

## Therapeutic programs for drug users in Czech prisons: outcomes, shortcomings and perspectives

Petr Zeman<sup>1</sup>, Šárka Blatníková<sup>1</sup>, Kateřina Grohmannová<sup>1,2</sup>, Tomáš Koňák<sup>1,3</sup>, Petr Novák<sup>1</sup>, Michaela Roubalová<sup>1</sup>, Ivana Trávníčková<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND:

- EU Drugs AP 2021-2025 calls for, i.a., responding to the drug use in the prison settings and ensuring evidence-based drug services for imprisoned users
  - Substance use is generally accepted as criminogenic factor; the existence of a relationship is well documented, although its nature is ambiguous (Carpentier, 2007)
  - Proportion of drug users among prisoners is significantly higher than in the general population (Griffiths, Nilson, Carpentier, & Merino, 2003)
- effective treatment programs for imprisoned drug users have the potential to contribute to reducing criminal recidivism and to rehabilitating or resocializing drug-using prisoners in general

Specialized departments for treatment of drug addiction (SDDA):

- Aim: to change the high-risk attitudes, values, thinking patterns and behaviour of drug-using convicts towards socially acceptable forms
- operate in 13 of the total of 35 Czech prisons
- specific extended treatment programs (usually 21 hours per week) based on the therapeutic work with imprisoned drug users (i.e. drug users sentenced for any criminal offence to imprisonment)

### IKSP research project „Treatment of Drug Users in Prison“ (2016 – 2019)

### OBJECTIVES:

to map the treatment programs applied at the SDDA and assess their effectiveness in terms of (1) reducing criminal recidivism and (2) changing criminogenic attitudes of the participants

### RESULTS:

(1) Reconviction analysis (Penal Register data – i.e. proxy indicator)

Research sample (RS): prisoners undergoing program in SDDA and being released in 2014

Control groups (CGs):

- CGA: imprisoned heavy drug users released in 2014
- CGB: prisoners non-users/occasional users released in 2014
- CGs: random sample

Tab. 1: Number of reconvicted offenders

	RS	CGA	CGB
< 1 year	39.5%	43.0%	30.7%
< 2 years	58.9%	64.8%	48.9%
< 4 years	70.2%	78.8%	61.8%

(2) The criminogenic attitudes and their changes were measured using the PICTS-cz

Research sample (RS): prisoners entering program in SDDA from November 2016 to June 2017

Control groups (CGs):

- CGA: imprisoned heavy drug users
- CGB: prisoners non-users/occasional users

Comparability of RS and CGs; Double testing (pre-test phase and post-test phase)

Tab.2: Mean difference between pre-test and post-test results

PICTS -cz	RS (n=129)	CGA (n=66)	t-value	CGB (n=60)	t-value
GCT	9,71 (21,31)	-5,33 (30,14)	4,00**	-2,9 (34,9)	2,54*
CUR	3,13 (8,21)	-1,22 (8,73)	3,39**	0,6 (9,22)	ns
HIS	0,54 (6,30)	-1,67 (6,34)	2,29*	0,4 (7,50)	ns
P	2,74 (18,76)	-5,69 (22,4)	2,75**	-2,5 (27,3)	ns
R	9,22 (24,6)	-3,96 (29,1)	3,29**	0,9 (30,1)	ns
MO	1,79 (4,06)	-1,72 (5,50)	2,54*	-0,2 (5,8)	2,39*
CO	1,50 (4,21)	-0,61 (5,68)	2,92**	-0,5 (5,89)	2,58*
EN	0,85 (3,21)	-0,86 (4,72)	2,62*	-0,6 (5,28)	ns
PO	0,511 (3,80)	-0,86 (5,76)	ns	-1,2 (5,29)	2,28*
SN	2,03 (3,74)	-0,23 (5,01)	3,53**	0,1 (5,34)	2,81*
SO	0,29 (4,31)	-1,17 (4,36)	2,20*	-1,0 (4,53)	ns
CI	1,70 (4,20)	-0,42 (4,61)	3,19**	0,7 (5,75)	ns
DS	1,03 (4,99)	-1,00 (5,81)	2,52*	-0,2 (5,32)	ns

### CONCLUSIONS:

- Significant positive changes in participants' pre- and post- program criminal thinking were found
- Compared to control groups, their mean differences between pre-test and post-test results were significantly better (in all but one scales compared to “heavy users“, in 5 scales compared to “occasional/non-users“)
- Post-release re-offending rate of participants still high (slightly better results than heavy users controls, clearly worse results than occasional/non-users controls)
- Sustainability of the effects of SDDA programs after release is currently a major problem

- Sustainability of the effects of SDDA programs after release is currently a major problem
- Treatment alternatives to imprisonment for drug-using offenders should be more available and used in the highest number of cases possible



Institut pro kriminologii  
a sociální prevenci

[www.kriminologie.cz](http://www.kriminologie.cz)  
[pzeman@iksp.justice.cz](mailto:pzeman@iksp.justice.cz)