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Strategie radzenia sobie ze stresem najczęściej stosowane wśród młodzieży nadużywającej środków psychoaktywnych

Strategies for coping with stress most commonly used among young people overusing psychoactive substances

Streszczenie

Cel. Celem niniejszego badania jest określenie najczęściej wybieranych strategii radzenia sobie ze stresem wśród młodzieży nadużywającej substancji psychoaktywnych.

Materiał i metoda. Badaniem objęto grupę 100 osób w wieku 14-19 lat nadużywających środków psychoaktywnych. Grupę kontrolną stanowiło 301 osób, nieleczonych z powodu zachowań ryzykownych. W pracy wykorzystano skalę SRSS – Sposoby Radzenia Sobie ze Stresem, której autorem jest P. Oleś.

Wyniki. W zakresie sposobów radzenia sobie ze stresem, mierzonych Skalą Radzenia Sobie ze Stresem (SRSS), wystąpiły istotne różnice pomiędzy grupami w zakresie skal: poszukiwanie rozwiązania (RO), dezorganizacja (DE), bagatelizowanie (BA), kompensowanie (KO), strategia skoncentrowana na problemie (PZS). Młodzież nadużywająca środków psychoaktywnych istotnie rzadziej niż młodzież z grupy kontrolnej poszukiwała aktywnego radzenia sobie ze stresem, przez co częściej ulegała dezorganizacji i częściej bagatelizowała i umniejszała znaczenie sytuacji stresowej.

Dyskusja. Osoby nadużywające substancji psychoaktywnych z badanej populacji wykazywały się podatnością na bodźce zewnętrzne, które je rozpraszają i stresują, wywołując w nich postawę obronną. Wiele teorii psychologicznych i socjologicznych podkreśla, że niektóre cechy osobowości związane ze sferą poznawczą, emocjonalną i motywacyjną, wpływające na formę oraz jakość relacji z samym sobą i z otoczeniem, mogą ułatwiać czy nawet predestynować do określonych zachowań, w tym do nadużywania substancji psychoaktywnych. Również nieumiejętność radzenia sobie ze stresem to jedna z cech i stanów bardzo często stwierdzanych w tej grupie ryzyka.

Wnioski. Przeprowadzone badania potwierdzają, że w sytuacji stresującej, młodzież nadużywająca środków psychoaktywnych częściej stosuje Strategie Zorientowane Emocjonalnie, które zmierzają do zredukowania emocji i zmniejszania przykrego napięcia, oraz bierne strategie postępowania w sytuacji stresowej.

Summary

Aim. The aim of the presented research is defining the most frequently chosen strategies of coping with stress among young people overusing psychoactive substances.

Material and method. The survey covered a group of 100 people aged 14 – 19 overusing psychoactive substances. The control group consisted of 301 people, not treated for risk behaviour. In the study the authors used SRSS scale – Ways of Coping with Stress, which was designed by P. Oleś.

Results. In the range of possibilities to cope with stress measured with the scale – Ways of Coping with Stress (SRSS), significant differences occurred between groups in the range of scales: search for a solution (RO), disorganization (DE), disregarding (BA), compensating (KO), strategy concentrated on a problem (PZS). Young people overusing psychoactive substances, much less frequently than youth from control group, looked for active ways of coping with stress, and consequently they became disorganized more frequently, disrespected and declined the significance of stressful situation.

Discussion. People overusing psychoactive substances from the studied population, were more prone to external stimulates, which disperse and irritate them evoking defensive attitude. Many psychological and sociological theories emphasise, that some features of character connected with cognitive, emotional and motivating sphere influencing a form and quality of relations with oneself and with other people, can facilitate or even destiny to certain behaviour, including overusing psychoactive substances. Inability to cope with stress is one of qualities and states that is very often identified in this group of risk as well.

Conclusions. The conducted studies confirm using in stressful situation, in the group of youth overusing psychoactive substances, the Emotionally Orientated Strategy, which aims to reduce emotions, increase tension and passive strategies of behaviour in stressful situation more frequently.

Słowa kluczowe: stres, środki psychoaktywne, młodzież.

Key words: stress, psychoactive substances, youth.

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INTRODUCTION

Many risk factors related to using psychoactive substances by youth were identified in literature. Windle et al. [1] distinguished five domains, to which they attributed risk factors of using alcohol by adolescents, according to their social situation, or: socially-environmental factors, school, family, peers and an individual. When factors connected with an individual are considered, youth confessing high level of alcohol consumption is characterized by specified set of features of character, with most commonly used strategies of coping with stress among them.

