CURRENT LITERATURE ON

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

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Current Literature on Drug and Alcohol Abuse: An Annotated Bibliography

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PREFACE

This annotated bibliography, updated monthly, provides worldwide coverage of research and statistics on drug and alcohol abuse. English- and foreign-language literature, primarily books and journals published since January 1991 is screened. Research focuses on topics such as usage patterns, new theories on patterns of abuse, signs and symptoms of addiction, legal penalties, genetics and heredity, prevention strategies and techniques, and codependency. The entries are arranged alphabetically by author. Each entry contains keywords.

This paper reviews the activities of the Addiction Research and Treatment Corporation, a substance abuse treatment agency, located in Brooklyn, New York, which services approximately 2,300 patients annually. The Corporation's history, treatment, and research activities are first described and the Corporation's health maintenance and community relations programs are examined in detail. A multicomponent treatment model is outlined.

Keyword(s): substance abuse; methodology; treatment


This article compares the recruitment rates and characteristics of families enrolled from three sources—DUI records, HMO records and telephone surveys. Implications for research on children of alcoholics are discussed.

Keyword(s): adolescents; alcoholism; methodology

Coppel, Anne. "Drogue: reduire les risques" [Drugs; Reducing the Risks] Liberation, (Paris) no. 3670, March 9, 1993, 2. [Call Number: no call number]

The article is by a French sociologist and specialist in drug addiction. She writes that the debate about how to deal with drug addiction is not simply about choosing between the "war on drugs" or allowing their complete legalization, as it is frequently imagined in France. Many European countries see a much wider range of options and the French now realize how far their approach to drug addiction has departed from the European mainstream. As of early 1993, for example, the French could only offer fifty-two addicts places in methadone treatment programs, compared to 15,000 places in Britain. In the Netherlands one-third of addicts have access to methadone programs. There were also only two programs for the exchange of needles in France, compared to 250 in Britain. Instead of
an absolute prohibition of many drugs in France, Coppel suggests that a policy of trying to reduce the risks of drug addiction. Rather than insisting on complete and immediate cures for addicts, French policy should have the more modest and attainable goal of helping addicts to live. An addict receiving methadone can have a family and a job and may eventually, over a long period of time, be freed of his addiction. Providing addicts with sterile needles not only reduces the spread of AIDS, but offers a new kind of contact with society’s institutions that can bring them back into society.

Keyword(s): France; drug treatment programs


There is ample evidence that parental alcoholism affects children in numerous ways. The effects of parental history were estimated using logistic regression models adjusted for age, race, and gender history of alcohol problems. Nonblack adults who lived with one or more alcoholic parents when growing up were 50 percent more likely ever to have been married than those with no parental history of alcoholism. The effect was of the same magnitude regardless of whether the alcoholic parent was the mother or the father, but was larger if both parents were reported to be alcoholics. Among blacks, positive parental history of alcoholism did not affect the odds of marriage.

Keyword(s): parents; alcoholism; probability; marriage


Like many other common, complex disorders, alcoholism tends to run in families. Evidence from animal studies as well as biochemical, electrophysiologic, and personality studies of alcoholics and their offspring indicates the existence of heritable factors predisposing to the development of alcoholism. Twin and adoption studies also support the idea that vulnerability to alcoholism depends in part on genetic factors. Efforts to address these issues, including the hunt for biological markers,
defining more homogeneous subtypes of alcoholism, and molecular genetic strategies of potential use in alcoholism are reviewed.

Keyword(s): alcoholism; families


A growing political movement in Zurich, Switzerland is calling for the de-criminalization of drugs. The number of addicts is steadily increasing there, including children as young as 12. A new method of inhaling heroin from heated aluminum foil laced with the drug was described by one young addict as almost heaven. The primary arguments for de-criminalization are to save money through an expected reduction of police, social workers, and homeless shelters from a doctor supervision program, and to decrease the strength of black market and drug-related crime. The proposed program would include production and distribution of hard drugs through a state monopoly system, where adults could buy single doses in pharmacies. Ration cards would be required to prevent black market sales. Right-wing groups are strongly opposed to such a proposal and a compromise is not yet in sight.

Keyword(s): Switzerland; drugs; de-criminalization


Based on a sample of 1,052 drunk drivers in northern California, less than one percent of those arrested for DUI had purchased and consumed alcohol prior to arrest from a convenience/gas store.

Keyword(s): California; arrests; drunken driving

The purpose of this study was to determine the proportion of patients in an ambulatory medical clinic who have an alcohol history recorded when prescribed benzodiazepines, and to assess the adequacy of the alcohol history when obtained. Medical records of 35 patients who obtained prescriptions for benzodiazepines at a large inner-city teaching hospital medical clinic were audited. None of the records showed evidence that the physician had sufficient knowledge of the patient's alcohol use to safely prescribe a benzodiazepine. In 57 percent of the records, no information about alcohol use was recorded. In the remaining 15 medical records, the information recorded was limited. The implications of prescribing benzodiazepines without knowledge of drinking status are discussed.

