

Substance Abuse Among Prisoner in Erbil/Iraq

S. Ali¹, J.W.A.N. Zangna¹, T.A.R.A. Sirwan²

¹psychiatry, college of medicine, Erbil, Iraq ; ²Pharmacist, Directorate of Health, Erbil, Iraq

Abstract:

Background and objectives: Large proportions of people who enter the criminal act and prison have a history of drug use. Many of these people continue to use drugs while in prison. As there have been no recent studies of substance use in prisoners among our community, we have conducted this study of the prevalence of substance abuse and dependence in prisoners.

Methods: This study was conducted at directorate of adult reformatory prison in Erbil city, within a period of 6 months between 15th of March to 15 September 2014. A convenient sample of 100 sentenced male prisoners from the entire number during the period of the study was selected. After randomization each prisoner was assessed through semi-structured interview based on the DSM IV. Drug abuse patterns and the relationship among addiction, crime prevalence, and some personal as well as socio-demographic characteristics were studied.

Results: According to the findings, characteristics such as age, education level, economic status, urban and/or rural status, all have an effects on the rate of drug use and, on crime commitment and its re-occurrence. Accordingly, younger age, lower socioeconomic status and urban residence showed a relationship with tendency to commit crime.

Conclusion: The prevalence of substance abuse and dependence, although highly variable, is typically many orders of magnitude higher in prisoners than the general population. This highlights the need for screening for substance abuse and dependence at reception into prison, effective treatment while in custody, and follow-up on release.

Key words: substance abuse, prison, Erbil