ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Correlations between Cannabis Use and Students' Sociometric Status in the Class: A Case Study

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BACKGROUND: *The use of drugs is characterised by a significant increase in its incidence around the age of 15, a higher prevalence among students at apprentice training centres in comparison to that observed among secondary vocational and grammar school students, and the incomparably highest proportion of cannabis among other illegal addictive substances. The social factors that affect use include a range of phenomena. The status of individuals in the class, as studied by sociometry, is one of them.* **AIMS:** *The aim of the research is to use the example of a specific class to describe the relationship between the position of a student in the class and their cannabis use.* **DESIGN AND MEASUREMENTS:** *A case study using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods primarily focused on the structure of relationships. Data were collected by means of a cannabis use questionnaire, a sociometric questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview. The data were analysed using statistical and sociometric methods.*

PARTICIPANTS: *Purposive selection; a case study of first-year students (21 in total, 11 boys and 10 girls, mean age 16) at an apprentice training centre.* **RESULTS:** *The lifetime and past-month prevalence rates of cannabis use were 67% and 33 %, respectively. In sociometric terms, central, ordinary, isolated, and rejected types of class members were identified. Statistically significant evidence shows that the degree of experience with the consumption of cannabis positively correlates with the sociometric status of a student in the class. The central and ordinary class members do not perceive cannabis use as a necessary sign of higher status, while the isolated individuals believe that their not using cannabis excludes them from the group.* **CONCLUSIONS:** *While a case study does not allow any generalisation, the sociometric method may be promising for both future research into risk behaviour and preventive work itself.*

KEY WORDS: CANNABIS – SOCIOMETRY – CASE STUDY – APPRENTICE – SOCIOMETRIC STATUS