

Trend of change in abused substances among adolescent drug dependence population in the 1980s in Thailand

Usaneya Perngpam, Vipa Danthamrongkul and Vichai Poshychinda
Institute of Health Research, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

ABSTRACT

Trend of change in type of principal substances used by the adolescent drug dependence treatment population in the 1980s was study from the new cases or cases that reported no previous treatment experience, age 15-24 year old in the annual drug dependence treatment population. The materials were retrieved from the national database of the Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Public Health compiled from drug dependence treatment intake records reported from all treatment services in the country. The number of annual treatment population ranged from about 11,000 in 1980 to about 56,000 in 1989. During this decade, the size of new case population were fairly stable for clients living in Bangkok, and the northeastern region. Trend of fairly sharp decrease new case population were observed in the south and central regions. The percentages of adolescents both the early, age 15-19 years and the late, age 20-24 years, subgroups in the new case population decreased from 14.5 and 35.8% in 1980 to 9.6% and 24.7% in 1989 respectively. The most remarkable trend of change in the 1980s was the nation wide epidemic spread of organic (industrial) solvent sniffing, mainly toluence in paint thinner, lacquer and glue, among the adolescents. The early adolescents had consistently higher percentages of users than the late subgroup. The maximal level of percentages among the new cases appeared in the northeastern region at the level of about 50 and 20% for the early and late adolescents respectively in 1989. Trend of slight increase new case percentages of opium and heroin users were observed in the northern and northeastern regions respectively. It was noted that all the remarkable changes were in the provincial regions while Bangkok seemed relatively stable.

Key words : Adolescent, Drug addicts, Inhalant

An International Conference "Youth in the Asia-Pacific Region" Organized by East-West Center,
Honolulu, Hawaii, Bangkok on June 30-July 4, 1992