International Aspects of Social Work Practice in the Addictions

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War and Peace: Social Work and the State of Chemical Dependency Treatment in the United States

Diana M. DiNitto

In recent decades, treatment for alcohol and drug problems in the United States has been influenced by a number of factors. This article discusses several of these factors, including the “War on Drugs,” with its emphasis on law enforcement and interdiction, and managed health care, which has compromised access to treatment. In spite of these factors, the U.S. invests a goodly amount in alcohol and drug prevention and treatment services and research. Efforts are being made to ensure that research findings are being translated into improved clinical practice. Among the controversial issues in the treatment arena are recent efforts by the Bush administration to promote public funding of faith- or religious-based groups in delivering chemical dependency services. Social workers commonly see people with alcohol and drug problems in their practices, but only a small number of social workers are well prepared to treat this group of clients.

KEYWORDS. Addiction treatment in U.S., chemical or substance dependency, substance abuse, social work, policy, war on drugs

Addiction Problems, Addiction Services, and Social Work in the Republic of Ireland

Shane Butler

The aim of this paper is to review policy and practice in relation to the management of alcohol and drug problems in Ireland, with a specific focus on the role of professional social work. There is a high prevalence of alcohol and drug problems in the caseloads of social workers that work within the statutory childcare and criminal justice services. Professional social work in Ireland is of comparatively
recent origin and there are few social workers employed in specialist addiction posts or settings in Ireland. The profession as a whole, moreover, has not actively lobbied for a greater role in specialist services. While formal social policy on addictions has shifted in recent decades towards broad public health strategies, which reflect a pragmatic European perspective, the disease model from the United States of America continues to have popular appeal.

KEYWORDS. Drug and alcohol policy in Ireland, social work education, childcare, criminal justice, specialist treatment, agency function

Dutch Drug Policy and the Role of Social Workers

Peter de Koning
Alex de Kwant

Dutch drug policy has been renowned because of its pragmatic and liberal approach, and its positive effects on the health status and mortality rate of hard drug addicts. This policy, however, has had some negative consequences, especially with respect to crime and safety in big cities. As a result, the government took measures to redress these problems. This article presents an overview of recent measures in health care and criminal justice in the Netherlands and discusses the role of social work in drug addiction.

KEYWORDS. Drug policy in the Netherlands, health care, Dutch criminal justice, role of social work

Substance Use and Abuse and the Role of Social Workers in Germany

Irmgard Vogt

The paper outlines major trends in consumption patterns of alcohol and other drugs in Germany with special focus on the use of cannabis among young people. It discusses primary prevention efforts and describes the current treatment system with its two branches: one for people with alcohol problems and the other for those with drug problems. It highlights the developing role of social work and identifies the research topics that are influenced by social workers and that will influence the debate regarding the future role of the profession.

KEYWORDS. Psychoactive drugs in Germany, alcohol and drug abuse, prevention and treatment systems, social work, research

Social Work and the Treatment of Substance Abuse in Israel

Neta Peleg-Oren
Giora Rahav
Meir Teichman

This paper examines the role of the social worker within the field of substance abuse in Israel at the start of the 21st century, its implications for the profession, and the training of its practitioners. Addiction to psychoactive substances is viewed as a bio-psycho-social phenomenon caused by a wide variety of factors and the respective interactions between them, placing it within the realm of the expertise of the social worker. The social worker plays a central role in providing both administrative and clinical interventions with this population. Additional ways in which the education and training of social workers can prepare them to deal more efficiently and comprehensively with the problem of substance abuse in both practical and academic terms is discussed.

KEYWORDS. Treatment of addictions in Israel, social work profession, policy, prevention

Drug and Alcohol Addiction in Singapore: Issues and Challenges in Control and Treatment Strategies

Mohd Maliki Osman

The problem of drug addiction in Singapore has been relatively under control over the past few years. This is a result of the strategy of controlling supply to reduce demand for drugs. Alcohol consumption in Singapore is relatively low compared to Western countries. This paper provides an overview of the drug and alcohol control and treatment strategies adopted in Singapore. While new strategies have been formulated, some issues and challenges still remain. These issues and challenges are discussed and findings of a recent study conducted by the author are described. They include the need to focus on gateway drugs like alcohol, intervention involving family members, opportunities for regular employment for drug addicts, and the role of religion in aftercare treatment.

KEYWORDS. Drug and alcohol use in Singapore, addiction, treatment, challenges, role of religion

A Preliminary Exploration of Immigrant Substance Abusers from the Former Soviet Union Living in Israel, Germany and the United States: A Multi-National Perspective

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Irmgard Vogt
Victor Chtinguelov

The Former Soviet Union (FSU) has historically been seen as having an unusually large population of individuals with alcohol problems. Since the fall of the communist regime, a growing drug abusing population has become visible. With the large migration of its residents to western countries and to Israel, the rates of alcohol and drug problems among these immigrants appear to be disproportionally high, although reliable data are lacking. The purpose of this article is to summarize exploratory data regarding alcohol and other drug use among immigrants from the Former Soviet Union living in Israel, Germany and the United States, and to identify further research needs and implications for treatment and policy.

KEYWORDS. Drug and alcohol abuse, Russian immigrants, heroin addicts in Former Soviet Union, Israel, Germany, United States
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Dr. Straussner has written numerous publications dealing with substance abuse and with occupational social work and EAPs. Among her textbooks are Occupational Social Work (Haworth); Clinical Work With Substance Abusing Clients; Gender and Addictions: Men and Women in Treatment; Ethnocultural Factors in Substance Abuse Treatment; and the Handbook on Addiction Treatment for Women (with Stephanie Brown). She is also the founding editor of the Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions.

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