

# THE INFLUENCE OF DRUG ADDICTION ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Shaban JAKUPI<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Criminal Law, Faculty of Law, University of Tetova, RNM<sup>1</sup>

\*Corresponding Author e-mail: shaban.jakupi@unite.edu.mk

---

## Abstract

The relationship between drug addiction and criminal behavior constitutes a complex interplay, as substance abuse impacts a wide spectrum of criminal activities. Building on foundational knowledge and guided by theoretical frameworks, multiple contributing factors influencing this interaction have been investigated. Socio-economic conditions, individual predispositions, and the availability of illicit substances are among the key factors in this context. By examining such factors, we aim to achieve a broader understanding of how substance abuse can trigger various criminal activities. Law enforcement strategies, treatment approaches, and their broader societal consequences are integral components of this study. Additionally, the examination of ethical considerations and human rights concerns that may arise is of importance. This study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to address the challenges posed by addiction and its relationship with criminality, with a focus on societal consequences and the potential for positive change. This can provide valuable insights into this issue, contributing to a deeper understanding and, among other things, its impact on the Western Balkans.

*Keywords:* Drug addiction, criminal behavior, human rights, societal consequences.

---

## 1. Introduction

Exploring the complex intersection of drug addiction and its consequential impact on criminal conduct, this study is dedicated to a thorough investigation with the aim of elucidating the intricate relationship between substance abuse and criminal behavior. In a scientific landscape where understanding these dynamics remains challenging, our research strives to contribute to a clear understanding supported by facts.

Embarking on this academic journey, we initially traverse the contextual landscape, providing a concise panoramic overview of the scientific domain encompassing drug addiction and criminal behavior. We navigate through prior research, amalgamating key studies, theories, and concepts that form the foundation of our investigation, thereby identifying unexplored areas and gaps in the existing knowledge.

Within this framework, the study unfolds to shed light not only on the immediate consequences but also on the broader societal implications of criminal behavior linked to drug use.

This research endeavor aspires not only to deepen theoretical insights but also to provide practical applications with significant implications for policy development and intervention strategies.

## 2. Methods

This study employed a comprehensive research methodology encompassing an extensive review of scholarly literature, including books, scientific articles, and relevant publications. Statistical data from reputable sources were analyzed to derive meaningful insights. The synthesis of information from diverse academic resources facilitated a thorough examination

of the intricate relationship between drug use and criminal behavior. Additionally, a systematic approach was adopted to assess and interpret the findings, ensuring the validity of the conclusions drawn. This combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses establishes a rigorous foundation for the subsequent discussions, contributing to the scholarly discourse on this complex subject.

### 3. Drug addiction

Drug addiction is a prevalent phenomenon with far-reaching implications, encompassing a spectrum of substances that significantly influence individuals' lives. Fundamental to drug addiction is the compulsive and uncontrollable use of substances, resulting in physical and psychological dependence. This complex interplay between the individual and the substance exerts a substantial impact on behavior, health, and overall well-being.

The range of addictive substances includes legal and illegal drugs, each uniquely affecting the brain and behavior. From commonly abused legal substances like alcohol and prescription medications to illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, the diverse substances contributing to addiction are extensive. Recognizing and comprehending this range is critical for understanding the nuanced nature of addiction.

On a neurobiological level, addiction entails alterations in the brain's reward system. These changes, driven by repeated exposure to addictive substances, affect neurotransmitters, particularly dopamine, a central player in the brain's pleasure and reward circuitry. As individuals engage in substance use, the brain adapts, reinforcing the cycle of craving, consumption, and compulsive seeking of the drug.

Psychologically, drug addiction intertwines with various behavioral patterns, including compulsive drug-seeking, loss of control over use, and continued substance use despite adverse consequences. The cognitive and emotional aspects of addiction contribute significantly to its impact on decision-making, priorities, and interpersonal relationships.

Navigating the intricate landscape of drug addiction, it's crucial to recognize its profound connection to criminal behavior. In the realm of criminal activities, the influence of drug addiction becomes a pivotal factor, shaping various dimensions of illicit behavior.

*3.1. Relationship between crime and drug use:* The link between drug use and criminal behavior is a complex field with various models offering insights. Understanding these relationships is crucial for comprehensive approaches to address the multifaceted factors influencing criminal behaviors associated with substance use. This exploration encompasses diverse models, starting from Goldstein's Tripartite Model<sup>1</sup>, each shedding light on different aspects of the intricate interplay between drug use and criminality.

