



IKSP

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

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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

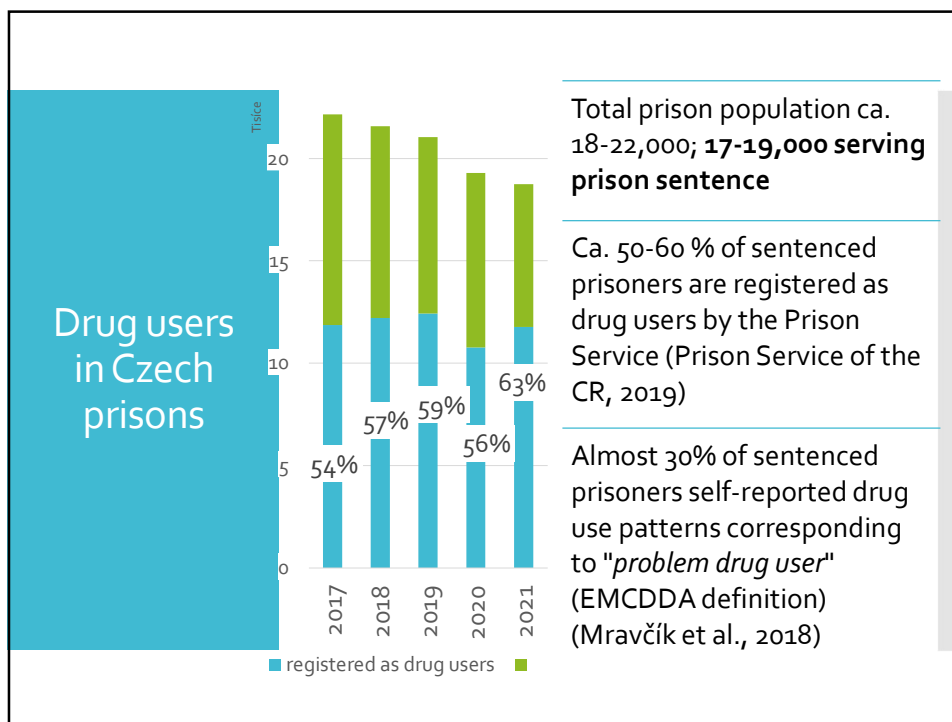
Substance use is generally accepted as criminogenic factor; the existence of a relationship is well documented, although its nature is ambiguous (Carpentier, 2007)

Proportion of drug users among prisoners is significantly higher than in the general population (Griffiths, Nilson, Carpentier, & Merino, 2003)

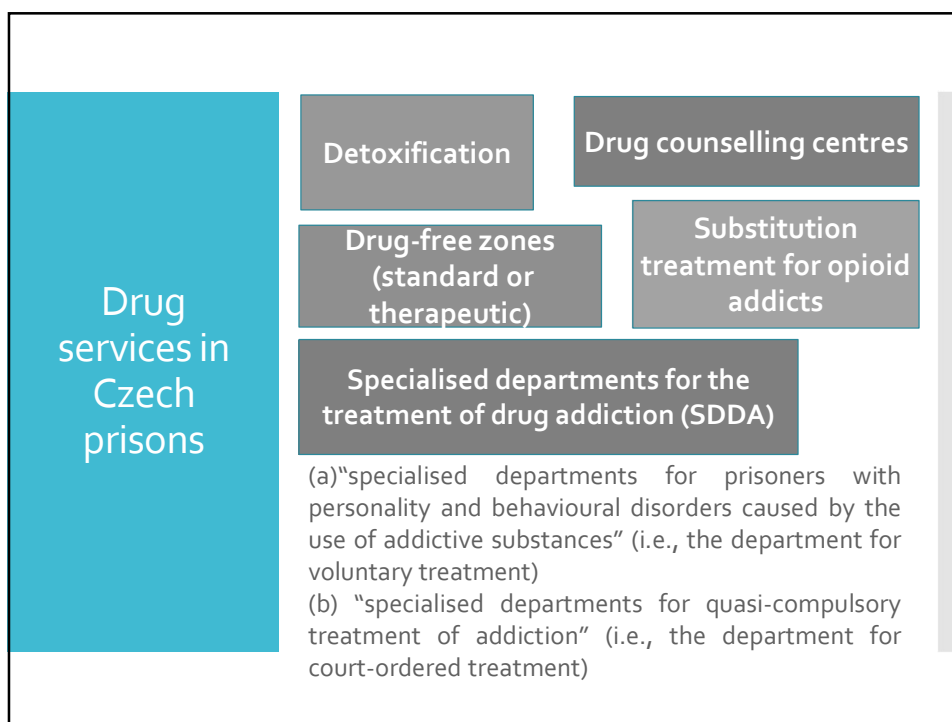
→ effective treatment programs for imprisoned drug users have the potential to contribute to reducing criminal recidivism and to rehabilitating or resocializing drug-using prisoners in general

