

## Abstract

**Background:** *Mitragyna Speciosa* – a plant, more commonly known as kratom, that has a history and tradition in Southeast Asia for centuries. In recent decades, it has been gaining popularity worldwide. In addition to its benefits, which include energizing, pain and stress relief, and reducing opiate withdrawal symptoms, kratom use carries health risks along with the development of addiction. In the Czech Republic, kratom is not yet legislated, its use is not regulated and everyone, including children, has access to it.

**Aims:** The aim of this study was to map the lifetime prevalence among 8th and 9th graders in the Nymburk district and patterns of use, their awareness in terms of effects, risks and availability, sources of information about kratom and attitudes towards it.

**Methods:** The data were collected using a paper questionnaire in four primary schools in the Nymburk district. The schools were selected by random sampling. 287 pupils participated in the survey.

**Results:** 17.8% of pupils had experience with kratom. Boys reported experience more often than girls. More than half of the respondents with experience have used kratom at most twice, got it for free from a friend and tried it out of curiosity. The most well-known desirable effects in pupils' minds were feeling calm and relaxed and increased alertness and energy. The most well-known risk of kratom for pupils was the development of addiction. A significant number of pupils had not heard of kratom before, thus were unaware of the effects and risks. Over half of the pupils thought that kratom could be purchased from the age of 18. They learned about kratom from social networks, friends and school. The issue is not sufficiently discussed in the family. Over a quarter of pupils had no attitude towards kratom, around a fifth of pupils rejected kratom or were interested in it and saw something positive about it.

**Conclusion:** The work showed that the pupils of 8th and 9th grades in the Nymburk district in the research group have experience with kratom, to a greater extent one-time. A significant number of pupils have no or incomplete information about kratom. Pupils' attitudes do not correspond to the prevalence. More attention needs to be paid to the issue of kratom, not only in education but also in the family.

**Key words:** kratom, *mitragyna speciosa*, primary school, pupil, prevalence, questionnaire study, Nymburk district