The psychopharmacological model explores how psychoactive substances impact aggression and violence. Whether used acutely or chronically, these substances can induce excitability, irritability, fear, disinhibition, mood swings, cognitive distortions, and impaired judgment, potentially leading to criminal behavior. In connection with crimes such as burglary, robbery, and theft, around 65% of perpetrators were found to be under the influence of drugs at the time of the offense. Additionally, around 55% of crimes such as fraud/forgery, fights, homicide, and public disturbances involved individuals influenced by drugs. Furthermore, with a notable emphasis on offenses like assault, prostitution, property damage, traffic violations, family-related offenses, and sex offenses, the statistics show an exceeding 50% involvement in such crimes.<sup>2</sup> While alcohol tops the list for psychopharmacologically induced crime, stimulants like cocaine/crack and amphetamines, particularly crack cocaine,

---

<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, P. J. (1985). The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 39, 143-174.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994, September). *Drugs & Crime Data*.

are recognized for their significant contribution to drug-related violence in urban areas. An estimated 85% of crack cocaine users are involved in some form of violent crime.<sup>3</sup> Opiates and cannabis are considered less likely to induce such crimes, with some suggesting a potential reduction in aggression for these substances.

Economic-compulsive crimes emerge from dependence on expensive substances, driving users to commit crimes to sustain their drug habits. This spans consensual acts like drug selling or prostitution to acquisitive crimes like shoplifting, robbery, and burglary. Offenders may even be compensated in drugs. This category also includes forging prescriptions and burgling pharmacies, providing medicines as substitutes for illicit products. While labeled "compulsive," not all users resort to economic crime, as some regulate their drug use based on financial resources, seek legitimate income, or maximize "in-kind" income.

Systemic crimes mainly involve violent acts within illicit drug markets, serving as part of the business of drug supply, distribution, and use. Violence is strategically used for control in situations like territorial disputes, punishment for fraud, debt collection, and clashes with the police. Systemic crimes in drug production and transit countries may also involve corruption of businesses, governments, and banking systems or crimes against humanity by drug traffickers. This violence is linked to prohibition and stems from the illicit nature of the market characterized by huge profits, lacking standard business law. The connection between drugs (trafficking and use) and systemic crime is complex and cyclical, responding to changes in specific drug markets, demand, supply, profitability, and community norms related to violent behaviors.

Drug law offenses encompass violations such as drug use, possession, cultivation, production, importation, trafficking, illicit manufacture of precursors, money laundering, and drug driving offenses. These offenses are intrinsically dependent on the prohibition of psychoactive substances, contributing to drug market violence and increasing drug prices. While often overlooked, drug law offenses play a substantial role in law enforcement and criminal justice system activities and resources. The illicit status of drugs also indirectly impacts other crimes, as increased allocation of resources to the enforcement of drug laws may reduce resources for other crimes, potentially increasing their incidence.

Such various crimes also occur on the Balkan Route, the consequences of which are multidimensional.

As drugs move through this region, criminal organizations engage in diverse illicit activities, ranging from money laundering to violence. The local populations, caught in the crossfire, may experience a rise in crime rates, further straining law enforcement resources and challenging community well-being.

The illicit profits generated along this route can fund other criminal endeavors, exacerbating the broader global challenge of organized crime. Corruption, permeating various levels of society, further complicates efforts to combat these criminal networks and contributes to the entrenchment of illicit activities.

Even though North Macedonia represents a link in the Balkan Route for the transportation of heroin, nevertheless, North Macedonia is not a major producer nor a significant transit point for illicit drugs.<sup>4</sup> An important transit point, but also in the production of illicit drugs, is Albania. Within the year 2019, in Albania were confiscated around 5.4 tons of illegal drugs (5.2 tons of which were cannabis and 200 kilograms other drugs). The only country where a larger quantity of drugs has been confiscated is Serbia. The port of Durrës in Albania and the port of Bar in Montenegro are the main entry ports for cocaine from Latin America into the Western Balkans.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.niagararecovery.com/blog/drug-related-crime-statistics>

<sup>4</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. (Year). International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Part 1, p. 419.