Background

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Specialised departments for the treatment of drug addiction (SDDA)

SDDA

- operate in 13 of the total of 35 Czech prisons (11 at the time of the field research)
- **Specific extended treatment programs** (usually 21 hours per week) based on the therapeutic work with imprisoned drug users

Aims:

- to change the high-risk attitudes, values, thinking patterns and behaviour of drug-using convicts towards socially acceptable forms
- to reduce the risk and probability of recidivism among high-risk offenders who are serving prison sentences, and to contribute to protecting society after their return to civilian life

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IKSP research project

Treatment of Drug Users in Prison (2016 – 2019)

Objective:

to map the treatment programs applied at the SDDA and assess their effectiveness in terms of

- (1) changing criminogenic attitudes of the participants
- (2) reducing criminal recidivism of the participants

Methodology:

- document analysis (legislation, literature, SDDA manuals, statistics)
- analysis of conviction records
- assessment (PICTS-cz)*
- semi-structured interviews with the SDDA staff

*PICTS-cz: the Czech version of the original PICTS tool (Walters, 1995, 2004) standardised for the Czech prison population (Blatníková, Faridová & Vranka, 2016).

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Goal 1 – changing criminogenic attitudes of the participants

- 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) - RS at the beginning and the end of the therapeutic program, controls at the same time as "their" RS member

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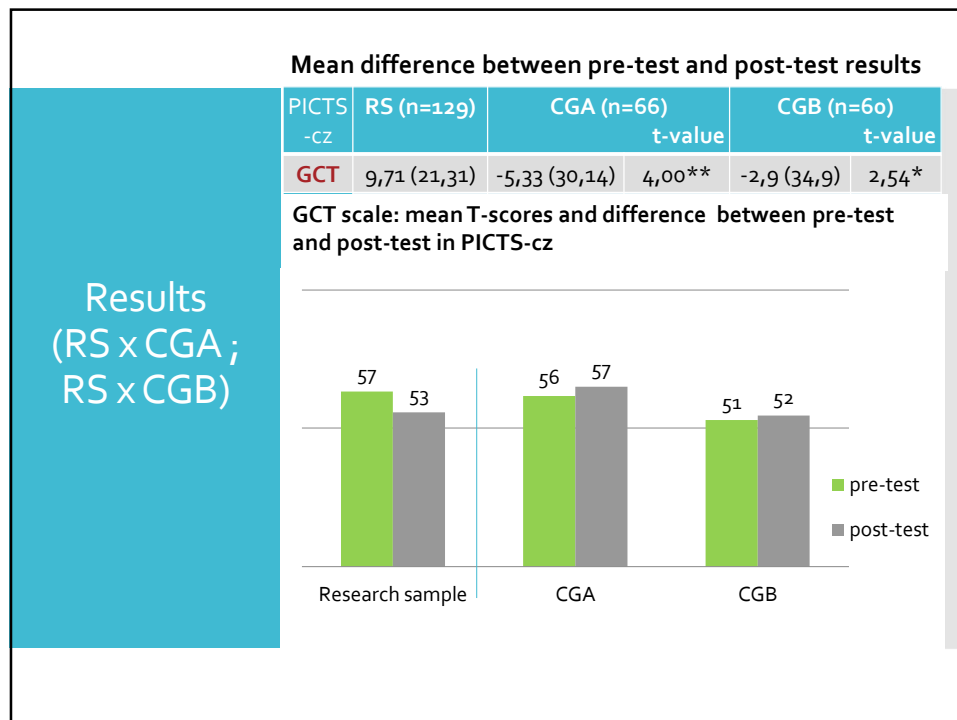
Results (RS)

