6th International Conference on Addiction Therapy

Substance Abuse, and Crime in Adolescence: The role of family

Prof. Valeria Verrastro, Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences, Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro, Italy

Prof. Francesca Cuzzocrea, Department of Health Sciences, Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro, Italy

Dr. Maria Pisano, Department of Health Sciences, Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro, Italy

Dr. Martina Tallarico, Department of Health Sciences, Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro, Italy

Dr. Valeria Saladino, Department of Human, Social and Health Sciences, University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, Italy

Abstract:

Several studies were focused on the association between substance abuse and criminal actions, as two of the main risky behaviors of adolescents.

Indeed, adolescents are more likely to be involved in behaviors such as drug abuse and criminal acts. These conducts are common among people who live in problematic family system or who experiment violence or substance abuse close to them. For instance, among family members, or in the peer group.

Data from several studies underlined the role of family climate, support, and communication, as well as, parental drug abuse, and parental incarceration, on illicit and at-risk behaviors.

Our work shows the main result of a literature review on the topic: the role of the family system on the juvenile substance abuse and crime.

This review explores the interplay among these factors, analyzing the main results of 61 articles published between 2010 and 2020.

From this work emerged that adolescents whose parents are justice-involved and often absent from home are more likely to perceive lower cohesion, support, and poor family communication.

These aspects might involve adolescents in criminal behaviors and substance abuse conduct.

Also, these risky behaviors are often linked to a feeling of uneasiness and a need of autonomy.

We also analyzed the connection between drug and crime, finding that the most diffused drug-related crimes in adolescence are economic crimes, weapon carrying, robberies, dealing, and drug possession.

According to these results, future clinical implications might be based on multidimensional approaches, focusing more on the family context to promote interventions for at-risk adolescents.

Importance of Research:

Our main findings suggest that illegal behavior and use of drugs within the family system increase the possibility for adolescents to be involved in criminality and addiction.

Furthermore, young people who experiment risky conducts often have a perception of lacking family support, negative climate, and communication and all these factors can contribute to the development of problematic behaviors.

Moreover, the connection between criminal activities and substance abuse can lead to a future criminal career and addiction in late adolescence and adulthood.

These focuses are important for future research, which should highlight the evaluation of the effectiveness of specific intervention components with outcome measures, to prevent and manage substance abuse among adolescents.



Biography:

Prof. Valeria Verrastro is a psychologist, psychotherapist, developmental and educational psychology researcher at the "Magna Graecia" University of Catanzaro, is co-director of the Institute for the Study of Psychotherapies in Rome. She has coordinated research in the field of family relationships, development and risk and protective factors in adolescence.

Institute Information:

The "Magna Graecia" University of Catanzaro is a university located in Catanzaro, Italy. It was founded in 1998 and is organized in three faculties: Faculty of Law, faculty of Medicine and Surgery, faculty of Pharmacy. The University is involved in several research projects and partnerships.

Institute Photograph:



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