

ABSTRACT

Background: Substance use also occurs among the elderly and poses an increased risk of various health and social problems in this group. Currently, this specific group is somewhat neglected in addiction studies. In my opinion, seniors are a highly vulnerable group associated with the consumption of addictive substances, and this issue has not been extensively studied in the Czech Republic yet.

Objectives: The main goal of this study is to determine which addictive substances are currently used by seniors in Prague and their prevalence. Secondary objectives include determining which sociodemographic and health characteristics affect substance use among seniors, the reasons they use these substances, and their awareness of addiction services.

Methods: Given the focus of this study and its objectives, a quantitative approach was chosen for the research. Data was collected using a custom-designed electronic and printed questionnaire as the research tool.

Results: The research indicates that seniors in Prague are frequent users of addictive substances. Coffee and alcohol are the most commonly used, followed by the use of medications (such as hypnotics, anxiolytics, and analgesics), cannabis products, and nicotine products. Only a small percentage of respondents reported using other addictive substances such as marijuana in the form of cigarettes, kratom, and methamphetamine. The use of other addictive substances was not reported. Seniors use addictive substances for various reasons, often involving a combination of physical, psychological, and social factors. The study also confirmed existing correlations between sociodemographic and health characteristics of the respondents and their substance use. Seniors are well aware of the potential for addiction to substances and the harmful effects of these substances on their health. However, awareness of addiction services among older people was very low.

Conclusion: It was found that seniors in Prague currently use addictive substances extensively, and out of a total sample of 150 respondents, not a single participant reported not using any. A significant increase in use was also confirmed by comparing the results of this research with two other previous studies, where an increase was observed in all compared addictive substances.

Keywords: Senior, old age, addictive substances, addiction, awareness