

Preferences for Particular Opioids among Clients of the Ulice Social Work Agency



FRÝBERT, J., ACKRMANNOVÁ, M.

Ulice – Social Work Agency, a civic association, Pilsen, Czech Republic

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BACKGROUND: At the end of 2010 the clients of the Ulice Social Work Agency started to complain about the lack of heroin on the black market in Pilsen. They responded to the situation by proceeding to inject opioids, which we had not come across before. **AIMS:** Our aim was to record how the clients perceive particular opioids and their subjective comparison and to find reasons for their choice or rejection of a particular substance. Clients' experience and perspectives were looked for. **DESIGN AND MEASUREMENTS:** The data was collected by means of qualitative semi-structured interviews and analysed using the clustering method. **PARTICIPANTS:** The study participants were selected according to the basic criterion of experience with all the opioids under scrutiny (heroin, Subutex, Vendal retard, and fentanyl patches). The study sample consisted of 23 clients

of our agency. **RESULTS:** Heroin scored the most points; it ranked first in 10 cases. Fentanyl ended up second, marked by the clients as the best seven times. Vendal retard was the best for three of the clients. Subutex was the last: while three clients classified it as the best, 10 clients rated it as the worst. **CONCLUSIONS:** The decisions were influenced especially by the price, length of effect, intensity of effect, purity of the substance, the safety factor, the number of administrations, and the intensity of withdrawal symptoms. The choice does not necessarily correspond with rational standards and the preference does not necessarily correspond with actual behaviour. The use itself is strongly influenced by the black market and its immediate possibilities (availability of a drug and dealers' offer). The financial means of particular clients are also an important factor.

KEY WORDS: PREFERENCES – OPIOIDS – HEROIN – SUBUTEX – VENDAL RETARD – FENTANYL PATCHES

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Address for correspondence: Jiří Frýbert / jirka@ulice-plzen.com / Ulice – Social Work Agency, a civic association, Úslavská 31, 326 00 Pilsen, Czech Republic