Analysing the ways of coping with stress, it was proved that the examined youth overusing psychoactive substances was getting disorganized, disrespecting and underestimating the importance of stressful situation. Similarly, Wills and Shiffman [2] perceive using alcohol/drugs as the way of coping with emotions and reduction of stress: some can use psychoactive substances to ignore unsolvable or uncontrollable stressors to feel better. Mroziak et al. [3] observed, that people addicted to alcohol, in comparison with healthy people, have stronger tendency to making use of unadoptable style, concentrated on avoiding problems by distracting attention. Among people, for whom using psychoactive substances is the only way of coping with the problem, and who have positive expectations connected with using them, psychoactive substances can become preferred strategy of coping in all stressful situations [4, 5].

AIM

The aim of presented study is defining most commonly chosen strategies of coping with stress among youth overusing psychoactive substances.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Studies were carried out among the group of patients of health centres and wards where they were treated. The group covered 100 people aged 14-19 overusing psychoactive substances (G-NU). In this group youth overusing alcohol (G-AI) – 46 (100%), people and youth overusing drugs (G-Nar) – 54 (100%) were distinguished. The following standards of selection to the examined group were set: the therapy because of overusing alcohol or drugs (first month of stay), lack of symptoms connected with serious somatic illnesses and organic damage of O.U.N., lack of mental handicap and mental disease symptoms, consent to participate in the study of examined subjects and their parents. The control group included 301 people who hadn't been treated because of risky behaviour and met the set criteria. The study was conducted in the years 2003-2006 throughout Poland.

In the subgroup of youth overusing drugs, 85.19% were at the age of 16-17, 3.7% at the age of 18-19 and 11.11% of examined were at the age of 14-15. In the group of youth overusing alcohol, 84.78% of examined were 16-17, 2.7% were 14-15 and 10.40% of respondents were at the age of 18-19.

In the group overusing psychoactive substances, most people attended gymnasium suffering from considerable school learning difficulties, that's why centres for youth

implement compulsory education. In the subgroup overusing drugs majority of the examined subjects attended gymnasium. In the subgroup of youth overusing alcohol about 26% attended gymnasium, 24% – secondary school, 24% – technical school and 20% – vocational schools.

The study applied the scale SRSS – Ways of Coping with Stress, designed by P. Oleś. The mentioned method assumes that operationalization of the theoretical approach is the construction of tools to study ways and strategies of coping with stress: „Ways of coping” [6]. The scale, after verification in 1985, includes 67 items, assessments basing on 4 point scale Likert type (from 0 to 3) [7]. When studying the ways and strategies of coping with stress, you can treat them in terms of characteristics if you get from the surveyed people general assessment of how they usually behave in stressful situation.

Some of them are sentences translated from original method of Folkman and Lazarus [7], some are lingual paraphrases of original sentences (if the same contents could have been expressed in Polish in the other way), some are authors' own propositions of sentences, developed on the basis of reviewing ways of coping with stress [8]. The method of studying the ways and strategies of coping with stress (SRSS), includes 11 detailed scales, whose reliability was checked with the method of internal compliance.

The following scales were distinguished:

Self-control (Op) – the scale consists of 8 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.74$; it measures predisposition of person to thoughtful behaviour and controlling emotions in stressful situation.

Searching for solution (Ro) – the scale consists of 6 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.66$, it analyses the ability of a person to use active way of coping with stress and searching for solution.

Mobilisation (Mo) – the scale including 7 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.82$; it measures the extent of individual's mobilisation to act in stressful situation.

Searching for information (Pi) – the scale includes 6 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.77$; it analyses the intensity of searching for information about the situation and ways of solving it by individual.

Searching for a support (Ws) – the scale consists of 4 items, the internal compliance is: $a=0.73$; it measures the degree of individual's searching for a support in the environment, when there is a stressful situation.

Resignation (Rg) – the scale consists of 5 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.69$; it measures the passive way of coping, by resigning of an effort and passive anticipation.

Self blaming (Sa) – the scale includes 6 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.76$; it measures inclination of individual to reacting to a stressful situation with negative feelings directed to oneself, such as auto aggression and self blaming.

Avoiding – escape (Un) – the scale consists of 5 items, its internal compliance is: $a=0.82$; it analyses the tendency of a person to avoid stressful confrontation and to escape from reality in connection with disorganization actions caused by stress.

Disrespecting (Ba) – the scale includes only 3 statements, its internal compliance was $a=0.53$; it measures inclination of a person to reduce the importance and disrespect stressful situation.

Compensating (Ko) – the scale includes 5 items, its internal compliance is: $\alpha=0.76$; it measures the inclination of an individual to compensate pain connected with stressful situation and undertake actions which make the compensation possible.

Religion (Re) – the scale includes 4 statements, the internal compliance of the scale is high, $\alpha=0.80$; it measures a degree in which person appeals to faith in coping with stress.

Optimism (Om) – the scale consists of 3 items, the internal compliance is: $\alpha=0.52$; the scale is used to examine a person's inclination to interpret stressful situation in optimistic way and expecting its positive solution.

Reflection (Rf) – the scale consists of 3 items, its internal compliance is: $\alpha=0.68$; it measures a person's conviction concerning the influence of stressful situations on creating the personality and acquiring experience and maturity.

