

## ABSTRACT

**Background and aim:** Recent social-historical transformations have resulted in the emerging of a new type of youth called post-adolescence. Post-adolescence is a life period of identity search, it is a pro-longed transition, a stage without status. Given that the role of traditional social rituals and the social institutes' controlling function has faded, this transition has become more difficult for the youth. Uncertainty and instability in the individual lives may be risk factors for deviant behaviours such as drug use. The object of the dissertation is to analyze the relation between drug use and post-adolescence with the help of sociology and psycho-social theories among the young adult population. The research aims at finding the psycho-social aspects which may have an effect on the drug use groups' (non-users, occasional and problematic users) transition to adulthood as well as defining the groups' post-adolescent features.

**Methods:** The research focuses on youth (18-34) who never used illicit drugs (non-users); are occasional or problematic drug users. I apply Vaskovics's theory regarding youth leaving their parents' home. Other aspects of post-adolescence in the research touch upon job, study, relationship, having children. The research's psycho-social aspect incorporates Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. When reaching the interviewees the mixture of snowball and networking method was used. Brutto sample 45 persons, netto sample 42 persons. The survey was carried out in Spring 2010 through McAdams' life story method, face to face and self-reported questionnaires. The questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS. I used the grounded theory for analyzing the interviews.

**Results and consequences:** According to the results all three groups' interviewees can be described with post-adolescent features. All three groups' narratives show factors which may damage the transition to adulthood. What makes the groups different though is the degree the interviewees are involved in post-adolescence and to what extent their transition to adulthood is damaged. Consequently, three models have been set up. According to Merton's model, assuming the goal of reaching 'the adult status', non-users' behaviour can be described with conformity, occasional users' with rebellion and problematic users' with retreatism. The post-adolescence and drug use (PAD) model demonstrates that problematic users reach the adult stage earlier than the other two groups' interviewees - as a consequence of certain external circumstances (such as family background). They are the ones being harmed the most during the transition to adulthood. On the contrary, non-users and occasional users are not under such pressure but are motivated to make the first steps on their own to become an adult. Among non-users and occasional users there are less factors which may affect the identity development. Both the PAD model and the Vaskovics model prove that non-users and occasional users are the ones closest to reach the adult status and problematic users are far away of becoming adult. The results draw the attention to the importance of prevention programmes focusing on self-knowledge development and on the improvement of the ability to tackle problems and that it should aim at both the adolescence and the young adulthood.