

Role of Internal and External Factors in Preventing Risky Sexual Behavior, Drug and Alcohol Abuse

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Abstract : Research relevance on psychological determinants of risky behaviors is caused by high prevalence of such behaviors, particularly among youth. Risky sexual behavior, including unprotected and casual sex, frequent change of sexual partners, drug and alcohol use lead to negative social consequences and contribute to the spread of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. Data were obtained from 302 respondents aged 15-35 which were divided into 3 empirical groups: persons prone to risky sexual behavior, drug users and alcohol users; and 3 control groups: the individuals who are not prone to risky sexual behavior, persons who do not use drugs and the respondents who do not use alcohol. For processing, we used the following methods: Qualitative method for nominative data (Chi-squared test) and quantitative methods for metric data (student's t-test, Fisher's F-test, Pearson's r correlation test). Statistical processing was performed using Statistica 6.0 software. The study identifies two groups of factors that prevent risky behaviors. Internal factors, which include the moral and value attitudes; significance of existential values: love, life, self-actualization and search for the meaning of life; understanding independence as a responsibility for the freedom and ability to get attached to someone or something up to a point when this relationship starts restricting the freedom and becomes vital; awareness of risky behaviors as dangerous for the person and for others; self-acknowledgement. External factors (prevent risky behaviors in case of absence of the internal ones): absence of risky behaviors among friends and relatives; socio-demographic characteristics (middle class, marital status); awareness about the negative consequences of risky behaviors; inaccessibility to psychoactive substances. These factors are common for proneness to each type of risky behavior, because it usually caused by the same reasons. It should be noted that if prevention of risky behavior is based only on elimination of external factors, it is not as effective as it may be if we pay more attention to internal factors. The results obtained in the study can be used to develop training programs and activities for prevention of risky behaviors, for using values preventing such behaviors and promoting healthy lifestyle.

Keywords : existential values, prevention, psychological features, risky behavior

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