Mean scores (raw score) of research sample (n=129)

PICTS-cz scale	Pre-test	Post-test	t-value	Effect size (d)
GCT	136,6 (22,4)	126,9 (25,6)	5,17**	0,46
CUR	28,2 (7,0)	25,0 (8,5)	4,33**	0,38
HIS	27,6 (6,4)	27,0 (6,7)	ns	0,09
P	91,6 (20,3)	88,9 (21,2)	ns	0,15
R	94,9 (23,5)	85,7 (25,5)	4,26**	0,38
MO	14,7 (4,0)	12,9 (4,1)	5,01**	0,44
CO	17,4 (4,5)	15,9 (4,2)	4,06**	0,36
EN	15,9 (3,6)	15,0 (3,7)	3,01*	0,27
PO	14,7 (4,1)	14,2 (4,1)	ns	0,13
SN	20,2 (4,0)	18,2 (3,6)	6,16**	0,54
SO	17,5 (4,3)	17,2 (4,5)	ns	0,07
CI	18,9 (3,8)	17,2 (4,5)	4,58**	0,40
DS	17,3 (4,7)	16,2 (4,9)	2,34*	0,21

Note: standard deviation in parenthesis; *p<0,05; **p<0,01

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**Goal 2 -
reducing
criminal
recidivism of
the
participants**

- Conviction records (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

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Results

(RS)

Number of reconvicted offenders, RS (n=124)

Reconviction	Yes	No	Total
< 1 year	49	75	124
< 2 years	73	51	124
until 01/18	87	37	124

Number of reconvictions after release, RS (n=124)

0	1	2-3	4+	Total
37	23	35	29	124

<div>Results</div> <div>(RSxCGA; RSxCGB)</div>	Reconvicted offenders in... (%)			
		RS (n=124)	CGA (n=278)	CGB (n=286)
	< 1 year	39,5 %	43,8 %	30,4 %
	< 2 years	58,9 %	65,4 %	48,4 %
	until 01/18	70,2 %	78,8 %	61,8 %
	Number of reconvictions after release (%)			
		RS (n=124)	CGA (n=278)	CGB (n=286)
	0	29,8 %	21,3 %	38,2 %**
	1	18,5 %	18,8 %	25,5 %**
	2-3	28,3 %	39,0 %	28,5 %**
	4 +	23,4 %	20,9 %	7,8 %**
	Total	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %

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")

Only minor differences between results of SDDA for voluntary x court-ordered treatment, and also between results of SDDA in different prisons

BUT: post-release re-offending rate of participants still high (slightly better results than heavy users controls, clearly worse results than occasional/non-users controls)

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Conclusions

Results indicate the positive influence of the program on the criminogenic thinking patterns of imprisoned drug users

Sustainability of the effects of SDDA programs after release is currently a major problem (continuity of care in prison and after release, links to drug services providers in community, case management)

Increase of the availability of similar targeted programs in prisons would be appropriate

Treatment alternatives to imprisonment for drug-using offenders should be more available and used in the highest number of cases possible

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Thank you
for your
attention!

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