

Behavioural Disorders: The Historical Perspective of the Largest City of the Croatian Istria County

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The goal of this research was to gain insight into the state and trends of certain specific risks and behavioural disorders over the years in the area of the city of Pula, with the purpose of monitoring changes that would provide guidelines for determining current needs, with a projection into the future of that area. The data was collected based on an insight into five major studies of behavioural disorders during the last forty years. The results showed that the trends are relatively uniform, with minor deviations over the years. The last measurement, in which the growth of excessive alcohol consumption among young people is enormous, stands out. Based on the obtained parameters, it should be possible to access further research and create and implement a programme of social measures and actions appropriate to the needs of the observed population.

Keywords: behavioural disorders, city of Pula-Croatia, historical trends, prevention, treatment

Introduction

For the past thirty years, special attention has been paid to risk factors for the appearance and development of behavioural disorders in children and young people. These risk factors set, in the emergence and development of behavioural disorders, set conceptual frameworks that explain the action of such factors, or apply knowledge about them in different conceptual frameworks for their prevention. These risk factors are all influences that increase the likelihood of serious difficulties in the process of socialization of children and young people who are interacting, and in which we can distinguish two groups (Coie et al. 1993 as cited in Kirby and Fraser 1997):

- risky traits or predispositions (e.g. gender, temperament, hyperactivity, some cognitive difficulties),
- characteristics of the environment – environmental conditions that have a direct and/or indirect effect on the total amount of risk (difficulties and pathologies in family dynamics of any kind, poverty, etc.).

The areas of risk are different, and the authors Williams, Ayers, and Arthur (1997) list the following major groups:

1. genetic or biological risk factors,
2. individual and peer risk factors,
3. school-related risk factors,
4. risk factors in the family,
5. risk factors in the community.

More precisely, risk processes are those that explain where and how risk factors lead to high vulnerability. At the same time, separating risky processes from risky traits is the main challenge for researchers and practitioners dealing children and youth with behavioural disorders. In addition to the above, risk is increasingly defined and assessed as the probability that future disorders will decrease in the balance between the competences of children and youth (resilience) on the one hand, and their riskiness (vulnerability) on the other.

In this context, scientific research seeks to find answers to questions about the degree of risk of children and youth, and to explain their actions, in order to apply this knowledge for the adequate implementation of prevention strategies aimed at behavioural disorders in children and youth.

Children and Young People with Behavioural Disorders in the Area of Pula: Historical Perspective

In the literature about the city of Pula, the largest city in the Croatian Istria County, and its past, in addition to considerations about political and social circumstances, there are mentions of behavioural disorders of children and youth. They are not continuous, so it is possible to follow the phenomenon only fragmentarily, that is, to follow individual periods from the distant past up to today, from which it is evident that every social community had its own attitudes and understandings of children and young people, their behaviour and treatment. Concern and care for this population category was different and depended on a number of conditions. Namely, among other things, the geographical position of Istria, which is located both on the Mediterranean and close to the cultural centres of Central Europe, has exposed this region to the influence of strong cultures of the East and West. During its history, from the loss of independence of Histria in 177 BC, until the independence of the Republic of Croatia in 1990, the city of Pula was a part of the Roman Empire until 476, the Eastern Gothic states until 538, the Byzantine Empire until

788, the Frankish Empire until 952, the Bavarian states until 976, the States of the German feudal lords until 1209, the Feud of the Church of Aquileia until 1420, the Republic of Venice until 1797, Austria until 1805, France until 1813, Austria until 1918, Italy until 1943, the Provisional Administration of Germany until 1945, the Anglo-American military administration until 1947, and finally Yugoslavia until 1990 (Paić 1991).

In Roman law, and later in medieval law, the fact that the perpetrator of the crime was a child or a minor was already taken into account to a certain extent. However, until the end of the nineteenth century we do not come across any serious attempts to establish the special position of minors in criminal law (Hirjan and Singer 1987). Thus, in the city of Pula the first important written evidence related to children and youth and the services that should deal with them can be found in the Statute of the Municipality of Pula from the year 1500, which is an important shift in the care and protection of children and youth. Namely, the provisions of this statute refer to guardianship and two services: Guardianship Service and Custodial Service (Povijesni muzej Istre 2000, 94–95). Several centuries later, *Naša sloga*, a Croatian weekly newspaper that was printed in city of Trieste at the end of the nineteenth century, and then in city of Pula, writes about the difficult state of education in the Pula region, in the sense that children from suburban settlements could not go to school (Ujčić 1963). For Croatian education in Istria and Pula, the Society of St. Ćiril and Metod for Istria was very important. It was founded in the city of Pula in 1893, and bought land for the construction of schools in the Pula area, but also took care of other categories of children and young people (e.g. hungry children in 1917, 1918).

