

Svenska narkotikamissbrukande kvinnor och män – missbruksförlopp och kriminalitet

*Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktors-
examen vid Stockholms universitet offentligens försvaras i aulan
hörsal 13, Sveaplan fredagen den 21 november 1997, kl. 10.00*

av

Siv Byqvist
Fil. kand.

Institutionen för socialt arbete
Stockholms universitet

Stockholm 1997
ISBN 91-7153-674-4

Abstract

The main concern of the thesis is the quantitative study of the progression of drug abuse and criminality among Swedish narcotics abusers at the beginning of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s. The thesis comprises six articles that are based on data collected from two samples obtained from two research projects. The data in four of the articles were obtained from the BAK/SWEDATE project (Swedish Drug Abuse Treatment Evaluation) which comprised a total of 1,268 drug abusers admitted to institutional care in 1982 and 1983. One article treats the results from the UNO-92 study (The extent of heavy drug abuse in Sweden in 1992), a nation-wide case-finding study comprising 17,000 persons exhibiting heavy drug abuse. One article, finally, treats data from both projects, but mainly BAK/SWEDATE. The data has been processed and reported on with reference to typologies, groupings and gender differences.

Article I describes the abusers' careers from debut to established abuse during the year before being admitted to treatment (SWEDATE). Article II describes the polydrug abuse patterns of the populations of both the SWEDATE and UNO-92 studies. New ways of categorising polydrug abuse patterns are introduced. Article III describes the prevalence and characteristics of the pattern of abuse in Sweden as well as the procedure used in the UNO-92 study to estimate the number of unidentified abusers. Article IV describes four types of male substance abusers in terms of a typology based on the extent of the abusers' criminal involvement (SWEDATE). The relation between female drug abuse and criminality (SWEDATE) is analysed in article V. Article VI describes two extreme groups of drug abusers, focusing on childhood conditions, social background, the situation during the year prior to admission to treatment, the year after discharge and after 5-8 years (SWEDATE).

The results showed four career paths from drug debut to established abuse. Cannabis as the sole substance was not the only gateway to heavy abuse. Most abusers developed some pattern of polydrug abuse during their drug careers. These patterns were categorised as: simple, double and multiple. The majority of heavy abusers could be categorised according to these patterns of polydrug abuse. The abuse of alcohol in considerable quantities was a common occurrence. There were alcohol abusers with narcotics abuse and narcotics abusers with alcohol abuse. A so-called subcultural group of men was identified, characterised by early crime debut, early narcotics debut, rapid transition to regular use, and extensive juvenile and adult criminality. The extent of criminality was much less among females than among males, fewer women than men were criminal and also the crime pattern was different. Despite gender differences a small criminal group existed even among women. The women's drug career progressed more rapidly than did the men's, and exhibited heavier abuse. The more problems that were added to drug abuse, the more problematic was the lifestyle and the poorer was the prognosis for recovery. Drug treatment agencies and the social services should give special attention to a group difficult to treat, which exhibited a pattern of criminal activity, polydrug abuse, alcohol abuse, mental ill-health and problematic childhood histories. Measures such as early intervention are required in order to inhibit drug abuse and prevent the progression to polydrug abuse and criminality.