiences is characteristic to the educated teens and with a better material situation. The one which is oriented towards friends and the traditional conservative are characteristic to children whose parents have a lower level of education. The style oriented towards friends correlates with negative output at school.

The Espad researches distinguish 3 factors of spare time: *active, in motion*,(distractions, disco, rides) *active, individual*, (reading, sport, hobby), *passive* (they don't read, don't have hobbies, don't participate at distractions, instead they spend a lot of time in front of the computer). (Traian Liteanu, Teodoru Ștefan, Constantin Stoica, *Drug Trafficking. Highlights, Dimensions and Perspectives*, Publishing House ANI, Bucharest, 2005.) All the researches have a common idea according to which those activities of spending the free time which are connected especially to the group of friends encourage the attempt of legal or illicit substances. The activities which need creativity drop the inclination to drug consumption but the searching of sensational can increase the probability of trying drugs.

The research data show that the young junkies don't participate at valuable cultural activities.

The young who consume drugs highlight a weaker relation in the framework of the family identify themselves with the deviant friends and they often participate at unconventional forms of manifestation. (Lopez, Jose Manuel Otero, Lourdes Miron Redondo,

and Angeles Luengo Martin: (1989.): *Influence of family and peer group on the use of drugs by adolescents*. The International Journal of the Addiction. 24: 1065-1082).

The role of school in drug consumption

In the second part of the 20th century as a result of the economical and social development, the developed countries are characterized by the appearance of the society based on science. The knowledge of people increase suddenly and it becomes accepted the idea according to which the assertion on the self and its social utility becomes the science.

The expectations connected to education have changed thus in the place of the diligence for equal opportunities, the achievement of a high output have become important. The sudden transformation of the labor force requires whole life education. The people have to keep pace with the development, to develop their knowledge and capability to keep their workplaces and to assure their statute in society respectively to be able to avoid isolation. Education has got a fundamental role in the social and personal development in the decrease of ignorance.

The relation between teachers has also changed: it has been formed a closer relation becoming “partners” in the educational process. Because the time allowed to each student has decreased the chance to establish a personal relation also decreases. (Delors, J. (1997): *Learning: The Treasure Within- 1996, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*, Osiris).

The school is a social structure whose fundamental function is the regular transmission of culture. Besides the fact that it is socializing for the integration in an organized society, the school probably plays an important role in the sharing of science “of the symbolic capital” in the formation of social strata.

School fulfills 3 functions:

- the transmission of some socially important information
- to form attitudes which help the educational process
- to help the pupil in the preparation for a job

School has got other multiple functions. The school itself has formed over the centuries on the image of society. It plays a decisive role in the process of maturity. Coming out of the familial protector environment by the group of friends the horizons of the young are widening we discover new values, we perceive new morals. Our knowledge becomes deeper by victories and by failures thus is formed the behavior which follows some norms or the one which becomes deviant.

Therefore school is the fundamental structure of formal education. It is the defining factor of late social institutalization land of socialization. It represents defining interactions, relations between students-students, teacher-students. Unfortunately the formal education in this acceptance means just a transmission of ideas because school is unable to replace the talent care, the guarantee equal opportunities, the attention granted to each individual. This is not the mission throughout life but from the modern societies are missing the control of the familial-religious norms or of other norms. In my opinion the experience lived by educators, psychologists in the medium of a family center the one which is different in society from other reasons appears at some lonely teenagers.

Many researches demonstrate that the inadequate relations between teacher-student, student-student the dissatisfaction for school contribute to the formation of deviances.

School (in its framework the teacher too) has a defining function in the student's personal development. First of all this situation was created by the changes in families: the changed life environment of the parents, the growth of tension in family, have put under question mark the practical personality development of the child. To be more precise these changes often generated adverse trends in the children's development. The teacher should have replaced more and more these goals, deficiencies, these negative phenomena.

The young of forthcoming age classmates and other colleagues play an important role generally in the development of the student but especially in the relation between school and teenager. It can be seen that those pupils who succeeded to integrate in the school environment (have friends, are accepted by colleagues, are not excluded) they go with more pleasure to school than those who couldn't identify themselves with the school environment.