<sup>5</sup> <https://euronews.al/en/in-a-few-words-albania-an-important-destination-for-drug-trafficking-and-manufacturing/>

Understanding the intricate dynamics of the Balkan route provides insight into the complexities of drug-related crimes. It underscores the importance of international collaboration and targeted interventions to disrupt these networks, mitigate the impact on affected communities, and address the broader socio-economic ramifications of drug trafficking.

Because the relationship between the impact of drugs on criminal behavior cannot be easily defined, there are various theories attempting to clarify this connection.

*3.1.1. Crime causes drug use:* The model proposes that participation in criminal activities paves the way for subsequent drug involvement. Factors such as the professional criminal lifestyle are identified as contributors to increased alcohol consumption and drug use. This evidence suggests that young individuals who enter the realm of crime often transition swiftly into drug use, exhibiting intense patterns of heroin and crack consumption, consequently leading to elevated levels of criminal offenses.

*3.1.2. Coincidence models:* Based on this model, the connection is incidental (no direct cause-and-effect relationship exists). Two theories challenge the idea that the connections between engaging in drug use and committing crimes (which might apply to various drug uses and criminal activities) are inherently causal. Firstly, the shared cause hypothesis posits that the connection between drug use and crime is influenced by a third or shared variable. It is conceivable that several dispositional factors tied to early development or recent history (e.g., family absence or family breakdown) may make certain individuals more prone to high levels of involvement in both drug use and criminal behavior.

The second is sometimes termed the lifestyle rationale, suggesting that various behaviors, including excessive and problematic actions, are integral components of a broader lifestyle. No claim can be made that one of these problematic behaviors causes the other. Concerning multiple drug use and crime, one could argue that excessive criminal activities and heightened drug use coexist within a larger framework of problematic behavior.

*3.1.3. Reciprocal model:* According to the reciprocal model, sometimes drug use causes crime but sometimes involvement in criminal activities leads to drug use.

*3.1.4. Common cause model:* The common cause model proposes that the connection between drugs and crime is not causal but rooted in shared explanatory factors within an individual. These factors encompass individual aspects like psychological conditions, genetic predispositions, personality disorders etc. Another illustration of common cause involves shared subcultural norms, where specific groups view crime and drug use as expressions of masculinity.<sup>6</sup>

Several other factors contribute to this interconnection, and a significant catalyst for subsequent criminality is "early drug initiation." This is often driven by psychosocial vulnerabilities, particularly prominent during adolescence, leading individuals to seek identity and autonomy through behavioral changes, sometimes resorting to unlawful acts. These challenges may persist into other age groups, accompanied by lingering low self-esteem.

Considering one's background history further elucidates the complex web of influences. Childhood problems, insufficient parental support, a lack of guidance, academic difficulties, impulsive behavior, and antisocial conduct all contribute to the intricate dynamics of substance abuse and violent behavior.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> (White and Gorman 2000). White, Helen Raskin and Gorman, DM (2000) Dynamics of the drug-crime relationship. In: Criminal justice 2000 volume 1. The nature of crime: continuity and change. Washington: U.S. Department of Justice. pp. 151-218.

<sup>7</sup> Kachhiya, S., & Isai, P. C. (2022). Profiling of Criminals under the Influence of Substance Abuse: A Judicial Role in Forensic Psychological Investigation.

Biological factors add another layer to this narrative. Individuals with a family history of substance abuse or genetic disorders may carry a predisposition toward violent behavior, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the factors intertwining drug use and criminal engagement.

#### **4. Societal and cultural difference**

The use of drugs and drug-related crime is influenced by various social and cultural factors, and an effort to emphasize the connection between them has been made by Durrant and Thakker.<sup>8</sup> This model is based on the idea that drug dependence is not an isolated phenomenon but is influenced by many factors that interact with each other. It includes a wide range of factors that explain drug use patterns in a social and cultural context. Among the factors influencing the connection between drug use and drug-related crime are socio-economic factors, drug functions, cultural factors, the type of drug effect, drug availability, etc.

In certain regions, socio-economic factors strongly influence the prevalence of specific drugs, shaping the associated criminal landscape. Moreover, they play a pivotal role, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas like the Favelas in Brazil. In these marginalized communities, where economic opportunities are scarce and poverty is pervasive, individuals may resort to drug-related crimes as a coping mechanism. High unemployment rates and limited access to education can propel residents toward activities like drug trafficking or theft, illustrating a direct link between socio-economic challenges and criminal behaviors related to drug use.

