

# Involvement with Juvenile Justice System as a Motivational Factor for Treatment for Adolescents with Substance Abuse Disorder: Their Parents' Views

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**Abstract:** The paper at hand aims at exploring whether engagement with the penal judicial system can affect drug using adolescents' decision to seek treatment, by studying the relative views and beliefs of their parents. The main research questions are concerned with the parents' beliefs about the effect of the judicial institutions (e.g. police, prosecutors, judges, juvenile probation officers) and the enforcement of reformatory – treatment measures on motivating youths. A Likert-based scale was used as the main data collection tool, as it was considered most suitable with respect to the study's goals, research questions and theoretical grounding. Data were descriptively analysed using the SPSS software, looking into the frequency distributions and the correlation matrices of the variables of interest. Results show that all parents consider the effect of the judicial institutions' involvement on the motivation of the juvenile addicted offenders as very significant. According to the participants' responses, intense policing, the involvement of the juvenile prosecutors and probation officers, the application of a personalized intervention model, the enforcement of reformatory measures and the referral - by the judicial authorities - to a rehabilitation program, can all have a decisive effect on an adolescent's decision to discontinue drug use.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Substance Abuse Disorder, Juvenile Justice System

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## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of substance abuse disorder is a multifaceted social problem, as apart from the harmful effects on the drug users themselves it has serious implications on their surroundings and social environment. There is an interactive relationship between the use of psychoactive substances and the delinquency that creates a multidimensional phenomenon. Many studies document the association of substance use with delinquency, combined with the complexity of adolescence, in order to examine and address the issue. Studies have, also, shown that delinquency and crime often co-occur with mental health problems and substance use in both adolescence and adulthood. In fact, among juvenile and criminal justice populations, rates of co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems are much higher than in the general population [1].

The existence of a significant correlation between

substance abuse and juvenile delinquency has been demonstrated by numerous studies [2]. According to Belenko and Logan [3] 70% of young people undergoing judicial proceedings have used substances at some time, and as many as 78% have recently consumed alcohol or drugs [4]. This evidence is particularly important because of the growing consumption of alcohol and cannabis among adolescence [5, 6].

Identifying the causes that lead an underage to addiction is not limited to recognizing the problem, but creates opportunities of change and integration of young people in social life.

Adolescence is a critical biological, psychological, and social developmental stage involving heightened risk for substance use and associated adverse consequences. This review, synthesizing emerging findings on this complex topic, is intended to inform research and clinical care focused on adolescents. Substance use in adolescence is heterogeneous,

ranging from normative to pathological, and can lead to significant acute and long - term morbidity and mortality [7]

Greece underwent reforms that were influenced by International Conventions and culture, changing the treatment of minor addicts. The problems of substance use are not limited to a specific social minority and the underage is no longer considered a criminal. Significant differences are observed between the adults and adolescents addicts, concerning the limits of criminal responsibility of minors, where it is considered necessary to design and implement changes aimed at each age's characteristics.

The justice system is called up on to address the adult, but mainly the minor addict, as a person in need of treatment. Regulations are enacted that define measures, mainly of a non-institutional nature, avoiding stigma and emphasizing personalized treatment, providing opportunities for education and development.

Supporters in this disposition of the legislator are the institutions of the juvenile justice system that manage criminally the juvenile addict, prescribing measures of a paternalistic nature. This "paternal presence" is the content of paternalism since the parental role is taken over by the state, when the parents have tried to answer the problem of substance abuse disorder without the expected results. The state intervenes, defining the framework of the criminal proceedings, as an external factor, in the decision of the minor substance user for rehabilitation trying to influence their motivation.

There is paucity of research on treatment-related coercion in youth: most research focuses on adult populations and legally mandated treatment. Many youth who present for substance use services report experiencing a sense of coercion, which suggests the potential importance of considering youth-centered strategies for involving youth in treatment planning and the development of treatment goals. Motivational theories suggest that individuals may seek treatment due to external or internal motivation [8].

