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Health-related behaviours of young people with domestic violence experience

Summary

As far as health is concerned, each of us has certain knowledge and experience. The results of the research show that we value health and place it among the most important values. To be healthy means to be a happy person who accepts his good and bad sides. Health is often seen as a state of non-illness, a sense of happiness and satisfaction, the highest value. Those attributes eventually define health as one of the most precious human resources.

It is important to mention various factors which may become health threats such as inappropriate attitudes and eating habits, especially the use of slimming diets and nutritional behaviours that lead to obesity. Nutritional behaviours are already formed during early childhood, whereas their effects can be felt throughout life.

Another group of risky behaviours includes drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Preventing the negative effects of drinking and smoking by young people is still a serious social problem. Preventive actions taken are aimed at eliminating the negative effects of addictive substances on youth.

Another worrisome phenomenon is child abuse which significantly affects the health of an individual, and consequently the condition of society. This dependence is visible in the definition of health proposed by the World Health Organization, according to which abuse experience does not allow for a subjective sense of well-being.

From a child's perspective, being abused by their closest relatives brings about negative somatic and psychological effects that may disrupt functioning of the individual in the intrapersonal, social and psychosomatic dimension.

This research covered 220 students from 12 classes (6 classes of students aged 15 and 6 classes of students aged sixteen), including 114 girls, which is 51.82% and 106 boys, which is 48.18%. Among the respondents, a group of young people with the experience of domestic violence was identified, which constituted 81 people (36.82%) of all respondents, and a group of youth with no experience of domestic violence - 139 people, which accounted for 63.18% of all respondents.

In the group of youth who experienced abuse there were 36 girls, which accounted for 31.58% and 45 boys, which accounted for 42.45%. In turn the group of young people with no experience of domestic violence included 78 girls (68.42%) and 61 boys (57.55%).

According to the results of the research, the most frequent form of abuse experienced by the youth was emotional violence. Other popular answers included negligence and physical violence. The smallest group were the people who suffered sexual violence.

While referring to emotional violence in the family, young people often mean excessive expectations of parents (58.63%); humiliation and ridicule of a child (48.64%); excessive burden of household duties (38.18%); lack of interest in the child's problems (32.73%); overprotective parents (31.36%).

Experiences of neglect in the family according to the answers given by the youth included leaving the child unattended (28.18%); not providing for the child's basic needs such as meals or clothing (20,91%).

When asked about physical violence in the family, the respondents often mentioned beating and causing body injuries (25.46%); physical punishment for minor offenses (20.46%).

The results of the research also show that by sexual violence in the family young people mostly mean soliciting to watch pornography (22.73%), while 17,2% of the respondents admit to having a sexual contact with an adult (17.2%).

By analysing the results of the research it can be observed that girls much more often than boys confirmed being humiliated and ridiculed. They also claim that parents do not show interest in their problems and overburden them with household duties. It was also girls who more often confessed that they were beaten and punished for minor offenses. In addition, girls more often than boys suffered sexual violence by being forced to watch pornographic magazines or videos, as well as to have sexual contact with an adult. Boys, in turn, more often mentioned parents' excessive expectations towards them, overprotective parents or being left unattended. In addition, boys more often indicated being deprived of proper meals or clothing. In the area of experiencing subjective health issues teenagers with domestic violence experience declared daily headaches, stomach aches and more often admitted to negative emotional states, such as depression, irritability, bad mood or nervousness. The above-mentioned issues might have influenced the way the young people view their own health which they often referred to as "average" or "bad". The research has revealed that youth with domestic violence experience are more prone to displaying risky behaviour which might be a consequence of family problems, educational difficulties or a desire to express dissatisfaction with their family situation. Young people who have suffered domestic violence confirmed

smoking at least one cigarette more often than teenagers without such experience (48.15% and 39.57% respectively). Young people with domestic violence experience more often admit to indulging in alcohol-containing drinks. Over 70% of youth with domestic violence experience and 58.27% of youth with no abuse experience admitted drinking beer, 45.67% of youth with experience of domestic violence and 28.78% of youth without it admitted drinking wine, and 44.44% of the respondents from the group with experience of domestic violence and 33.82% of the group without the experience of domestic violence admitted to drinking vodka, cognac or whiskey. According to the survey, young people who have experienced abuse are certain to have consumed the sufficient amount of alcohol to make them drunk much more often than the other group (45.68% and 35.25% respectively). Nearly 90% of the surveyed youth declared that they had never used marijuana or hashish in their lives. The analysis of the data showed that a similar percentage of young people with both domestic violence and no experience of family abuse never used marijuana or hashish in their lives (88.89% and 89.93% respectively). However, every tenth respondent has already had at least one contact with these drugs, including 11.11% of youth who have had domestic violence experience and 10.07% of those who have not.