In low-income countries, individuals often turn to stimulant drugs, such as methamphetamines or certain amphetamines, to alleviate the harsh realities of their daily lives. These substances may offer a temporary escape from the challenges posed by poverty, providing individuals with a sense of euphoria or heightened energy. For instance, in certain rural areas of India, where access to resources is limited, individuals might use these stimulant drugs to endure physically demanding labor and cope with the psychological toll of challenging living conditions.

Cultural influences significantly shape the landscape of drug-related crimes. Attitudes, values, and cultural norms contribute to variations in drug preferences and the associated criminal behaviors. For instance, in some societies, the cultivation or consumption of specific substances may be deeply ingrained in cultural practices, impacting the prevalence and nature of drug-related offenses. Secularism is another factor that may influence drug use and related crime by fostering a diverse range of cultural and moral perspectives. In secular societies, the absence of a dominant religious framework can result in varied attitudes toward substance abuse, potentially leading to increased drug experimentation. The lack of a moral authority may contribute to a more permissive environment, impacting social norms and potentially reducing stigma associated with drug use. It's crucial to approach the development of strategies with vigilance, ensuring a balanced consideration of cultural diversity and potential challenges associated with drug-related issues.

The availability of drugs significantly influences drug-related crime, and certain regions face heightened challenges in this regard. In Catalonia, Spain, the strategic location has made it a transit point for drug trafficking between Africa and Europe. The increased availability of drugs, coupled with smuggling routes, has been associated with organized crime and a rise in drug-related incidents. This example highlights the intricate connection between the accessibility of drugs and the potential for an upsurge in criminal activities.

---

<sup>8</sup> Durrant, R., & Thakker, J. (2003). *Substance Use and Abuse: Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 311 pp

## 5. Socio-economic impact

Drug-addicted crimes cast a pervasive economic burden on societies, affecting various aspects of life. Understanding this impact is crucial for crafting effective strategies to address the root causes of drug-related criminal activities.

The economic toll of drug-addicted crimes involves direct costs for law enforcement and legal proceedings, straining public budgets. Indirect costs include diminished productivity, healthcare demands, and the societal impact of fractured families. Addressing this complex challenge requires a comprehensive approach to mitigate fiscal pressures and enhance community resilience.

**Impact on Employment:** Drug-related crimes create a crisis in employment that disrupts individual lives and economic stability. Those involved often struggle to secure and maintain employment due to the shadow of a criminal record, hindering their employability even after rehabilitation or serving sentences. Employers, concerned about risks and liabilities, may hesitate to hire individuals with a history of drug-related offenses, perpetuating unemployment and economic disenfranchisement. This crisis extends to wider societal issues, increasing strain on social welfare systems as unemployed individuals turn to public assistance programs. The economic ripple effect reaches families and communities, leading to increased reliance on social services and impacting overall productivity and economic growth.

**Healthcare Costs:** Drug-related crimes significantly burden healthcare systems, driving up costs due to heightened health risks among individuals involved in such activities. The strain on public resources intensifies as drug-addicted individuals may lack consistent healthcare access, placing additional pressure on healthcare providers and institutions. Governments struggle with resource allocation to meet the growing demand for specialized addiction treatment and healthcare services. Notably, in 2021, the Program Budget for Addiction Treatment in the Ministry of Health in North Macedonia allocated 84,500,000 Macedonian Denar, reflecting a commitment to address healthcare challenges.<sup>9</sup>

**Education:** The socio-economic repercussions of drug-addicted crimes reach into education, affecting individuals and the broader community. Individuals engaged in such activities often face disrupted educational pathways, leading to high dropout rates, reduced academic achievement, and limited opportunities. Drug addiction becomes a barrier to education, with personal struggles, legal issues, and social stigma hindering access. Educational institutions must allocate resources for interventions, counseling, and rehabilitation efforts to address the diverse needs of affected students. The impact on education intertwines with other socio-economic factors, affecting employment opportunities and perpetuating economic vulnerability.

*5.1. Impact on family:* The impact of drug use on criminal behavior extends its reach into the fundamental unit of society – the family. Substance abuse can fracture familial bonds, leading to strained relationships, emotional distress, and financial instability. The ripple effects are profound, affecting not only the individual engaged in drug use but reverberating through the lives of family members. Increased criminal behavior driven by drug dependence introduces a volatile element into the domestic sphere, heightening the risk of legal consequences and social stigma. Family dynamics may further suffer as trust erodes, communication breaks down, and responsibilities are neglected.

