

ABSTRACT:

Background: Illegal drug users are often socially excluded. It is not easy for them to cope with such behaviour and they assume that they will be treated unequally.

Aims: The main aim of the research is to map the experiences of illegal drug users with discrimination in everyday life. I was interested in what actions the clients themselves describe as discriminatory, regardless of whether it is actually discrimination from a legal point of view, in what areas of everyday life they encounter discrimination and whether they resolve the situation in any way.

Main research questions:

- How do respondents understand the concept of discrimination?
- In what areas do respondents encounter discrimination?
- Whether and how have respondents dealt with the situation?

Sample: The research sample consisted of 10 persons (5 men and 5 women) using addiction services. 5 respondents were clients of a low threshold facility and the remaining 5 respondents were in institutional care. The respondents had to meet the basic criterion of illegal substance use. It was irrelevant whether they had developed an addiction.

Methods: Interviews were recorded on a tape recorder and then transcribed into MS Word and analyzed using thematic analysis with semi-open coding and categorization methods.

Results: All respondents reported that they had encountered discrimination in their everyday lives. The most frequently mentioned issue was the problematic attitude of society, the second most frequently mentioned area was health care. Awareness of discrimination legislation and protection against discrimination was insufficient among the respondents.

Conclusion and recommendation: The legal concept of discrimination does not correspond to what respondents consider discrimination. There is a need to raise users' awareness of how to recognise discrimination and how to defend themselves. I would suggest the creation of programmes on legal literacy for substance users and education for workers in addictology programme.

Keywords: discrimination - stigmatization - drugs - anti-discrimination law