

Abstract:

Background: The Probation and Mediation Service (PMS) deals with offenders of criminal activity, some of whom also have addictive behavior. The addiction of the offender is considered as a significant risk factor for criminal recidivism. According to the PMS annual report, there has been an increase in the proportion of the drug crime by 2–3 percentage points per year since 2017, to 26 % in 2021. Working with addicted offenders requires specific knowledge and skills.

Objectives: The thesis has the objective to identify and analyze the current needs of further education of probation officers of the Prague centre in the field of addictology. The partial objective is to find out how – according to respondents – the proportion of offenders of criminal activity with addiction problems is and its comparison with official statistics.

Methods: The data was collected in the form of a questionnaire survey. The research sample included 32 probation officers from the Prague centre (out of 41 in total). The staff was selected by total sampling method, the return rate was 78 %. The data was analyzed using descriptive analysis method. The research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles.

Results: All staff considered addictology knowledge and skills to be important for their work. They rated their current level of knowledge with an average value of 2,82 and their level of skills with 2,18. No worker considers his or her addictological knowledge and skills to be completely sufficient. More than half of the workers (53%) are rather satisfied with them. 41 % of the workers are rather and not at all satisfied with the level of their addictological knowledge and skills. The need for further education in the field of addictology is expressed by 94 % of staff. Four forms of education were most preferred by the staff: Training and lectures, Internships in the facility, Introduction of the addictology service and Workshops. The biggest obstacles to ongoing education in the field of addictology are high time and work pressure (78 %), lack of suitable offers (50 %) and high prices of the courses (34 %). 13 % of the workers feel poorly motivated for ongoing education. The most requested topics for ongoing education, in which nearly 60 % of the staff expressed interest, are Motivational interviewing and Motivation and support for client to change.

The estimation of the staff indicated a significant proportion of clients with addiction issues, when 56 % of the workers estimated that they work with 46 % or more of such clients. Furthermore, research has shown that the official statistics in this field are underestimated in the long term.

Conclusions: Due to the fact that the research was focused only on the Prague PMS centre, its results cannot be easily generalised to the entire Czech Republic. However, methodological and educational departments have expressed an interest in the results of the research and thus they can be used as a basis for the preparation of ongoing education or broadening the survey to other centres.

Keywords

Addictology, drug criminality, Probation and Mediation Service, educational needs