After all, the latest therapeutic approaches do not consider the existence of motive as an invariable characteristic of the personality, but a dynamic process that can be affected [9]. While interest in understanding the incentives to change among individuals with substance abuse disorders is growing, little is known about incentives among adolescents with substance abuse disorders who are participating in formal services. The most robust predictor of incentives is the severity of negative consequences associated with youth's substance use—the greater the severity, the greater the incentives [10].

The motive as a dynamic factor, that stimulates, determines and directs the individual's behavior towards a goal has always been a subject of discussion and investigation in the field of rehabilitation. The impetus for the present paper was the professional experience with minor addicts and their parents as well as their response to a wide range of influences and interventions.

The main purpose of the research is to investigate, studying the parents' views, whether the involvement with

the criminal justice system motivates the minor addicts to rehabilitate. It was considered appropriate to seek the perceptions of parents, as they experience their child's substance dependence either as victims, with a focus on the negative consequences it causes, or as a dysfunctional system, that contributes to the problem's development and maintenance, or as a framework that helps to solve the problem which affects their perspective on dealing with addiction. Most of the time, the parents are trying to answer to the problem on their own; when they don't have the expected results they hope that their child's involvement with the judicial authorities will be the pressure lever for their rehabilitation. Through the presentation of the research results, the correlation of the social control authorities' influence on the adolescent's decision for change and rehabilitation is attempted.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Goal and Research Questions

The main goal of the research is to investigate, studying the views of parents, whether involvement in the criminal justice system motivates minors to rehabilitate. It was deemed appropriate to request for the parents' perceptions, which are of interest, as they experience the implications of substance abuse disorder and from the literature review it was observed that this is something that has not been explored.

The subject was selected based on personal curiosity and systematic deepening in the topic as a consequence of direct contact with addicted juveniles in the author's workplace. Another reason for choosing to investigate further the subject was the constant discussions of the parents, in the rehabilitation area, regarding their children's motives. The parents' views and expectations from the criminal justice system served as inspiration, making their raw experience an opportunity for research.

More specifically the research questions are the following:

- 1) What are the factors that can motivate the juvenile from getting involved with the criminal justice system?
- 2) What is the police role in motivating the juvenile to quit the drug use?
- 3) What is the role of the Prosecutor, Judge, and Juvenile Probation Officer in the motivation of minors?
- 4) Does the imposition of reform-therapeutic measures motivate the underage to stop the use of substances?

### 2.2. Data Collection Method

The selection of the research tool was made after taking into account the following factors: the aim and the research questions, the validity (that refers to the degree to which a tool measures or describes what it was made to measure or describe), the reliability (which is defined as the degree to which a method produces the same results under constant conditions in more than one case), the accuracy in data collection and the time required to conduct the research [11].

In the current research, the Likert scale questionnaire was used as a tool, which is a scale of evaluation - measurement of views, attitudes or behavior and records not only the general agreement or disagreement with a proposal but also the degree of agreement, since the question is accompanied by "how much" or "to what extent" [12]. Likert scale is the most often used psychometric scale to collect responses from people in a survey. A typical Likert scale survey does not let its respondents simply select from "yes/no"; it provides specific choices that are degrees of "agreeing" or "disagreeing". [13]

On the Likert scale the evaluator has a list of suggestions (affirmative or questions), the number of which usually varies from six to thirty. Suggestions are accompanied by closed-end answers, which are usually given in the form of a scale from 3 to 7 points and indicate a different degree of agreement or satisfaction. The following set of options was used to grade the scale: (a) "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Agree", "Strongly Agree". The participant/evaluator is invited to note the degree of agreement or disagreement with each and every proposal [14].

### 2.3. Research Background

In the initial stage of the research the aspects of the theoretical concept were defined and the next step for the establishment of the Likert scale was to formulate questions that would correspond to these aspects. Many different questions were asked which were formulated to cover each component of the general concept [15].

