

Drug abuse in youth prison

Stefan Raddatz

Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony, Hanover

So far, the problem of drug abuse in German prisons is an issue investigated insufficiently. Approximately, 20 % of the prisoners use drugs. In a longterm study by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony, Germany, about two-thirds of the interviewed persons report drug use. Of this sample, 27 % could be categorised as “drug abusers” due to their own characterisation as drug addicts or their consumption of heroin. The consumption of alcohol by 22% can also be considered as abuse. The finding, whereby 92 probands can be identified as both drug abusers and alcohol abusers, deserves closer attention. According to the results of other studies, we are finding a high portion of resettlers from the former Sovietunion among drug abusers. In our study this rate amounts up to 19%.

Significantly, early deviant behaviour in the group of up to 14 year olds, can be observed more frequently among drug abusers. This is also true for violent offence: During their childhood, drug addicts are significantly more often involved in aggressive acts. Therefore, these juveniles can be subsumed under the category of “life-course-persistent” delinquents, a perception that can be found very often in literature. The outcome raises the question, whether or not the abuse of drugs in this specific group can be looked at as an expression of a deviant lifestyle.

Reference

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