

Basic Characteristics of Substance-addicted Patients' Primary Families in Comparison with a Control Group



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OBJECTIVES: *This retrospective investigation compared the characteristics of the primary families of patients diagnosed with drug or alcohol addiction and the primary families of people who do not suffer from this condition. The research focused on six specific family-related areas: family completeness and material resources, the quality of emotional relationships, parenting styles and methods, CAN syndrome, lifestyle and interest in the child, and the rate of substance addiction among other members of the families under study. **METHODS AND RESULTS:** Quantitative research comparing a group of addicted clients with a group of people without an addiction. The group of addicted clients comprised 101 members and the group of people without an addiction had 56 members. The research was performed by means of a questionnaire investigation. The level of significant difference was 5%. The results confirmed the hypothesis that the primary family has an important influence on the development of a child and the dysfunctioning*

*of the family may be one of the risk factors for the development of substance addiction. The research identified several key areas in which the group of addicted patients and the group of people without an addiction showed dramatic differences and may thus be considered significant. They included: incompleteness of families and the absence of male role models, being raised by the mother only, poorer quality of emotional relationships, higher rates of physical, psychological, and sexual violence in families, a higher rate of occurrence of substance addiction among the next of kin, and the more frequent use of corporal punishment. **DISCUSSION:** The dysfunctioning of the primary family may be one of the risk factors for substance addiction, although there are many other areas that have an impact on this process (such as peer groups, society, genetic factors, lifestyle, the vulnerability and temperament of each personality, the availability of both legal and illegal drugs, and individual protective factors).*

KEY WORDS: SUBSTANCE ADDICTION – PRIMARY FAMILY – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH – QUESTIONNAIRE INVESTIGATION – COMPARISON OF STUDY AND CONTROL GROUPS

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