The school environment doesn't appear just at the level of student-teacher relation but also in the group relations and maybe these are the most defining in the acquisition of a risky behavior.

Because the teenagers spend a great part of their time at school the suitable school environment (for example an accepting environment in the group, helpful colleagues) and the successful outcome (school results, normal attitude towards the school requirements, low stress) provide the sensation of success and proficiency). (Seiffge-Krenke, I.-Weidemann, S.-Fentner, S.-Aegenheister, N.-Poebblau, M. (2001.): *Coping with school-related stress in healthy and clinically referred adolescents*. European Psychologist, 6/2, p. 123-132).

At school can exist a series of factors which can lead to the attempt of trying substances:

- low school efficiency
- settling-in problems, behavioral difficulties (pupil's failure to get his remove, non-attending the classes, expulsion. (Lorion, L.: (1991.), Idem, 31-45).

The school efficiency is an important factor in the life of teenagers as it regards the spiritual life: induces positive and negative changes. The first school years from a psychological-evolutional point of view are critical periods. The young and his family now are meeting for the first time in an organized environment with the social expectations of the educator respectively with the evaluation of his behavior and output. The expectations cause deep traces in the teenager especially in the first years of school which on the one part can be incentive and on the other part can be regressive. A first problem for example is the absence of mind but the problems connected to writing and reading are also frequent respectively disruptive behavioral problems of personality. The evolution is blocked by low grades, the fear of failure respectively the lack of self confidence.

The experience gained at school plays an important role in the appearance or refusal of drug consumption. Those teenagers who are dissatisfied with school will consume illicit or legal substances with a higher probability. As a result of the weak school results learning difficulties and the failures connected to learning conflictual relations can occur with the school environment and the teenager can turn against the school values. If this process can't

be stopped a circle is formed which will produce the decrease of school efficiency and it will lead to a lower learning motivation. (Schulenberg, J., Bachman, J.G., O Malley, P. M., Johnston, L. D. (1994.): *High school educational success and subsequent substance use: A panel analysis following adolescents into young adulthood. Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 35. 45-62).

While the good school results and the positive attitude towards school, the school becomes a protective factor against the problematic behavior.

An important role has got the *atmosphere at school* respectively the more the school affords greater attention to the the pupils needs the most they will love school. Another important role has got the pupils' attitude towards teachers that is to say the more the pupils see their teachers helpful the more they love school. The school stress follows which is having a negative note: the more the school assignments are tormenting the young the more they will have a negative attitude towards school. A defining role have got the *school efficiency*, respectively the attitude towards classmates.

The researches from our country and from abroad show that 10-15% of the pupils are facing learning problems and this percentage is increasing yearly. The learning problems appear from the secondary school and high school and it is manifesting in the pupil's failure to get his remove. Generally the researches demonstrated that the girls report better in school and have better results. Therefore the problems connected to the report towards school can constitute ominous signs of illicit or legal substances.

The links between school life and the consumption of substances were studied with the indicators of school efficiency and with the absences by missing classes. In both cases it turned out that there exist a significant link between the *school results, the frequency of absences and the consumption of substances*. The school media is better at those pupils who don't consume substances. To this media are approaching those who consume legal substances and the weakest result are registered at those pupils who have consumed illicit substances.

The relation between absences due to missing the classes and the consumption of substances is significant in all countries. (Hibell, B -Andersson, B – Bjarnasson, T. - Ahlström, S. - Balakireva, O. -Kokkevi, A.-Morgan, M.(2004.): *The ESPAD Report. 2003. Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Students in 35 European Countries Stockholm CAN, Council of Europe*).

To the absences from school, missing classes respectively running away from home contribute a series of factors: the negative attitude towards school, settling-in problems, sentimental difficulties, respectively different familial influences.

Another important school problem constitutes the *settling-in difficulties*. A part of the teenagers underestimate some institutional norms. They are those who don't settle-in the school rules, action against them, respectively and withdraw under the influence of them. Through their behavior they are disturbing the teachers and their colleagues. These difficulties of setting-in can be explained by exaggerated control. In the other category enter the behavioral difficulties. The behavioral problems can be different: for example if the pupil disturbs the class with comments, using obscene words, discusses with the desk mate, is disrespectful with the teacher etc.

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