---

<sup>9</sup> Strategija nacionalne për drogat e Republikës së Maqedonisë së Veriut 2021-2025 me planin për veprim 2021-2023. (2021). Page 13.

*5.2. Impact on community:* The impact of drug use on criminal behavior extends beyond individual and familial realms, resonating profoundly within the intricate tapestry of communities. Elevated levels of criminality associated with drug dependency create a pervasive atmosphere of insecurity, placing additional strain on community resources. Law enforcement grapples with increased demands, diverting attention from other critical matters. The social fabric weakens as community members contend with heightened risks and compromised public safety. Economic vitality may suffer due to a decline in property values and diminished investments. The stigma surrounding drug-related crime further isolates affected individuals, hindering community integration and fostering a cycle of alienation. Recognizing these multifaceted challenges is paramount in formulating community-centric interventions that not only address immediate concerns but also cultivate resilience and social cohesion, mitigating the far-reaching consequences of drug-related criminal behavior.

## **6. International collaboration**

International collaboration in addressing the influence of drug use on criminal behavior is paramount in developing effective strategies and policies. The global nature of drug trafficking and its impact on criminal activities necessitates coordinated efforts among nations to tackle this complex issue.

One key aspect of international collaboration is the sharing of information and intelligence. Countries need to establish robust communication channels to exchange data on drug trafficking routes, emerging trends, and criminal networks. This collaboration enhances the ability to anticipate and respond to evolving challenges, facilitating more targeted and efficient law enforcement efforts.

Moreover, joint operations and task forces between countries play a crucial role. By pooling resources and expertise, nations can conduct more effective operations against transnational drug cartels. Coordinated efforts in monitoring, intercepting, and dismantling these criminal organizations disrupt their activities on a broader scale, reducing the flow of illicit drugs across borders.

International collaboration also extends to addressing the socio-economic factors that contribute to drug-related criminal behavior. Sharing best practices in prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs allows nations to learn from each other's successes and challenges. This collaborative approach ensures that evidence-based interventions are implemented globally, promoting a more consistent and comprehensive response to drug-related issues.

The United Nations and its agencies, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), play a central role in fostering international collaboration. Conventions and treaties, such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, provide a framework for countries to work together in controlling the production and distribution of drugs. Regular conferences and forums provide opportunities for nations to come together, share experiences, and collectively shape policies that address the multifaceted challenges posed by drug use and its criminal ramifications.

## 7. Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation, a multifaceted approach crucial in the journey to recovery, addresses the complex challenges individuals face in breaking free from the shackles of drug dependence. Within this context, the harsh reality emerges — within two years of release, 60-80% of drug offenders find themselves back entangled with the criminal justice system.<sup>10</sup> This alarming statistic underscores the pressing need for effective rehabilitation strategies that extend beyond mere incarceration. A linchpin in this process is Medicamentous Treatment (MMT), where medications like Methadone, Suboxone, and Naltrexone take center stage. These pharmacological interventions play a pivotal role in managing withdrawal symptoms and preventing relapse, offering tailored solutions to meet the distinctive needs of individuals on their path to recovery.

Medicamentous Treatment extends beyond MMT to encompass a spectrum of pharmacological interventions, ensuring a nuanced approach to address the complexities of substance dependency. This pharmacological facet acknowledges the diversity of individuals' needs and strives to provide effective solutions.

Another integral dimension of rehabilitation is found in Therapeutic Communities, creating a supportive and communal environment conducive to recovery. This setting allows individuals to engage in a collective journey towards wellness, reinforcing positive behaviors and connections. Transitioning from communal environments, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) assumes a pivotal role in the rehabilitation process. CBT, as a psychotherapeutic approach, focuses on addressing thought patterns and behaviors associated with addiction, fostering lasting and positive changes in individuals.

