

# Phenomena and problems of pathology in Poland

( Zjawiska i problemy patologii w Polsce )

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**Abstract** – Introduction. Everyone in the social dimension is able to determine which behaviour is appropriate and which is not. However, defining behaviour is difficult, because it depends to a large extent on the environment in which people are brought up, historical time and medicine. From this point of view, behaviours that are unsuitable for a particular form can be called pathology. The aim of the study. The aim of the work was to present a short outline of understanding of social pathology and its selected forms.

Selection of material. The search was conducted in the Scopus database for the period 1976-2019, using the terms *social pathology*. From the literature found in the Google Scholar database, studies were selected which, in the opinion of the authors, would be most useful in the preparation of this study.

Conclusions. The spread of social pathologies favours the development of physical and mental disorders, an increase in morbidity and morbidity, bodily harm, increased stress and even death, and the spread of faulty norms and patterns in society.

**Key words** – social pathologies.

**Streszczenie** – Wstęp. Każdy człowiek w wymiarze społecznym potrafi określić, jakie zachowania są właściwe, a które do nich nie należą. Jednak zdefiniowanie zachowań jest trudne, ponieważ w dużej mierze są zależne od środowiska w jakim się wychowuje człowiek, czasie historycznym oraz medycyny. Z tego punktu widzenia zachowania, które są nieadekwatne do określonej formy można nazwać patologią.

Cel pracy. Celem pracy było przedstawienie krótkiego rysu rozumienia patologii społecznej oraz przedstawienia wybranych jej form.

Dobór materiału. Poszukiwania przeprowadzono w bazie Scopus za okres 1976-2019, używając pojęć *patologia społeczna*. Ze znalezionej w bazie Google Scholar piśmiennictwa wyselekcjonowano opracowania, które zdaniem autorów byłyby najbardziej użyteczne w przygotowaniu niniejszego opracowania.

Wnioski. Upowszechnienie patologii społecznych sprzyja u osób doświadczającej tej patologii rozwojowi zaburzeń fizycznych i psychicznych, wzrostowi zachorowalności i chorobowości, uszkodzeniom ciała, nasileniu stresów a nawet śmierci oraz upowszechnieniu w społeczeństwie wadliwych norm i wzorców.

**Słowa kluczowe** – patologie społeczne.

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- A. The idea and the planning of the study
- B. Gathering and listing data
- C. The data analysis and interpretation
- D. Writing the article
- E. Critical review of the article
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## I. SOCIAL PATHOLOGY - DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

Everyone in the social dimension is able to determine which behaviour is appropriate and which is not. However, defining behaviour is difficult, because it depends to a large extent on the environment in which people are brought up, historical time and medicine. From this point of view, behaviours that are unsuitable for a particular form can be called pathology. A number of defini-

tions have been created to define social pathologies in a precise manner. The most frequently cited definition is that of A. Podgórecki, who defined pathology as "that type of institution, that type of social functioning, or that type of structure that remains in a fundamental, irreconcilable contradiction with world-view values that are accepted in a given community". [1] Based on this definition, it can be assumed that the author made pathology dependent on human judgment.

It follows that social pathology is a negative behaviour which must take into account certain conditions [1,2]:

1. violation of norms and values.
2. the destructive nature of behaviour, which is measured by the scale of social condemnation.
3. it should be present in a larger group of people or be determined on a mass scale.
4. the need to use a great deal of human strength to counteract the problem.

Another definition of pathology was provided by J. Malec. According to the author, it assumes that "social pathology is the total number of deaths, moral deterioration, deterioration of mood and material losses caused by violation of praxeological, moral and legal rules and self-destructive behaviour". [3] It follows that the author adopts three criteria for assessing pathological phenomena [3]:

1. human death, impairment of physical and mental immunity, increased morbidity and morbidity, bodily harm, increased stress.
2. the externalisation of faulty standards and patterns.
3. material losses.

From a medical point of view, pathology is defined as a space that deals with the pathological changes that occur in the human body under the influence of a pathogenic factor in the structure of organs and tissues and in their activities. [4,5]

## II. ALKOHOLIZM

The most common pathological phenomenon in Poland is alcoholism. A high proportion of girls aged 16-18 years is visible (it is higher than that of boys, at the same age), but this changes with age, a higher proportion of men than women drink at 20-24 years. According to some doctors in Poland, about 4 million Poles overuse alcohol, 800 000 of whom are addicted. The most vulnerable to alcoholism are people who do stressful and risky work, including doctors,

lawyers, soldiers, businessmen, actors, musicians, politicians and journalists.[6,7]

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Another common pathological phenomenon in Poland is drug addiction. It is the most common phenomenon at school age. It is estimated that there are around 20 000 to 40 000 drug addicts in Poland who have taken up treatment.

The possibility of drug dependence is conditioned, among other things, by [8-10]:

1. The characteristics of the drug, namely its low price, easy availability and lack of control over its use, may lead to easier dependence on a particular drug.
2. The social environment, unemployment and poverty, as well as the place of residence where drugs are available, can help to accelerate the development of psychoactive substance dependence.
3. individual factors. These include age (young people are more likely to take drugs), gender (boys are more likely to take drugs than girls), and peers (those who are in the drug user group more likely to take drugs than those who are not in contact with psychoactive agents).

