

# **Abstract**

## **Background:**

In Czech Republic, the use of addictive substances in the general population is regularly evaluated. In people with spinal cord lesions, the issue of substance abuse is not sufficiently mapped. Difficulty to get feedback can also play a role in this regard. There are many factors for possible risky behavior in people with spinal cord lesions. In Czech Republic, there are several aftercare facilities that comprehensively address clients with spinal cord lesions. In these facilities, obtaining feedback from this specific group of clients would help get better target interventions and set up other specific services for the monitored subpopulation.

## **Objectives:**

The main goal of the research was to map the issue of dependence on legal and illegal addictive substances in a group of people with spinal cord injuries after injury or illness. A secondary goal was the feedback from the Centre's clients on whether and how they would use addictology counseling.

## **Methods:**

Data for quantitative research were obtained by voluntary questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were gradually obtained from the centre's clients in person between the three waves of the covid epidemic between 2020 and 2021. The research sample consisted of a total of 106 respondents aged between 18 to 77 years. Anonymous questionnaires were processed in Microsoft Excel with the help of descriptive statistics. The entire research was approved by the organization's Ethics Committee.

## **Results:**

The results show that although the lifetime prevalence results of legal and illegal addictive substances in people with spinal cord lesions are at the same values as in the general population, the prevalence of daily use of some legal addictive substances is significantly higher in people with spinal cord lesions than in general population. For most illicit addictive substances, the prevalence of daily use is significantly lower than that in the general population.

In the research group, the prevalence of daily alcohol use is 22,7 % compared to the general population, i.e. 8,5 %. In people with spinal cord lesions, research has shown a prevalence of 21,7 % of daily tobacco use. In the general population, studies in 2019 showed a daily prevalence of smoking of 18,1 %. The results also show that the daily use of cannabis in the

subpopulation of people with spinal cord lesions is 4 %, in the last 30 days it is used in 2,6 % and in the last year 8,9 %, which is similar to the findings in the general population, namely 9.4%. The annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Czech Republic in 2019 shows that cannabis is the most frequently used illegal substance. The life prevalence of cannabis is 26 -39%. In the research group, it was a total of 25,7 % of respondents who had tried cannabis at some point in their lives (Annual Report on the State of Drug Affairs in the Czech Republic in 2019).

### **Conclusion:**

The questionnaire survey mapped the prevalence of the use of legal and illegal addictive substances in people with spinal cord lesions. This research with an overview of the prevalence of different types of addictive substances can help professionals and health professionals who are in daily contact in a particular facility with this specific group of people with service settings and interventions for clients at risk. Risky behavior slows progress and plans in the rehabilitation of people with spinal cord lesions. The present bachelor's thesis can deepen our understanding of clients with spinal cord lesions using addictive substances, and can be used as a basis for further extended research into risky behavior in people with spinal cord lesions.

### **Recommendation:**

People with spinal cord injuries after an injury or illness form a large group of people with acquired physical disabilities. However, information on substance abuse and addiction can only be obtained by assisted completion of a questionnaire for some people with spinal cord injuries. Early intervention and education on the risky use of addictive substances and addiction can prevent other, not only health, complications. It can also help adhere to the rehabilitation plan, which increases the quality of life of people with spinal cord injuries.

### **Keywords:**

physical disability, spinal cord lesions, substance abuse, risky behavior in people with spinal cord injuries