The final form of the questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part refers to socio-demographic data: gender, nationality, educational level, marital status. The second part lists nineteen proposals referring to the role of the police, the prosecutor, the judge and the juvenile probation officer and their attitude towards juvenile substance users. In addition, there are questions regarding the reformatory, therapeutic measures, imposed by the judicial authorities, as well as their specific characteristics. Participants record the degree to which they agree or disagree with each of the proposals.

The questions were made simple, with clear wording, with affirmative (agree/strongly agree) and negative (disagree/strongly disagree) disposal to the expressed opinion, in order to ensure the validity of the research. The design and conduct of the research followed the principles of ethics where there was adequate information for the purposes of the research, participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were ensured during the collection, recording and presentation of data.

The data analysis was done, with descriptive analysis, through SPSS by studying the frequency distribution of the variables and the correlation between the questions.

The research was conducted in Thessaloniki, in Therapy Centre for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA) which is the only Rehabilitation Program for adolescents in Northern Greece. In order to carry out the research at KETHEA - "Anadysi", the KETHEA Research Department was

contacted, the research plan was presented and a cooperation protocol was signed for its conduct.

### 2.4. Population – Research Sample

Population is the set of data under study. Usually the population under study is too large to be studied in their entirety and would cost a lot of money, time, human resources, etc. Thus, the researcher selects a sample, which is a representative subgroup of the population that has been defined for analysis. In the present research 81 parents of juvenile addicts, who addressed KETHEA-"Anadysi", participated, and their demographic characteristics are listed below:

- 1) Out of 81 samples that participated in the research 34 were male and 47 female.
- 2) Regarding their nationality, 92% is of Greek nationality and 7.4% of other.
- 3) In terms of educational level, the majority of them is high school graduates or with incomplete studies in Institutions of Higher Education, Universities, as well as some graduates of Higher Education Institutions or Universities. The other categories of studies are represented in smaller percentages.
- 4) Finally, according to the data, the vast majority is married or cohabiting, 77.8%, followed by a smaller percentage, 21%, who are divorced and only 1.2% are widowed.

## 3. Results

### *Response frequency distribution*

To read the results, frequency tables were produced where the variables are summarized and described. There was a relative cumulative frequency as the answers "I disagree and I strongly disagree" have a negative connotation in the questionnaire (e.g. police arrest does not help in the motivation of minors) and the questions "I agree and I strongly agree" have a positive connotation. Nevertheless, the five different answer choices show the extreme disagreements - agreements that are discussed in the findings. The research findings are presented by thematic axis, based on the research questions.

### *The Role of the Police:*

The majority of the parents, 74%, believe that police check for drug possession will help their children realize that drug use is a serious problem in their lives. Almost half (51.8%) think that the police arrest will motivate their child, while 35.8% disagree.

53% believe that detention at the police station is a reason for their child to seek help for rehabilitation, as opposed to 34.6% of the sample that disagree. The police report that their child was arrested, for 59.4% of the parents, does not seem enough to distress and remove their child from substance use. Also, in both questions, there is a percentage of about 15% that the sample's view is neutral about these motivators.

### *The Role of the Prosecutor, the Judge and the juvenile*

*Probation Officer:*

According to the research results, the parents consider that the contact with the Prosecutor and the juvenile Probation Officer is crucial for the change in their child's life. Thus 69.1% believe that the guidance of the Prosecutor is critical, for their child to decide discontinuation of the substance use, and 77.7% believe that the guidance of the juvenile Probation Officer offers motives for change.

51.8% of the sample expects that the law enforcement and the imposition of measures by the Judge will influence the decision of minors to interrupt the drug use, while the 29.6% have the opposite opinion and the 18.5% hold a neutral position. 54.3% of the parents seem to agree with the strict verdicts of the Judge or the Prosecutor regarding the adolescent addicts, while 34.6% disagree with this attitude (i.e. verdict strictness).

On the other hand, about half of parents, 40.7%, believe that the Judge or the Prosecutor should be lenient with their child, as opposed to the other half, 44.7%, that disagree with this attitude. In addition, 14.8% answered this question neutrally.