Personal factors are more likely to be influenced by people with passive or dependent personalities.

## IV. FEMALE

Violence is another pathological phenomenon that can be seen in Poland. It can be said that violence is the use of the offender's advantage against another person or a group of people (here we are talking about the family) in order to fulfil one's own needs. It is done by violating the personal rights of another human being, by manipulating, not taking into account the good of other people and causing suffering. The perpetrator of violence often thinks that he does everything for the good of another person. Such behaviour has a huge impact on the victim's psyche, destroying their joy of life and irreversibly affecting their development potential. From this point of view, we can say that violence is 'any act, not accidental, which exploits the superiority of the perpetrator, which compromises the personal freedom of the individual, contributing to his or her physical or mental harm and goes beyond social norms of mutual contact, or any act of anguish and cruelty'[6] According to

police statistics, in 2017, the total number of people who experienced violence was 92 529 victims. The number of women who have experienced violence is 67,984, while the number of minors is 13,515. The statistics also include men, with 11,030. These are data obtained from the police, it is not known how many acts of violence have been silenced. [11]

## V. PROSTITUTION

Another pathological phenomenon occurring in Poland is prostitution. According to definition I. Blocha prostitution is " a form of extramarital sexual intercourse characterised by the fact that a prostitute individual, more or less, gives himself or herself to an indefinite number of people, openly and notoriously, rarely without payment, usually in the form of professional selling himself or herself for the purpose of having sexual intercourse or other behaviour of this kind or for the purpose of providing some kind of excitement that gives sexual satisfaction and, as a result of this professional practice, becomes a certain permanent type". [12]

According to I. He wrote down the factors that can affect the "entrance" into prostitution are [4]:

1. low social status of the family,
- Excessive restraint, particularly by the father,
3. no family ties,
4. lack of organisation in one's own life,
- 5 Defective educational methods,
- 6 The increase in pathology in the family from which the exposed person originates,
- 7 Frequent changes in the educational environment,
8. failure at school,
9. early start of sexual intercourse,
- Sexual abuse during childhood.

By typing prostitutes B. Hołyst has identified five types. The first type are the so-called Call girls, or girls on the phone. Most often they are educated girls who know languages. They usually have their own flat and their main clients are business people from abroad. Contacts with clients are made only by phone. Prostitution is their only source of income, but they are usually not known to the police. Another type of prostitutes are people offering their services in hotels and night clubs. These people come into contact with clients by dancing, sometimes sit down with clients or are recommended by others. They provide their services in rented rooms, rarely committing any crime. Another type are street prostitutes. These are people sur-

rounded by a large group of other people involved in the situation. In this group, there are many cases of prostitutes who are dependent on alcohol or drugs, sick or infected with sexually transmitted diseases or many people with HIV. They are well known to the police. Another type are prostitutes working in social agencies and erotic massage parlours. It often happens that they are foreign women, however, well educated. The last type of prostitutes are women who have occasional sex with others. These people are usually anonymous. It often happens that they are secondary school pupils, students or clerks. It happens that they operate, for example, during the tourist season. [13]

## VI. PEDOFILIA

Another social pathology that can be encountered in Poland is paedophilia. Generally speaking, paedophilia is a medical term that defines the sexual drive of a person over childhood to a child. [14] The World Health Organization and the American Psychiatric Association have determined that one can talk about paedophilia if conditions such as [15,16] are met:

1. A person suspected of paedophilia has experienced repeated, strong sexual drive and the imaginings of children in their pre-pubescent age,
2. It realises the drive and experiences suffering because of it,
3. The preference shall be valid for at least six months,
4. A person shall be at least 16 years old and shall be at least 5 years older than the child or the child shall be in his or her age before puberty.

There are a number of common features that are often repeated when it comes to child abuse [14,16-18]:

- Children are most often exploited by people who know them well, that is cousins, uncles, family friends, fathers, stepfathers,
- The younger the child, the more likely it is that the abuser is a close relative,
- The close relationship between the perpetrator and the child may lead to acts of abuse occurring frequently and the child trying to keep it a secret,
- Children are usually abused by grooming or blackmail, rarely by rape,
- Girls are used twice as often as boys,
- In contrast, boys are more often exploited by men,
- Girls are usually used between 10-15 years old and boys 3-12 years old

It is estimated that only 1% of child sexual abuse cases are revealed. Every sexual abuse of a minor has a negative

impact on the child's development, and the effects of this impact can be divided into two groups [4,19]:

- Psychological - chronic depression, lowering self-esteem, anxiety, guilt, sleep disorders and difficulties in concentration,
- Behaviour - tendency to self-harm, quicker addiction, criminal behaviour,
- Psychosexual disorders - inability to maintain lasting relationships, accepting aggressive and sexual behaviour from other people,
- Post-traumatic psychiatric symptoms - possibility of psychosis, pathological suspicion, labyrinth of moods and autism.

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