The integration of these rehabilitation methods significantly impacts the reduction of drug-related criminal behavior. Medicamentous Treatment not only curtails withdrawal symptoms but also diminishes the likelihood of relapse, thereby lowering the instances of drug-driven criminal activities. Therapeutic Communities, by fostering a sense of community and support, create a protective environment that reduces the risk of individuals engaging in criminal behavior to support their addiction. Additionally, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy equips individuals with the skills to navigate challenges, reducing the impulsivity often associated with drug-related crimes. Counseling and support groups contribute to the overall stability and resilience of individuals, further decreasing the chances of relapse and criminal involvement. Together, these rehabilitation methods form a comprehensive framework that not only aids recovery but also actively works to break the cycle of drug-related criminality.

## 8. Results and discussions

**Table 1.** Annual prevalence of the use of cannabis, cocaine, opioids, opiates, amphetamine-type stimulants and "ecstasy" in the population aged 15-64, 2021<sup>11</sup>

	Cannabis (%)	Opioids (%)	Opiate (%)	Cocaine (%)	Amphetamines and prescription stimulants (%)	"Ecstasy" (%)
<b>Europe</b>	<b>5,44</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Eastern and South-Eastern Europe	2,06	0.78	0.67	0.29	0.13	0.32

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.birchtreerecovery.com/blog/drug-related-crime-statistics>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-](https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/annex/1.1_Prevalence_of_drug_use_in_the_general_population_regional_and_global_estimates.xlsx)

[2023/annex/1.1\\_Prevalence\\_of\\_drug\\_use\\_in\\_the\\_general\\_population\\_regional\\_and\\_global\\_estimates.xlsx](https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/annex/1.1_Prevalence_of_drug_use_in_the_general_population_regional_and_global_estimates.xlsx)



Western and Central Europe 7,81 0.64 0.51 1.44 0.75 0.89

The provided table presents prevalence rates of drug use in Europe, categorized by different drug types, and segmented into Western and Central Europe, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. These figures provide valuable insights into the patterns of drug consumption across the continent.

**Cannabis:** The rates show a notable prevalence of cannabis use, with Western and Central Europe reporting higher usage (7.81%) compared to Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (2.06%). This discrepancy could be influenced by varying cultural attitudes, legal frameworks, or social norms regarding cannabis in these regions.

**Opioids and Opiates:** The usage of opioids and opiates is relatively consistent across the two regions, with slightly higher rates in Western and Central Europe. These substances, known for their potent analgesic effects, may contribute differently to the overall drug use landscape.

**Cocaine:** Western and Central Europe exhibit a significantly higher prevalence of cocaine use (1.44%) compared to Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (0.29%). This suggests a regional distinction in the popularity of stimulant drugs, potentially influenced by factors like accessibility and cultural acceptance.

**Amphetamines and Prescription Stimulants:** The rates for amphetamines and prescription stimulants are also higher in Western and Central Europe, indicating a greater prevalence of stimulant use in this region.

**"Ecstasy":** The data reveals a notable prevalence of "Ecstasy" use in both regions, with Western and Central Europe reporting a higher rate (0.89%). This highlights the popularity of synthetic drugs in certain areas.

These variations in drug use patterns can be influenced by a range of factors, including cultural attitudes, socioeconomic conditions, law enforcement efforts, and the availability of specific substances in the respective regions. Understanding these nuances is crucial for comprehensively analyzing the influence of drug use on criminal behavior in different parts of Europe.

**Table 2.** Percentage of Homicide Offenders Intoxicated by Drugs<sup>12</sup>

Country	Year Range	Percentage of Homicide Offenders Intoxicated by Drugs
Norway	2015	8%
Scotland	2000-2015	18%
Finland and Sweden	2003-2006	18%
England and Wales	2013-2015	14%
The Netherlands	1994-2004	7%
Slovakia	2000-2015	Never exceeds 3%
Germany	2000-2015	Steady pattern between 6-10%

The table provides insights into the percentage of homicide offenders intoxicated by drugs in various European countries over different time periods. A deeper analysis and comparison reveal notable trends:

**Consistent Intoxication Levels in Scotland, Finland, and Sweden:** Scotland, Finland, and Sweden share a similar percentage (18%) of homicide offenders intoxicated by drugs. This

<sup>12</sup> (2018). EMCDDA. (2018). Drug-related Homicide in Europe: A First Review of the Data and Literature. Page 28.

consistency across different periods and countries suggests a relatively stable pattern in the prevalence of drug intoxication among individuals committing homicides in these regions.

