

ABSTRACT

Background: The term psychoactive drugs can be defined as pharmaceuticals that have a psychoactive effect - typically psychopharmaceuticals or opioid analgesics. There is a relatively high prevalence of risky use of these drugs in the Czech Republic. The most commonly used drugs with sedative, hypnotic and anxiolytic effects (mainly benzodiazepines) and opioids are at risk. Stress is inherent in university study and can make studying itself significantly more difficult. Therefore, in addition to the use of the above-mentioned drugs, the so-called 'smart drugs' are an important group for the university student population. This group includes nootropics, which are drugs that improve cognitive functions such as memory, learning or concentration (commonly used, for example, in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease). In addition to nootropics, students may also be at increased risk of taking psychostimulant drugs (e.g. ADHD drugs) to increase concentration, relieve fatigue and accelerate thinking.

Aim: The aim of this paper is to map the prevalence of psychoactive medication use in association with college study in the student population.

Methods and research population: The research was carried out using a quantitative method in the form of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire is non-standardized, it was created by compiling several questions from several research papers or ESPAD study, other questions were inspired by different questionnaires and the rest were created based on the stated research objectives. Its dissemination was done through social networks, and participants were recruited through a self-selection method. The research population was university students. Proportionally, there are more women among the respondents (similarly, of course, in the general university population), most major university cities are represented, as are respondents from different fields of study, and the age distribution is across all possible age categories. A total of 435 respondents completed the questionnaire, using data from 431 questionnaires. The data were processed using descriptive analysis procedures.

Results and Conclusion: The prevalence of study-related psychoactive medication use came out at 16% overall. Of these, the prevalence is higher in the female population (18%) than in the male population (11%). The most commonly used medications are anti-anxiety or sleeping medications (69% of respondents), with benzodiazepines being the most common among specific medications. Another finding was the association between study difficulty and use, with the prevalence of use increasing with subjectively perceived study difficulty. With regard to risky use (i.e. use other than as stated in the package leaflet or outside the doctor's instructions, which may relate to the quantity of the medication or the frequency of use, the method of use or its purpose), the prevalence is 5%. The research has mapped the prevalence of use and risky use of psychoactive drugs, and in addition, it also points to the demanding nature of studying at universities and the possible lack of grasp of mental health care by students, which is offset by the use of medication.

Keywords: students, university, psychoactive drugs