It is important to note that on 22 February 1930, the Youth Court was established in Pula (Paić, private personal notes). The Law on Types of Penalties from 1946 (Hirjan and Singer 1987) envisioned the possibility of imposing 'three' educational measures on juvenile perpetrators of criminal offenses: handing over minors to their parents or other persons who take care of them, reprimand and referral to a correctional institution, and undergoing capital punishment for older minors. The Criminal Code from 1951 included two educational measures. A novelty was introduced in 1959 in the form of nine different sanctions, i.e. eight educational measures and a juvenile prison sentence, which improved the possibility of individualizing the sanction for minors.

More modern trends in the treatment of children and youth with behavioural disorders were recorded in the second half of the twentieth century. In that period, modern systems of intervention measures (treatment) for juvenile offenders can be viewed through different theoretical and philo-

sophical approaches (Dekleva 1996, as cited in Žižak and Koller-Trbović 1999): classical (morally punitive), modern (rehabilitation-treatment), and post-modern (restorative-responsibility). Also, the treatment of children and minors with behavioural disorders needs to be seen through its theoretical foundation, i.e. through the models on which certain treatments were based, explaining, through the history of treatment, the accepted ways of interpreting human nature as a whole, alongside documenting specific behaviours or behavioural disorders (medical, behavioural and psychoeducational models). Throughout history, institutions have generally not documented the theoretical basis of their programmes, so it is difficult to evaluate them, while research has been able to uncover relatively little about it (Mejovšek 1984).

In accordance with these models and their acceptance, various institutions were opened in the area of the city of Pula. Thus, on 15 July 1958, the Centre for Social and Health Prevention was founded. In the early 1960s, today's Centre for Education of Children and Youth was opened, while pedagogues and psychologists began to be employed in the schools. Young people's free time was organized more intensively. The Youth Centre was founded in 1961. It was an independent institution which organized, improved and implemented cultural, artistic and educational work and the upbringing of children and young people, as well as their entertainment and leisure. At that time, the union of societies, *Naša djeca*, of the Pula municipality had 30 societies (Ujčić 1963).

About forty years ago, more systematic scientific research into behavioural disorders began to be carried out in this area, first in terms of causality and manifestations, and later in the identification of risks and strengths:

1. In the early 1980s, in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, including the city of Pula, more extensive research was carried out, which dealt, among other things, with research into the personal characteristics of juvenile delinquents and the characteristics of their behaviour, i.e. the forms and causes of these disorders. At that time, special emphasis was given to the research that was interpreted as part of their professional-analytical activity by a group of authors, expert workers of the Centre for Social Welfare in Pula in 1984 (Banković et al. 1984), in cooperation with experts from the Department of Behavioural Disorders and Penology of the Faculty of Special Education, University of Zagreb. The main goal of the research was the analysis of juvenile delinquency in the territory of the then municipality of Pula, with the purpose of further elaboration of the programme of measures and actions to suppress and

prevent the occurrence of juvenile delinquency, which is a significant contribution of this research. The sample of examinees ($N = 185$) was represented by children and minors from the area of the municipality of Pula who, in the period from 1979 to 1981, due to the commission of a criminal offense, were reported to the then Municipal Public Prosecutor's Office in Pula.

2. A more significant research was the one that was carried out from 1992 to 1995 as part of the scientific research project 'The influence of social and economic factors on the structure and development of crime in Croatia.' The project was carried out by the Faculty of Special Education and the Faculty of Criminal Sciences, University of Zagreb. For the area of Pula, the aim of the research was to determine the characteristics of the personality and behaviour of minor perpetrators of violent and property offences in the area of the local jurisdiction of the then District Court in Pula, assessed by experts from the Centre for Social Welfare (Radetić 1994). The sample of examinees consisted of 129 minor perpetrators of violent and property offences who, in the period between 1988 and 1993, were sentenced to death for the said criminal acts, had a sanction imposed on them, or the criminal proceedings against them were suspended for reasons of expediency.
3. The following scientific research was carried out from 1998 to 2002 as part of the scientific research project 'Models of interventions for the purpose of preventing behavioural disorders of children, youth and adults in the Republic of Croatia.' The leader of the project was the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb. The research was focused on studying the so-called risk factors, but also on the identification of existing positive strengths both in the children or minors, as well as in their environment, with the purpose of assessing the need for treatment of children and minors with behavioural disorders for the city of Pula. The assessment of the riskiness of a certain area of risk/needs was based on the personal judgments of experts working at the Centre for Social Welfare. The sample of examinees for the city of Pula consisted of 100 children, minors and young adults (Radetić-Paić 2002a; 2002b; 2003).
4. Furthermore, from 2007 to 2014, the scientific research project 'Coordinating interventions with the needs of children and youth at risk: development of a model' was carried out by the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb, Croatia. The project had several goals: to develop, standardize and equip for practical implementa-