Keyword(s): physician; alcohol; benzodiazepines


The author describes a growing pressure on the German government to give more practical help to junkies. In June, the Bundesrat (Federal Council) supported scientific proposals for doctor-supervised programs of heroin supply to heavy addicts. For 120,000 users of hard drugs in Germany, only 4,000 treatment places are available. Proponents of the program, largely from the Social Democratic Party, argue that abstinence therapy and methadone programs are not effective. Many politicians from the more conservative Christian Democratic Party, however, are opposed to state-supplied heroin.

Keyword(s): Germany; drug; treatment


This study examined the effects of Vietnam war-zone duty and combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on the severity of drug and alcohol-abuse disorders among veterans seeking treatment for substance dependence. Vietnam veterans with PTSD experienced more severe drug and alcohol abuse problems than did theater veterans without PTSD and were at greater risk for having both
forms of substance abuse. Further analysis showed that PTSD was significantly related to some dimensions of drug and alcohol abuse problems but not to other dimensions. These findings indicate that PTSD, rather than combat stress per se, is linked to severity of substance abuse. Lastly, reexperiencing and avoidance/numbing components of PTSD were more strongly associated with drug abuse than alcohol abuse, but physiological arousal symptoms of PTSD were more highly correlated with alcohol abuse.

Keyword(s): substances of abuse; Vietnam veterans; stress


There are treatment strategies with encouraging evidence of effectiveness that are only beginning to be applied in practice. Research is clarifying the mechanisms and reasons for successful treatment, pointing to factors to emphasize in therapy. Approaches that yield even short-term advantages can promote more rapid recovery, and may provide clues for how to prevent relapse. Evidence shows that even relatively brief treatment can be substantially more effective than none at all. Recent evidence also supports the importance of matching clients to alternative treatment strategies. There is reason to believe that the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment can be greatly increased.

Keyword(s): treatment; substance abuse; alcohol abuse


This survey assesses clinical knowledge, practice, and attitudes concerning alcohol-related birth defects. Data were collected in a questionnaire that was mailed to 234 randomly-selected Massachusetts pediatricians. Responses suggest that a substantial proportion of pediatricians have knowledge about the effects of alcohol on pregnancy. However, many considered themselves unprepared to deal with this topic. More physicians suspected Fetal Alcohol
Syndrome than made the diagnosis. Almost three-fourths reported they would find professional education in this area helpful. Broader dissemination of research findings in clinically relevant formats and improving the sense of preparedness among pediatricians could potentially improve the care of children born to pregnant women with drinking problems.

Keyword(s): fetal alcohol syndrome; pediatricians; methodology

Neskovic, Wolfgang. "Ohne Drogen geht es nicht [It Doesn’t Work Without Drugs]" Die Zeit, (Bonn), vol. 48, no. 25, June 25, 1993, 16, . [Call Number: None]

The author recommends legalizing drugs in Germany, and permitting the sale of hashish and heroin in pharmacies. By requiring proper labelling and warnings about the substances, the media and the population would be better informed about illegal drugs and their effects. Criminalization of drugs attempts to create a drug-free society, which does not work, argues the author. Currently, consuming drugs (other than nicotine and alcohol) in Germany is a criminal offense, where little help is offered in treating the illness of addiction. Abstinence or imprisonment are the given alternatives. Additionally, in prison many addicts first use harder drugs or learn criminal behavior. Citing statistics, the author states that the current drug policy is ineffective: every year there are increases in consumption, drug-related deaths, and drug-related crime rates. Neskovic supports a program where hard and soft drugs (e.g., heroin and hashish) would be available through a state-controlled program in pharmacies. As with alcohol, sale to youths would be illegal; warnings and descriptions would be required on labels; no advertising for any drugs (including nicotine and alcohol) would be permitted. The alleged benefits are an increase in consumer knowledge about dangers of addiction, decrease in drug mafia and dealers, reduction of drug-related crime (one study showed that areas where police make successful busts, prices and crime rates rise), and finally, the availability of only clean drugs in the market.

Keyword(s): drugs; legalization; Germany

This study examined cross-cultural differences in drinking attitudes and drinking levels and their correlation among Japanese in Japan and Japanese-Americans in Hawaii and California. In most situations, an increase in drinking levels was associated with more tolerant drinking attitudes in all three groups. Abstainers were less likely to say that getting drunk is sometimes all right, whereas the reverse was true for heavier drinkers. Drinking levels among Japanese especially among Japanese women, were not highly associated with how much drinking was perceived as acceptable in each situation, whereas among Japanese-Americans, drinking levels were highly associated with drinking attitudes. Although the Japanese had generally tolerant attitudes toward drinking, they indicated higher abstention rates before driving than Japanese-Americans regardless of their drinking levels. This may reflect the impact of public education on drunken driving in Japan.