First three scales express the strategies problematically orientated and the other seven ones are emotionally orientated. The factor accuracy of such distinction was confirmed. In connection with it, two general scales, consisting of items included in the mentioned detailed scales, were developed:

The problematically orientated strategy (PZS=Mo+Ro+Op) – the scale consists of 21 items, its internal compliance is $\alpha=0.86$; it is used to study active strategies of coping with stress, by confronting the problem and attempt to resolve it and changing the situation, and also thanks to rational behaviour and controlling emotions.

The emotionally orientated strategy (EZS=Pi+Ws+Rg+Sa+Un+Ba+Ko) – the scale consists of 40 items, its internal compliance is $\alpha=0.87$; it is used to study active strategies which tend to reduce emotions and reduce unpleasant tension and passive strategies of behaving in stressful situation.

RESULTS

Coping with stress

In the range of possibilities to cope with stress measured using the Scale of Coping with Stress (SRRS), significant differences between groups in the range of scales appeared: searching for a solution (RO), disorganization (DE), disrespecting (BA), compensating (KO), strategy concentrated on a problem (PZS). Youth overusing psychoactive substances significantly less frequently than youth from control group searched for active ways of coping with stress, which caused the condition of getting disorganized, disrespecting and reducing the importance of stressful situation more frequently (Table 1).

However in the range of possibilities to cope with stress, measured by using the SRSS Scale, there weren't any statistically significant differences between the group of youth overusing alcohol and youth overusing drugs. Both groups acquired similar results in the range of strategies of coping with stress.

DISCUSSION

People overusing psychoactive substances from the studied population, appeared to be receptive to external stimuli,

TABLE 1.

Scale	NU		GK		Test <i>t</i>		
	M	SD	M	SD	t	Df	p.i.
Self-control	1.75	0.56	1.85	0.28	-1.79	241	n.i.
Search for a solution	1.87	0.62	2.06	0.31	-2.83	133	**
Mobilization for action	1.85	0.62	1.92	0.40	-0.97	152	n.i.
Search for information	1.68	0.55	1.59	0.36	1.42	158	n.i.
Search for a support	1.61	0.68	1.69	0.45	-1.09	160	n.i.
Resignation, passiveness	1.37	0.78	1.06	0.42	3.62	138	***
Autoaggression, negative emotions	1.67	0.51	1.60	0.35	1.22	161	n.i.
Disorganization, escape from reality	1.44	0.60	1.28	0.36	2.47	147	*
Disrespecting	1.53	0.57	1.31	0.48	3.11	191	**
Compensating	1.56	0.66	1.88	0.42	-4.31	155	***
Religious	1.48	0.73	1.32	0.57	1.85	177	n.i.
Optimism	1.73	0.53	1.81	0.41	-1.36	176	n.i.
Maturation	1.66	0.80	1.67	0.46	-0.19	144	n.i.
Strategies concentrated on a problem	1.82	0.52	1.94	0.22	-2.14	120	*
Strategies concentrated on emotions	1.55	0.43	1.49	0.17	1.39	122	n.i.

which distract and stress them, inducing defensive attitude. It caused suspense for people's intentions and unwillingness to socialize [9].

Many psychological and sociological theories point out that some features of character connected with cognitive, emotional and motivating sphere, influencing a form and quality of relations with oneself and with other people, can make easier or even predispose to particular behaviours such as overusing psychoactive substances. Also incompetence to cope with stress – is one of the features and states very frequently found in this risk group. It can simplify and foster the adoption of attitudes and reactions predisposing to incorrect behaviour [4, 5].

Attracting attention to more significant meaning of external factors and egoistic motives in stressful situation can result from insatiated needs of an individual. Dynamic changes in development of personality factors in the maturation period, conditioning emotional lability, can contribute towards formation of tension and frustration conditions, which favour overusing psychoactive substances and using inefficient strategies of coping with stress [10].

CONCLUSIONS

The examined youth from a group overusing psychoactive substances more frequently in stressful situations exhibit a tendency to reward the troubles connected with stressful situation and take actions, which give the possibility of compensating them. Under the influence of the experienced stress, it tends to belittle the significance of felt emotions and disorganize actions by avoiding stressful confrontation and escape from reality.

Therefore, in preventive and therapeutic measures, connected with risk behaviour of youth, the role of individual insight into used strategies and possibilities to cope with stress must be pointed. It seems to be particularly important in adolescents, use of training skills to cope with stress and learning so called adaptive flexibility. Ability to fully experience and understand their own feelings, their place and role in life is also very important. These issues are of great importance for healthy and effective functioning in the period of maturation and for personality development, which is connected with soulfulness and openness to new experiences.

If we know these aspects of psychological functioning of minors, which influence the way of passing through a stage of adolescence, we know which psychological characteristics, preventive and therapeutic actions should be focused on.

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