tion the instruments for assessing the needs/risks of children and youth at risk and/or with behavioural disorders; to record and describe the population of children and youth included in the existing system of social welfare interventions through three key characteristics: risk levels, potential and intervention needs; to analyse these characteristics in terms of the appropriateness of the interventions in which they deal; to record and describe the one-year population of new users of interventions; to describe children and young people at risk/with behavioural disorders in relation to these key characteristics; to identify risk levels, potential and intervention needs in areas of different sizes, characteristics and possibilities; to propose a system of interventions aligned with the assessed levels of risk, intervention needs and user potential. The above was also carried out for the city of Pula on a sample of 100 children and minors (Radetić-Paić 2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2012).

5. The research 'Positive development of adolescents in Croatia' (PRAG-HR) was conducted by a team of scientists from the Laboratory for Prevention Research, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, in cooperation with partners including the city of Pula (Ferić et al. 2019). In the Pula locality, nine secondary schools participated in the research. The research was conducted during the 2018/2019 school year, simultaneously in all involved secondary schools ($N = 704$ students). The main goal of the project was to investigate the characteristics of the development and growth of young people in Croatia, i.e. to check how young people see their behaviour, feelings and states, the resources they have and how they experience close relationships in various domains. This project wanted to find out important information about the positive development and needs of young people with regard to external resources (family, school, community, peer groups) and their internal strengths and advantages in order to jointly design a strategy to promote their positive development and better preventive activities. It should be emphasized that this research, in contrast to the previous ones, was observed and conducted on the regular population of students, so not with subjects at risk or with already expressed behavioural disorders.

Methodology

Based on everything presented, the goal of this research was to gain insight into the state and movement of certain specific risks and problems in behaviour over the years in the area of the city of Pula with the purpose of moni-

toring changes that would provide guidelines for determining current needs, with a projection into the future of that area. The data were collected based on an insight into five major studies of behavioural problems in the area of Pula, the largest Istrian city in Croatia, during the last forty years, as part of the previously mentioned research or projects. Samples of examinees were described in the previous chapter. There were written traces of studies earlier (Singer 1980), but no common characteristics could be found for comparison. The data were processed and analysed on the basis of relative frequencies, chain indexes (V_t) and projections (Y), which were used to calculate more detailed changes in the state of phenomena in successive periods.

The observed research variables are:

- earlier records and interventions,
- broken family relationships,
- running away from school,
- inadequate use of free time,
- excessive alcohol consumption,
- aggressiveness.

Results and Discussion

Looking at the trends in individual forms of behavioural disorders over the last forty years (table 1), the last observed year, 2018, stands out immediately. It is significantly different from all other observed years. These findings are, in part, not surprising, due to the reason that this research, unlike all previous ones, was conducted on a regular population of students, with no behavioural disorders recorded up to that time. Above all, this can be seen from the missing information, that the fact that there were no previous records and interventions was stated by the students themselves. Also, considering the sample, it was expected that these examinees would run away from school less and be less aggressive. The same year, this time in a negative sense, stands out in the area of alcohol abuse, which actually indicates the alarming fact that alcohol abuse is very high among children whom we consider to be properly developed, i.e. without recorded behavioural disorders.

Observing the trends of the previous years (1984, 1994, 1998 and 2008), the course in all observed forms of behavioural disorders is relatively uniform, with minor deviations over the years. The number of previously registered examinees and those for whom interventions have already been undertaken shows a downward trend. About half of the observed examinees with already

Table 1 Relative Frequencies of Certain Forms of Behavioural Disorders in Research Conducted over the Last Forty Years

	1984	1994	1998	2008	2018
Earlier interventions	50.00	43.00	51.00	36.00	—
Broken family relationships	51.40	50.40	58.50	51.50	30.70
Running away from school	42.20	31.10	30.00	40.00	13.60
Inadequate use of free time	36.00	34.10	62.00	52.60	39.60
Excessive alcohol consumption	12.40	13.30	10.00	6.00	62.80
Aggressiveness	23.80	42.60	36.00	29.00	11.40

Table 2 Chain Indexes 1994–2018

Category	1994/1984	1998/1994	2008/1998	2018/2008
Earlier interventions	86.00	118.60	70.59	—
Broken family relationships	98.05	116.07	88.03	59.61
Running away from school	73.70	96.46	133.33	34.00
Inadequate use of free time	94.72	181.82	84.84	75.29
Excessive alcohol consumption	107.26	75.19	60.00	1046.67
Aggressiveness	178.99	84.51	80.56	39.31

demonstrated behavioural disorders had broken family relationships, with a smaller deviation in the negative sense during 1998. Running away from school, if we exclude the latest measurements on the population of subjects without behavioural disorders, ranges from 30 to 42.2%. From 1994 to 1998, there was a sharp increase in the inadequate use of free time by almost 100% of students, but a decrease is noticed in the following years. Excessive alcohol consumption among children and young people with behavioural disorders ranged from 6% to 13.3%, with very worrying data in the last measurement, during 2018, on the population of examinees without behavioural disorders, where the growth is enormous. Aggressiveness in all years averages to slightly less than 1/3, with a slightly larger deviation in 1994 (42.2%).