Finally, the vast majority of parents (91.3%) considers that personalized intervention (exploring the personality of each minor, the reasons behind the substance use, the family environment) by the courts, can help the adolescent to get rehab treatment. Of particular interest is the fact that there is no parent expressing extreme dissent.

*Imposition of reform - therapeutic measures:*

The court proceedings, as a reason for the minor to seek treatment for addiction, divides the parents' views as 42% agree and 44.5% disagree. Similarly, there is a percentage of 13.6% who are neutral on this question.

The imposition of leisure management measures, for 81.5% of parents, is a reason that will help their child quit drugs. 8.6% think that it is not helpful, without a strong disagreement, and 9.9% answer neutrally.

About half of parents believe that the specific restrictions (e.g. return home schedule, bans in certain locations) set by the judicial authorities will motivate their addicted child to rehabilitate, 1/3 disagree, while the rest (16.3%) express a neutral opinion.

A significant percentage, 61.6% of parents believe that the minors would stop the drug use if they were given the opportunity to develop professional skills as a measure by the judicial authorities. On the contrary, 14.8% do not share the same opinion and 13.6% express a neutral attitude.

Almost universal is the agreement of the sample, 95%, that measures aimed at education – character formation, would help their children to discontinue using substances, while there is no participant who strongly disagrees.

There is a high degree of agreement in the question regarding the diagnosis and opinion of dependence by a specialized team of doctors, psychologists and social workers. 88.9% of parents believe that specialists' diagnosis helps the underage user to recognize their problem with harmful use, 6.2% disagree, without someone completely disagreeing, and 4.9% answer neutrally.

According to research data, 12.3% believe that the

assignment of custody of the minor to juvenile institutions is a key reason for their child to stop drugs. A higher percentage, 65.4% disagree with this view and 22.2% have a neutral opinion.

91.4% estimate that the juvenile referral, by the judicial authorities, to a Rehabilitation Counseling Program, helps the discontinuation of the substance use. There is also no extreme disagreement.

On the other hand, the referral of the minor to Therapeutic Communities with residential treatment divides the views of the parents as 32.1% disagree, 35.8% agree, and 32.1% express a neutral opinion.

*Multiple Answers Analysis – Relevance between Variables*

The next step after completing the descriptive statistical analysis was to find a correlation between two variables. A crosstab is a table showing the relationship between two or more variables. Cross tabulation allows you to summarize the data in categorical variables and examine it to determine if there are any associations present [16]. The cross-referenced questions were selected based on the research questions and the theoretical framework of Juvenile Criminal law.

*Police Checks – Police Arrest:*

Relating these two variables, it appears that 13.5% believe that police check and arrest will not motivate their child for rehabilitation. On the contrary, 48.15% consider that the arrest/check by the police is a reason for the minor to seek rehabilitation treatment. Also, 16%, although they believe that the police check will help to stop the use, have a diametrically opposed opinion on the arrest.

*Police Arrest – Contact with the Prosecutor:*

43.2% of the sample believes that both the arrest and the contact with the Prosecutor will influence their child in their decision to quit the substances. 12.3% believe that neither can influence the minor in his/her decision. In addition, it is observed that 19.75% of parents estimate that contact with the Prosecutor will motivate their child whereas police arrest will not.

*Police Arrest - Detention at the Police station:*

Relating these variables, it seems that the highest percentage (40.7%) appears to believe that both the arrest and the detention at the police station, act as a catalyst in the decision of the minor to interrupt the substance use. A significant percentage, 27.16%, is observed to support the view that neither can affect the adolescent's decision. The other combinations present very small percentages.

*Trial Process – Law enforcement and imposition of measures by the Judge:*

32.1% of the parents believe that both the above factors contribute to the withdrawal of minor from drug use. The opposite view is held by 27.2%; while 14.8% find the law enforcement by the Judge helpful but not the trial process.