Keyword(s): Japanese; Japan; Hawaii; alcoholism


Alcohol and substance abuse problems are now of concern among deaf persons. The problems of cultural influence, prevalence of the problem, and factors contributing to isolation and denial are addressed in this article. In addition, the issues of accessibility and service delivery are explored. Current programs that are accessible and provide alcohol and substance abuse recovery are identified.

Keyword(s): deaf; treatment; substances of abuse

Scorzelli, James F. "Has Malaysia’s Antidrug Effort Been Effective?" Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, (New York), vol. 9, no. 2, 1993, 171-76. [Call Number: RC565.A43]
Based on the premise that preventive education and rehabilitation will result in the elimination of a country's drug problem, Malaysia in 1983 implemented a multi-faceted anti-drug policy. The results of a 1987 study suggested that Malaysia's effort had begun to contribute to a steady decrease in the number of identified drug abusers. Although the number of drug-addicted individuals declined, the country's recidivism rates were still high. Because of the high relapse rate, Malaysia expedited its rehabilitation effort and developed a community transition program. A follow-up study was conducted in 1990 to determine the impact of these social changes. The results of this study did not clearly demonstrate that the Malaysian effort had been successful in eliminating the problem of drug abuse, and raised some questions concerning the effectiveness of the country's drug treatment programs.

'Keyword(s): Malaysia; drug treatment; prevention


The fact that methadone maintenance treatment does not lead quickly to abstinence in most clients can be a disappointment to treatment professionals and the public. By studying a cohort of 41 patients for their first year in a methadone maintenance program, this study revealed significant trends of diminished narcotic and cocaine use. However, increased benzodiazepine use was also identified. More importantly, this study identified some chronological patterns of drug use that predicted less drug use at the end of one year of treatment. In addition, the implications for stopping, providing, and determining effective drug treatment are discussed.

Keyword(s): drug abuse; self-medication; methadone; treatment

Inherited susceptibility is believed by some to be a factor in cocaine dependence. In this study, nonalcoholic cocaine-dependent patients were screened to identify alcoholic first-degree relatives. One or more first-degree relatives are also reported to be alcoholic by 25 to 50 percent of alcoholic patients. Approximately the same percentage of these cocaine patients also report having an alcoholic first-degree relative. This lends credence to the hypothesis that the apparent inherited susceptibility to alcoholism may be a more general susceptibility to addictive disease. A much higher proportion of females than males have an alcoholic first-degree relative.

Keyword(s): cocaine; alcoholic relatives; genetics


This review considers gender issues in the recent literature for alcohol, nicotine, and other psychoactive drug abuse and for each of the four drug types reports: the ratio of men to women treated; gender differences in treatment outcome; whether the senior author’s gender is related to the gender ratio of subjects in studies; and, the percentage of studies reporting methodological variables by gender (dropouts, outcome). No evidence for sex differences was obtained for any drug class. However, despite the recognized importance of gender as a treatment variable, the majority of studies failed to address gender differences in treatment outcome.

Keyword(s): substances of abuse; gender; treatment


The drinking pattern of 412 homeless and marginally housed adults in New York State are described, and compared with 5,952 domiciled adults. Results show transience in their sleeping patterns, and in recent months many have slept with friends or in public places. They are disproportionately male, aged 18-34, and African-American or Hispanic. Many of the homeless and marginally housed
are abstainers as opposed to 26 percent in the state as a whole, but a startling 13 percent drink more than 20 drinks a day, as opposed to less than one percent in the state as a whole. They also reported high rates of dependence signs such as blackouts or loss of control. Heavy drinking is higher among men than women, and higher among African-Americans than whites or Hispanics. For homeless men, those with the poorest sleeping arrangements have higher rates of heavy drinking.

Keyword(s): homeless; drinking pattern; New York State

"Weniger Drogentote [Fewer Drug Deaths]" Deutschland Nachrichten, June 25, 1993, 7, . [Call Number: None]

The article discusses a decline in the number of reported deaths related to drug use. From June 1992 through June 1993, there were 694 deaths from the consumption of hard drugs reported, down 18 percent from the same 1991-92 time period. Additionally, the number of arrested drug users was 3,770 from January through June 1993, 13 percent fewer than the first six months of 1992. In East Germany, no increase in drug use or drug crime since reunification has been reported as was anticipated.

Keyword(s): Germany; drug; deaths


Men and women appear to differ with respect to why they begin to use drugs, as well as why they relapse into drug use. Prior to their commencement of drug abuse, social background concerns and social adjustments appear to constitute a heavier burden for women than for men. Observations of social functioning and adjustments made during their drug careers and in the follow-up investigations, however, failed to yield significant statistical differences. The predominant effects of drug use appear to eclipse the gender-related role-pattern.

Keyword(s): heroin addiction; Switzerland; females