The chain indexes in table 2 show how many units of occurrence in the period from 1994 to 2018 occur for every hundred units of occurrence in the period $(t-1)$. The ratio of the current and previous value of the time series (by the coefficient of dynamics) is not multiplied by one hundred.

Projections of observed phenomena can be followed in table 3. All observed behavioural disorders, based on earlier indicators and consequently calculated projections of the development of the phenomenon for the next period, would decrease, except for alcohol abuse, which will increase.

Table 3 Projections 2028–2048

Category	2028	2038	2048
Earlier interventions	23.03	18.32	14.66
Broken family relationships	22.24	16.11	11.67
Running away from school	9.16	6.17	4.15
Inadequate use of free time	31.65	25.29	20.21
Excessive alcohol consumption	100.00	>100.00	>100.00
Aggressiveness	6.42	3.61	2.03

Conclusion

Based on the observed time series in all observed forms of behaviour disorders, it can be concluded that the trends are relatively uniform, with minor deviations over the years. The last measurement on the population of examinees without recorded behavioural disorders, in which the growth of excessive alcohol consumption among young people is enormous, stands out significantly.

The question is where to start in order to determine the stated needs or risk factors for the appearance and development of behavioural disorders for the city of Pula, on the basis of which it is possible to act? At the local level, it is the centres for social welfare that have the ability to gather all the information on the risk of behaviour disorders, as well as on the disorders that have already manifested, and undertake interventions according to the aforementioned population, which is worth keeping in mind during research. In addition, the Centre for Social Welfare is the most responsible at the level of the local community for taking certain interventions in the event of children and youth disorders, and beyond. Therefore, by researching the needs of the population of children and youth who are the point of interest of the Centre for Social Welfare Pula (today: Croatian Institute for Social Work – Pula branch), the needs of the Centre itself are defined, but what is even more important, the overall needs of the population at risk at the city level can be defined, which was the basic starting point of this research. Other institutions are not able to provide complete information about this population, since they only cover it segmentally. On the other hand, centres for social welfare are relatively alone in solving disorders related to children and youth with behavioural disorders, especially in the field of prevention, where there is a considerable need to involve the wider social community at the local level in solving the aforementioned disorders, as well as in connecting and harmonizing the needs for different forms of action.

The limitations of this research, which require caution in drawing conclusions, are primarily the uneven sample of examinees during the observed years in terms of the intensity of behavioural disorders, and the insufficient number of observed phenomenological forms that would enable the application of more robust statistical methods and insight into the latent dimensions of differences between examinees.

The value of the research is that it provides insight into the past forty years' trends with the purpose of monitoring changes that can provide guidance for future projections. The results point to the need for very extensive and thorough action in the prevention (and treatment) of these phenomena in the observed area of Pula. Based on the obtained parameters, it should be possible to access further research and create and implement a programme of social measures and actions appropriate to the needs of the population of children and youth with behavioural disorders or at risk of the above-mentioned disorders at the observed local level.

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Vedenjske motnje: zgodovinska perspektiva največjega mesta hrvaške Istrske županije

Cilj pričujočega raziskovanja je dobiti vpogled v stanje in gibanje posameznih specifičnih tveganj ter vedenjskih motenj na področju mesta Pulj skozi leta,

namen pa je spremljanje sprememb, ki bi lahko podale smernice za določanje sedanjih potreb ter projekcijo za prihodnost na tem področju. Podatki so pridobljeni na podlagi vpogleda v pet večjih raziskovanj vedenjskih motenj v zadnjih štiridesetih letih. Rezultati so pokazali, da so trendi relativno enotni, z manjšimi odstopanji skozi leta. Značilno izstopa zadnje merjenje, v katerem je povečanje čezmernega konzumiranja alkohola pri mladih enormno. Na podlagi pridobljenih parametrov naj bi se lahko pristopilo k nadaljnjim raziskavam ter izdelavi in izvajanju programov družbenih ukrepov ter akcij, ki so primerne za potrebe opazovane populacije.

Ključne besede: vedenjske motnje, Pulj, Hrvaška, zgodovinski trendi, prevencija, tretma