*Law enforcement and imposition of measures by the Judge - Personalized intervention from Judicial Authorities:*

Half of the parents, 50%, believe that both law enforcement and personalized intervention can help their child to get treatment for addiction. 26.3% believe that personalized intervention helps to stop the drug use but not

the law enforcement and the imposition of measures by the Judge. Finally, the 14.3% who expressed a neutral view on law enforcement consider personalized intervention to be helpful in motivating the minor to quit the drug use.

*Contact with Judge - Guidance and monitoring by Juvenile Probation Officer:*

The combination of these factors shows that more than half of the sample, 56.8%, is positive about the role of the Judge and the juvenile Probation Officer in the motivation of minors. In addition, 8.6% of the parents who had a neutral attitude towards the contact with the Judge express a positive opinion about the juvenile Probation Officer, while all the other combinations have zero percentages.

*Personalized intervention by judicial authorities - Measures aimed at educating / formatting character:*

The high percentage of 86.3% of the sample is observed to believe that these two factors help juvenile to stop using substances.

*Imposition of leisure management measures - Professional skills as a measure:*

59.3% consider both the management of free time and professional skills measures that will keep their child away from substance use. 11.1% believe that managing leisure time can help their child as opposed to professional skills.

*Imposition of leisure management measures - Specific limits by judicial authorities:*

40% of parents believe that both measures are equally important in motivating their children. 27.5% believe that the management of free time will help the minor to stop using substances, while the specific limits by the judicial authorities will not.

*Strictness of a Judge or Prosecutor - Law enforcement and imposition of measures by the Judge:*

37% consider both the strict attitude of the Judge or Prosecutor and the imposition of measures to have a decisive influence on their child's decision to discontinue the drug use. In contrast, 22.2% do not agree, stating that these two factors cannot motivate their children.

*Guidance and monitoring by juvenile Probation Officer - Personalized intervention by judicial authorities:*

The present correlation indicates that the above two factors can aid the motivation of minors according to 73.8% of the sample.

*Diagnosis of Specialists – Referral to Rehabilitation Counseling Program:*

A high percentage, 82.7%, of parents considers that these two variables are equally important in recognizing the problem and stopping the substance use.

*Diagnosis of Specialists - Referral to Therapeutic Community (residential treatment):*

30.9% of the sample believes that both the Specialists' diagnosis and the referral to a Therapeutic Community with residential treatment will encourage their child to rehabilitate. A similar percentage, 30.9%, believes that the specialists' diagnosis can motivate the juvenile, however, the referral to a Therapeutic Community cannot.

*Assignment of custody to juvenile Institutions - Referral to*

*Therapeutic Communities:*

26% of the sample think that the above two factors will not help their child to stop using substances. On the other hand, 21% believe that referral to a therapeutic community with residential treatment will keep the minor from using drugs, while they have a diametrically opposed view to the assignment of custody.

## 4. Discussion

Trying to make a general assessment of the participants' responses, it is observed that the factors that can motivate minors to interrupt the drug use are:

*The Role of the Police*

The results of the research show that the police check for drug possession helps minors to realize that substance use is a serious problem in their lives. Substance users typically engage in a range of criminal behaviors to support their habits and/or lifestyles such as drug use, possession of paraphernalia, petty thefts, property crimes, and shoplifting. This criminal behavior feeds into the need for officers to make decisions about arresting an individual [17].

Parents expect intense policing, through checks and prosecution for possession, that will act preventively and repressively the juvenile users. Intensive policing is expected to intervene in changing users' attitudes towards substances and the lifestyle associated with them. The police prosecution raises fears of arrest and conviction for minor substance-use offenses, which may prevent the juvenile from coming in contact with substances and motivate them to join a Therapeutic Program to reduce their involvement with the penal system.

Arrest and detention at the police station appears to be the next couple of factors that significantly motivate the minors, and their combination with the police check reinforces the above perceptions. The disclosure of the act (of arrest) may have a pedagogical effect, to the extent that no other sanction other than the non-state social interventions is necessary [18].

