

Use of Volatile Substances by Children from Ethnic Minorities: Results of a Pilot Study



VACEK, J., ŠTASTNÁ, L., MIOVSKÝ, M., ADÁMKOVÁ, T., ŠEJVL, J., HOLCNEROVÁ, P.

Centre for Addictology, Department of Psychiatry, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic

Citation: Vacek, J., Štastná, L., Miovský, M., Adámková, T., Šejvl, J., Holcnerová, P. (2010). Užívání těkavých látek dětmi z etnických minorit: výsledky pilotní studie. *Adiktologie*, (10)4, 214–225.

BACKGROUND: While the inhalation of volatile substances is one of the most risky forms of drug use, there is only scant information available about it in comparison to other addictive substances. On the basis of existing research, there is reasonable suspicion that inhalant use concerns mainly children from socially excluded localities and ethnic minorities who are not covered by school surveys and are thus not accounted for in the statistics. **AIMS:** The aim of pilot research carried out using expert estimates was to determine whether this assumption is justified and whether helping professionals come into contact with such users. **SAMPLE/DATA:** The sample of the quantitative study comprised 176 facilities, including addiction services, outpatient specialist physicians and residential treatment institutions (8.5% response rate). The qualitative study included 11 key informants selected using the method of pur-

posive institutional sampling. **METHODOLOGY:** We used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (questionnaires and semistructured interviews with key informants from among helping professionals). **RESULTS:** The major findings include: inhalant users come into contact with professionals; their inhalant use is restricted to certain locations or communities; it is associated with lower socio-economic status, and children under 15 and members of ethnic minorities predominate among users. **CONCLUSIONS:** Professionals (physicians) do not particularly focus on the issue of the use of addictive substances, which makes it more difficult to identify and intervene early in such use. The low response rate in the quantitative segment of research may indicate the lack of interest in the issue of inhalant use.

KEY WORDS: INHALANTS – VOLATILE SUBSTANCES – PREVALENCE – ETHNIC MINORITIES – EXPERT ESTIMATES – DRUG HISTORY

Submitted: 10 / SEPTEMBER / 2010

Accepted: 30 / DECEMBER / 2010

Grant support: The project was funded by the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism and the national budget of the Czech Republic by means of the Research Support Fund. Subproject No.: A/CZ0046/1/0006.

Address for correspondence: Jaroslav Vacek / vacek@adiktologie.cz / Centre for Addictology, Department of Psychiatry, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Ke Karlovu 11, 120 00 Prague 2, Czech Republic