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Fatal consequences of drug abuse in Slovakia

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Using drugs represent a serious health and social problem. The aim of the paper is to present the results of analysis of cases of drug-related deaths in the period between 2004–2015 in Slovakia. The study included all those deceased who died in relation to drug abuse and were submitted to medico-legal autopsy and toxicological investigation in Slovakia within a period of the years 2004–2015. The obtained data were analysed according to methodology of European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addictions. There were reported 1150 cases in total, i.e. 2% of all autopsies. In absolute figures so-called indirect deaths-654 cases (57%), prevail over so-called direct deaths-496 cases (43%). Out of the total number of cases, 74% were men. 46% of the cases were ≤ 34 years of age. Illicit drugs were related to 52% of deaths. The most frequently detected drugs in the group of direct deaths were from the group of medicaments and opiates. In the group of indirect deaths, the situation was similar, except for opiates, higher prevalence was of the substances from the group of amphetamines/methamphetamines and cannabinoids. Fatal poisoning number was seen to be related to illicit drugs which varied from 4 to 6 per million inhabitants aged between 15–64 years per year. Low mortality rate related to illicit drugs was found out in the period of years between 2004–2015 which ranks Slovakia among countries with the lowest death rate of overdosing with illicit drugs in Europe.

Biography

Jozef Sidlo is an Associate Professor and Chief Expert for Forensic Medicine of Ministry of Health of Slovak Republic, National Expert for Drug-Related Deaths, Head of two Institutes of Forensic Medicine in Bratislava, Scientific Secretary of Slovak Society of Forensic Medicine, and Editor of the journal *"Folia Societatis Medicinæ Legalis Slovacæ"*. He has published more than 450 papers and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of another 4 journals. He has presented more than 400 lectures, of them more than 50 as Invited Speaker. He has acted as Chairman and Co-chairman of more than 45 scientific sections at domestic and international congresses.

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