The notification of the minors' detention to their guardians by the police does not seem to be a strong reason for a minor to be troubled and eventually motivated to quit substance use.

*The role of the Prosecutor*

The participants' answers reflect a common attitude according to which the guidance given by the juvenile Prosecutor will have a decisive influence on the adolescent's decision to give up harmful use. In a context of social and economic crisis where institutions are dysfunctional and informal systems of social control (family, school, community, etc.) are unable to respond to their socializing role, recourse to the prosecutor's office is on the rise [19]. The prosecutor's office communicative methodology and the development of strategies for the holistic approach of the minor ensure the motivation of addicts.

The precautionary intervention of the prosecutor, and the abstention from the criminal prosecution of the juvenile, aids to prevent the creation of juvenile phobic syndromes and the development of traumatic experiences created by the Court [20].

A qualitative feature of the prosecutor's attitude concerns the strict decision they have to make towards the adolescent drug user (as a means for the most effective treatment of juvenile delinquents) that parents believe it will motivate their children for rehabilitation.

#### *The role of the Judge*

Interesting perceptions are observed about the role of the Judge, as the parents believe that the strict attitude of the Judge and the imposition of measures may motivate or impose motivations for treatment to the minor substance user.

The social perception of his/her role, which is inspired and possessed by paternalistic motives, creates anticipations by expecting the juvenile Judge to act as the parent surrogate, the one who was inactive or proved insufficient to play the role of the strict-limiting parent [21]. The participants believe that the Judge will impose measures, intervening in an advisory manner, defining the lines that should not be crossed in order to avoid consequences. If the adolescent is unable to protect themselves due to their addiction, the Judge will impose rules, teach the distinction of right and wrong, promoting responsibility, consistency and autonomy through the law enforcement.

#### *The role of the juvenile Probation Officer*

The role of the juvenile Probation Officer was considered crucial for the motivation of addicted adolescents according to the views of the parents. The juvenile Probation Officer is called upon to look after the social care and protection of the minor user, at this critical moment in his life, in a way that moves outside the penal system, being his/her representative. The juvenile Probation Officer can also act as a lever of pressure and a motive for the minor drug user; a means of motive that in its original form is not a direct request for treatment for the adolescent; however, in the course of treatment this motive can be transformed into personal reasons for change and release from substance use [21].

In particular, the contact with the Prosecutor in combination with the monitoring and guidance by the juvenile Probation Officer contributes, according to the research participants, to the discontinuation of drug use and to the change of the adolescents' life. The supervision of minors by the institutions of justice has the meaning of supporting and guiding, monitoring the adolescent's development, identifying their needs, setting goals, motivating them to change life and to readjust to the social context. The attitude of the Prosecutor with the dynamic participation of the juvenile Probation Officers may motivate the minor, avoiding the formal criminal procedure and imposing pedagogical measures, as it is deemed that criminal prosecution does not necessarily deter the juvenile from committing new offenses [18].

#### *Trial Process*

The trial process does not appear to be a commonly accepted motivating factor for minors with substance abuse disorder. The sample's equal division confirms the importance of personalized intervention; as for a portion of adolescents the trial is a process that may affect their attitude and their decision to stop using substances; on the other hand,

due to the trial's accompanying negative effects on their mental mood, it is very likely to stigmatize and provoke strong emotions that will make the situation even more difficult for the minor.

The fact that the legal process divides the views of the parents, but the enforcement of measures prevails over the majority of the sample, encourages the view that abstaining from criminal prosecution and enforcing measures out of court can be more effective.

#### *Personalized Intervention*

The responses reflect a common stance for custom-made intervention by representatives of the criminal justice system. The research data confirm the principle of customized treatment that the imposed sanction should be appropriate primarily to the needs of the juvenile offender and secondarily to their action, and should aim mainly at their education [20]. Actions and attitudes that respond to the needs, peculiarities of age and personality of minors, are a quality factor of great importance for the inspiration of young people.