**Varying Intoxication Rates Across Countries:** England and Wales report a lower percentage (14%) compared to Scotland, Finland, and Sweden. This difference may reflect variations in drug use patterns, law enforcement, or other socio-cultural factors influencing the relationship between drug intoxication and homicides.

**Low Intoxication Rates in the Netherlands:** The Netherlands show a relatively low percentage (7%) of homicide offenders intoxicated by drugs between 1994 and 2004. This suggests a lower incidence of drug intoxication among individuals involved in homicides during this period compared to other countries.

**Consistently Low Intoxication in Slovakia:** Slovakia reports that the annual number of drug-intoxicated homicide offenders never exceeds 3%. This consistent low prevalence over the years may indicate a less significant role of drug intoxication in homicides in Slovakia compared to other nations in the study.

**Moderate but Steady Intoxication in Germany:** Germany exhibits a steady pattern with a range between 6% and 10% of homicide offenders intoxicated by drugs every year from 2000 to 2015. This suggests a moderate but consistent presence of drug intoxication among individuals involved in homicides in Germany over the years.

**Norway's Scenario:** Norway stands out with a lower percentage (8%) in 2015. While the data represents a single year, it suggests a potential variation or unique scenario in terms of the prevalence of drug intoxication among homicide offenders in Norway compared to the broader European context.

There are highlighted both similarities and variations in the relationship between drug intoxication and homicides across European countries, emphasizing the influence of cultural, legal, and societal factors on these patterns.

**Table 3.** Opioid users treated with OST <sup>13</sup>

	North Macedonia	Albania	Kosovo	Serbia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro
Number of opioid users	6800	3469	4000-5000	20500	7500	/
Number of people treated with OST	1850	1130	/	2312	1310	1150

A similar pattern is observed among various Western Balkan states, where the coverage of North Macedonia for individuals treated with OST in comparison to those addicted to opioids is 27%. This figure is still far from the 50% of the European average but remains favorable compared to other Western Balkan states.

Among the barriers hindering a higher coverage rate, one factor may be that rehabilitation centers are more concentrated in larger cities, presenting reduced accessibility for individuals living in rural areas. Other reasons could include the quality of programs, limited awareness about these issues, and societal prejudice towards individuals with addiction. To increase this coverage, decentralization of rehabilitation centers, improving program quality, conducting public awareness campaigns, and greater government support could be considered.

<sup>13</sup> Цековски, И. (2019). "КВАЛИТЕТОТ НА ПРОГРАМИТЕ ЗА ЛЕКУВАЊЕ НА ЗАВИСНОСТИ ВО МАКЕДОНИЈА." Здружение ХОПС – Опции за здрав живот, Скопје.

## 9. Conclusion

This comprehensive exploration into the intricate relationship between drug use and criminal behavior has uncovered a nuanced interplay of factors shaping individual choices and societal outcomes. From understanding the psychological impact of psychoactive substances to dissecting the socio-economic repercussions, our journey traversed through diverse landscapes. Conclusively, the models illustrating this correlation underscore the need for targeted interventions that account for regional, cultural, and socio-economic diversities.

In the realm of rehabilitation, the spotlight on diverse strategies, with a focal point on Medicamentous Treatment, emphasizes tailored approaches to address the unique needs of individuals on the path to recovery. Therapeutic communities, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, counseling, and support groups collectively form a holistic framework acknowledging the varied dimensions of rehabilitation.

International collaboration emerges as a linchpin for comprehensive solutions. The exchange of knowledge, best practices, and concerted efforts on a global scale become imperative in tackling the pervasive influence of drug use on criminal behavior. Future strategies must prioritize collaborative endeavors to bridge gaps in understanding, share resources, and collectively address this complex challenge.

As we conclude, the synthesis of our exploration points to the pressing need for policy reforms. Recognizing the impact on families, communities, and societies at large, a proactive stance is essential. Advocating for diversified treatment approaches, decentralization of facilities, heightened program quality, community education, and policy revisions stand as beacons guiding us toward a future where the impact of drug use on criminal behavior can be mitigated, rehabilitation can be more effective, and international collaboration can pave the way for a unified and informed response to this intricate societal challenge. This article not only serves as a documentation of existing knowledge but beckons us to embark on a path of collective action, societal understanding, and evidence-based policies.

