

9TH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE ON LOCAL SAFETY AND SECURITY



University of Maribor

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Erasmus+



Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency

THE USE OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES AMONG YOUTH IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SLOVENIA

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Introduction

- Psychoactive substances (PAS) affect the **central nervous system**;
- **Altered mental functioning**;
- The effects may be **stimulative, sedative or hallucinogenic**, etc.;
- They include **legal, controlled, and new psychoactive substances (NPS)**;
- Use can cause **physical or psychological harm**;
- Negative consequences may also appear **socially**.



Depressants
Drugs that calm the brain, reduce anxious feelings, and induce sleepiness. Examples include: ethanol (in alcoholic beverages) and opioids, such as codeine and heroin.

Hallucinogens
Drugs that can cause hallucinations and distorted perceptions, changes in thoughts, emotions, and consciousness. Examples include: LSD, mescaline, nitrous oxide, and psilocybin.

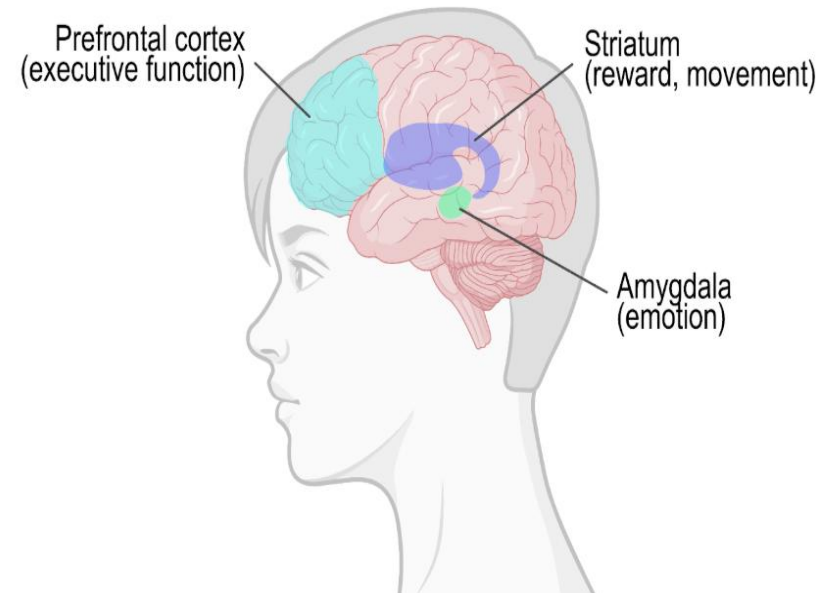
Stimulants
Drugs that stimulate the brain, increase alertness and wakefulness. Examples include: caffeine, nicotine, cocaine, and amphetamines (such as Adderall).

Opiates/Opioids
Drugs that suppress the central nervous system. They slow breathing, heart rate, thoughts, actions, and alter perceptions of pain. The term opiate is generally used to refer to natural versions of the drug derived from the opium poppy. The term opioid refers to products that are synthetic or manufactured.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
The primary psychoactive component found in the cannabis plant. THC products (e.g., cannabis dried leaves, extracts, edibles, etc.) can have various effects including: relaxation; euphoria; impaired concentration, coordination and memory; changes in sensory perception, blood pressure and appetite.

Introduction

- Youth are more vulnerable due to **ongoing brain and social development**;
- Changes in the brain → shifts in **cognition** → higher risk of substance use;
- Substance use → **lasting changes** in **mood, behaviour, cognition**;
- Negative effects also appear **socially**;
- Higher risk of **substance use disorders** in **adulthood**;
- Higher risk of **emergence or continuation** of **other related problems** into adulthood.



Youth

- 10 – 25 years old;
- Developing behavioral patterns – protect their health;
- Motivational reasons – desire to act in accordance with social norms, self-medication
- Risk factors and protective factors associated with the use of PAS and youth:
 - demographic f.,
 - mental health-related f.,
 - social f.
 - „parental f.“



Educational institutions



- Organization intended to enable learning;
- Preventing the use → reducing the likelihood of developing health problems;
- Periods of growth and development when negative experiences can develop;
- Positive school climate prevents the use of PAS (relationships with teachers, safety, academic engagement and school connection);



- Most effective – include the development of skills to resist peer pressure and self-regulation
- Effective programs – targeting key risk factors at the individual, family and community levels
- People are enrolled in programs due to parental or judicial reasons
- Information alone is not sufficient component of programs



The situation in Slovenia - findings

- Analysis of secondary data from various institutions;
- A **decline** in overall use of **alcohol** and **cigarettes** throughout the years;
- **Alcohol** remains the **most used PAS** among youth;
- An **increase** in the use of **alternative nicotine products**;
- An **increase** in the **rate of early initiation and daily smoking**;
- **Cannabis** is the **most used illicit drug** despite an **overall decrease** throughout the years;

SOME PRODUCTS THAT YOU SMOKE OR INHALE:



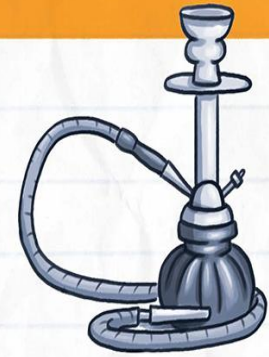
CIGARETTES



CIGARS



VAPING DEVICES



HOOKAHS

SMOKELESS PRODUCTS:



CHEWING
TOBACCO



SNUFF

Ground tobacco that can be sniffed
or put between your cheek and gums



DIP

Wet snuff that is chewed



SNUS

Small pouch of wet snuff

The situation in Slovenia - findings

- An overall **decrease** in the use of **other illicit drugs**;
- In terms of prevalence, cannabis is followed by ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine, LSD and NPS;
- A **higher rate of nonmedical use of psychoactive medications** among youth compared to the older population;
- The **most used** are **sedatives and opioid analgesics** (especially among girls);
- An **increase** in the use of **psychostimulant medications**;
- **Differences** in the use of PAS **between genders** are **decreasing**;
- An **upward trend** in **polydrug use**.

Thank you for your attention.