The investigation of the needs and personality of the minor drug user, the special characteristics of his/her family and social environment at the given time, stimulates expectations for the appropriate rehabilitative treatment, proposing and redefining imposed measures, aimed at rehabilitation and social inclusion.

#### *Reform measures*

Interesting views are observed on the issue of legal consequences for minors, where the views of parents are in line with the basic purpose of juvenile criminal law. They aim, therefore, at the implementation of restorative - remedial practices focused on educating the adolescent.

The leading group of measures is the management of leisure and the professional training, emphasizing on the social and professional inclusion, turning away the minors from the margins of addiction.

There is universal agreement to any extent of measure aimed at educating - shaping the adolescent's character. With such measures, the aggravating factors of addiction are compensated, and the young people are provided with aptitudes, possibilities of quitting drug use and skills for smooth psychosocial development.

These limits to the minors' social conduct as a measure by the judicial authorities, are supported by some participants, but as opposed to the universal agreement on educational measures, leads to the conclusion that minors are motivated by measures aimed at formatting their personality (which is also required in adolescence) and not necessarily by control measures.

#### *Diagnosis from Specialists*

The high rate of parental agreement on consulting the specialists regarding the determination of addiction on psychoactive substances, promotes the need for therapeutic monitoring of the minor drug user and not only criminal treatment.

The diagnosis from experts would help the minors, by giving them information of scientific or technical nature, to

recognize the problem they have with the use of substances, a fact that minors are unable to realize on their own due to their addiction.

#### *Attending a Therapeutic Rehabilitation Program*

Participants recognize that attending rehabilitation Counseling Program will help the adolescent stop using drugs. The Counseling Program includes information, harm reduction, counseling, health care and education services, with the ultimate goal of complete and consistent abstinence from substance use and delinquency. Through these services the teenager can see the negative consequences of drug use and learn to deal with the difficulties without the drug use. In particular, the combination of specialists' diagnosis and attending a rehabilitation counseling program, according to the results, is able to help the minor realize that use is a serious problem in his life.

On the contrary, the referral of the adolescent to a Therapeutic Community or to any other institution with residential treatment is considered by the parents, that it is not enough to encourage the minor to rehabilitate. It seems that the forced admission to a therapeutic community and the cut off from the family environment do not meet the needs of the minor and have dubious effectiveness.

Despite the fact that the role of a Rehabilitation Therapy Program is recognized as decisive, it is observed that it is important to be on outpatient treatment basis and not on sort/long term residential basis (Therapeutic Communities). In this way all the services of a structured, safe and supportive framework are provided without the teenager being cut off from their family and social environment.

This view is also reinforced by the parents' perceptions of the juvenile Institutions as they are opposed to any custodial measures. It is therefore confirmed that the theoretical framework of juvenile criminal law, showing the effects (inappropriate conditions, marginalization, stigmatization, etc.) at such a sensitive age, suggest that it is the last resort for adolescents with substance abuse disorder treatment. Deprivation of liberty proves to be more harmful to the minor than motivating, and usually increases drug use.

## **5. Conclusion**

The juvenile justice system seeks to ensure formal social control in response to juvenile delinquency, on one hand, and to their edification on the other. Criminal law and its reinforcement determine the possibilities of further development of minors, their role in future social life and the prevention of new crimes. The findings of the research conclude that all parents consider important the intervention of criminal justice institutions in the motivation of juvenile addicts for treatment. In summary, we can conclude the following:

- 1) Intense policing appears to offer security to parents and through the repressive mechanism is expected to reduce the supply and demand of drugs. The police are called to act proactively to the "problem" and not reactively to the delinquency. The trust that parents show in the

police reinforces the need for police training in the specifics of adolescence, drug use and substance abuse disorder. In order for police tactics to work, police staff needs to be trained in ethical issues, communication and approaching the minor drug users skills. The reorganization of the services and the creation of a juvenile police with specialized personnel across the country would help in the protection of juvenile justice. In addition, the police are called upon to inform the arrested juvenile users about the existing Therapeutic Rehabilitation structures as the success of the motivational interventions [22] relies heavily on the joint action of the two bodies during the critical moment of arrest. Alternatives to arrest through police-led diversion programs are emerging harm reduction strategies where there is less reliance on the justice system and more on the public health treatment system [17].