## References

- [1] Albery, I. P., McSweeney, T., & Hough, M. (2004). Drug Use and Criminal Behaviour: Indirect, Direct or No Causal Relationship? In *Forensic Psychology: Concepts, Debates and Practice* (pp. 140-156).
- [2] Ataiants, J., Roth, A. M., Mazzella, S., & Lankenau, S. E. (2020). Circumstances of Overdose Among Street-Involved, Opioid-Injecting Women: Drug, Set, and Setting.
- [3] Copes, H., Hochstetler, A., & Sandberg, S. (2014). Using a Narrative Framework to Understand the Drugs and Violence Nexus. *Criminal Justice Review*, 1-15. © 2014 Georgia State University.
- [4] Durrant, R., & Thakker, J. (2003). *Substance Use and Abuse: Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 311 pp.
- [5] EMCDDA. (2018). Drug-related Homicide in Europe: A First Review of the Data and Literature. Page 28.
- [6] Gaines, L. K., & Kremling, J. (2014). *Drugs, Crime, and Justice: Contemporary Perspectives*, Third Edition. Waveland Press, Inc.
- [7] Goldstein, P. J. (1985). The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 39, 143-174.
- [8] Hassan, A. I., Assassa, M. F., & Al-Wakeel, M. M. (2016). Drug Abuse and Related Crimes. *Al-Azhar Medical Journal*, 45(1), 35-47. DOI: 10.12816/0026266.
- [9] Holloway, K. R., Bennett, T. H., & Farrington, D. P. (2006). The effectiveness of drug treatment programs in reducing criminal behavior: A meta-analysis. *Psicothema*, ISSN 0214-9915. Copyright © 2006 Psicothema. Affiliations: University of Glamorgan and University of Cambridge.
- [10] Kachhiya, S., & Isai, P. C. (2022). Profiling of Criminals under the Influence of Substance Abuse: A Judicial Role in Forensic Psychological Investigation. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, 8(10), 582. ISSN: 2349-6002.

- [11] McLellan AT. Substance Misuse and Substance use Disorders: Why do they Matter in Healthcare? *Trans Am Clin Climatol Assoc.* 2017;128:112-130. PMID: 28790493; PMCID: PMC5525418.
- [12] Riordan, K. (2017). *The connection between drug use and crime in Western Australia.* Edith Cowan University.
- [13] Saladino, V., Mosca, O., Petruccelli, F., Hoelzlhammer, L., Lauriola, M., Verrastro, V., & Cabras, C. (2021). The Vicious Cycle: Problematic Family Relations, Substance Abuse, and Crime in Adolescence: A Narrative Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 673954. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.673954. PMID: 34381398; PMCID: PMC8350047.
- [14] Spooner, C., & Hetherington, K. (2004). *Social Determinants of Drug Use.* Technical Report Number 228. ISBN: 0 7334 2244 6. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.
- [15] Turnbull, P. J. (2019). The relationship between drugs and crime and its implications for recovery and desistance. In D. Best & C. Coleman (Eds.), *Strengths Based Approaches to Crime and Substance Misuse* (pp. 7-19). Routledge. ISBN 9781138288737.
- [16] U.S. Department of Justice. (1994, September). *Fact Sheet: Drug-Related Crime (NCJ-149286).* Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- [17] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994, September). *Drugs & Crime Data.*
- [18] United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). (2003). *Drugs, Crime, and Violence: The Microlevel Impact* (Document No. E/INCB/2003/1).
- [19] Цековски, И. (2019). *КВАЛИТЕТОТ НА ПРОГРАМИТЕ ЗА ЛЕКУВАЊЕ НА ЗАВИСНОСТИ ВО МАКЕДОНИЈА.* Здружение ХОПС – Опции за здрав живот Скопје.
- [20] [https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/annex/1.1\\_Prevalence\\_of\\_drug\\_use\\_in\\_the\\_general\\_population\\_regional\\_and\\_global\\_estimates.xlsx](https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/annex/1.1_Prevalence_of_drug_use_in_the_general_population_regional_and_global_estimates.xlsx)
- [21] <https://www.birchtreerecovery.com/blog/drug-related-crime-statistics>
- [22] <https://www.niagararecovery.com/blog/drug-related-crime-statistics>
- [23] <https://www.gacrkl.ac.in/coursematerial/sem3-ev3-chap2.pdf>
- [24] [https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/470/Dif16EN\\_85000.pdf](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/470/Dif16EN_85000.pdf)