- 2) The role of Prosecutor is decisive and leading in the field of bypassing the juvenile criminal process. The Convention on the Rights of the Child calls on States Parties to adopt measures to deal with accused children without recourse to justice. The time from the initial arrest to the trial of the criminal case is considered particularly critical for the juvenile's course regarding their involvement in substance use. Abstaining from criminal proceedings and the immediate intervention of the Prosecutor will offer immediate alternatives to the juvenile and motive to choose them. In addition, it is estimated that abstaining from criminal prosecution will relieve the already burdened judicial system, avoid stigmatization of adolescents and direct requests to out-of-court social protection bodies.
- 3) The contribution of juvenile Probation Officer in order to form a comprehensive and balanced approach carries the main burden of the treatment of minors addicts as it is the only permanent public institution for out - of - institution treatment of juvenile delinquency. The immediate conduct of a social investigation, the possible implementation of a reform measure and the cooperation with the Prosecutor for the course of each case are the ground for the juvenile to permanently refrain from criminal prosecution. Early recording of needs, psychosocial intervention, the connection of the minor and their family with social protection bodies and their immediate motivation in order to bring about improving changes in their life, facilitates their social integration and the assumption by the minor of a dynamic and equal role in socialization processes. The data of the research reinforce the above proposals as the implementation of the reform measures out of court with the cooperation of the juvenile Probation Officer and the Prosecutor expresses the majority of the sample. The reinforcement of the juvenile Probation Office with staff is considered as a basic condition for the achievement of the above objectives.
- 4) Personalized intervention and the idea of education,

which runs through criminal law, are also highlighted in the present research. The imposition of measures aimed at reforming personality, social and professional skills are proposed as drivers of transformation that will disconnect the minor from the object of their addiction.

- 5) The diagnosis of the condition of each minor (type, extent and severity of addiction) is particularly important in order to take the necessary measures to protect their mental and physical health [23]. Since juvenile addicts are a group of people who do not have mechanisms to safeguard and protect their health, this role should be played by adults. Adolescence is a very vulnerable period in addictions and often adolescents do not realize the extent of drug use in their lives. Diagnosis by specialists is a focused intervention, with individualized assessment, which will trigger the minor to stop the course of substance use and be referred to Rehabilitation Programs.
- 6) Reference by the judicial authorities to Rehabilitation Programs is a measure of change and seeks complete abstinence from substance use and delinquency. It is therefore imperative that referrals to Therapeutic Programs be strengthened as adolescents will succeed in building a new way of life with equal and creative integration into society.
- 7) Finally, the care of minor addicts will be achieved through the creation and implementation of cooperation protocols or the operation of an interdisciplinary liaison service that will respond to both the immediate and medium/long-term needs of those served. An additional benefit is the communication and cooperation between health services and the justice system, with the aim of providing holistic care, as well as facilitating access to them.

From the above points we can conclude that the criminal treatment of juvenile addicts determines the possibilities of their further development, their role in the future social, political, economic, and cultural life as well as in the prevention of new offenses committed by them. Juvenile justice is a law of increased protection and prevention that is called upon to create mechanisms for improvement of minors' personality.

The care of the addicted adolescent is a commonplace of both the judicial authorities and the Therapeutic Rehabilitation Programs. Therefore, collective action is required for the successful treatment of addiction in order to achieve holistic transformation, in addition to the termination of drug use, in order to improve the functionality of the former addict throughout their social life. Therapeutic intervention needs to be organized to target holistically to the problems associated with addiction; released from a perception that focuses only on the core of substance use, but responsive to the specific needs of the serviced that are often underestimated or not evaluated at all. In this way the service network will operate synthetically and complementarily, giving a solution to the complexity of the issue that needs a thorough and specialized approach to solve it.

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