

THE PROBLEM OF STIGMATIZATION OF PIERCING SUBCULTURE AS DRUG SUBCULTURE AND IT REFLECTION IN EDUCATION OF ADOLESCENTS.

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Abstract: *The contribution presents the results of thesis, covering problems of stigmatisation of the piercing subculture as drug subculture. At the beginning, the thesis describes characteristics of both subcultures in question and the trends in their development. The following section contains results of the research centred on informedness of individuals at different age about piercing subculture, their attitudes towards application of piercing and biases against individuals with piercing. The results of the research among adolescents were used for creation of a programme which can be recommended for implementation in the high school curriculum. The project offers a draught of the content structure of lessons and recommendation concerning selection of teaching methods, including motivational didactic games and exercises.*

Key words: *piercing, trends connected with piercing, piercing subculture, drug subculture, curriculum*

Decoration of the body becomes more often the image of young people. Is this a Fashion trend, effort to attract the attention or particular way how to express oneself? Very common are disputations about suitability or risks of this way of decoration of the body. Individuals with piercing are viewed with admiration, respect but also fear. Difference can lead to stigmatization of pierced young people that way that they are grouped to those individuals, whose life style is connected with undesirable manners, especially with using drugs. But is really the piercing subculture directly linked with the drug subculture? The hetero described research should answer this question.

The aim of this study was to find and describe the possible drug and piercing subculture on basis of the analysis of available informative resources and of results from own research for educational projects for high schools.

The research itself is based on wide theoretical analysis of the problem to be solved. The treatise on piercing subculture included history and characteristic of piercing, description of current style of piercing, motives for application. Further more the current drug scene, drug subculture and motivation aspects for using drugs by children and young people is described. On basis of analysis of common attributes, motives, and proceedings of individuals belonging to both groups the null hypothesis for the research was set.

Description of the research

The aim of the research: **to map attitudes of informants to piercing**, especially with respect to possible stigmatization, prejudices and myths and to monitor **problematic of piercing in connection with the habit forming substance misuse**; particularly to find out the linking or suggestibility of drug use and piercing, respectively the influence of piercing on habit forming substance use.

Hypothesis: Piercing subculture is not drug subculture.

Methods: Questionnaire and structured interview

Analysed groups of informants:

128 informants (38 of them with piercing, 90 of them without piercing) took part in the questionnaire research, consequently 60 of them were randomly chosen for further interview.

The reason for choosing both types of informants with and without piercing was the possibility to compare the presuppositions of those without piercing (as they were most probably viewed) with reality based on experience of those with piercing. The difference was intended element for comparison of opinions of informants with and without piercing.

The pupils of the primary school in Prague were addressed, further clients of educational institute (South Moravian Region), and randomly chosen informants according to needed criterions (age, piercing). Informants were acquired as well on the Internet portal, here the questionnaire was Publisher.

Tab. 1 Number of informants represented in the particular groups (questionnaires)

Informants	14–18	19–35	36 and older	TOGETHER
with piercing	8	15	15	38
without piercing	53	22	15	90
female	25	13	14	52
male	36	24	16	76
TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMANTS				128

Questionnaire to be filled in by informants, was anonymous, informants identified only their basic statistic data: sex, age, highest level of education. Due to two different groups (informants with and without piercing) two version of questionnaires and two structures for interview were prepared, however these did not differ in the main points.

The research was undertaken from October 2006 to January 2007.

Results of the research

Tab. 2 The most represented reasons for application of piercing.

Reasons	age					
	14–18		19–35		36 and older	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
due to the boredom	2	3,3 %	1	2,7 %	0	0
to be IN	28	45,9 %	10	27 %	4	13,3 %
to be different	9	14,8 %	14	37,8 %	15	50 %
for religion reasons	1	1,6 %	1	2,7 %	0	0
other: they like it	21	34,4 %	11	29,8 %	11	36,7 %

While finding out the possible reason for application of piercing the most frequented reason of piercing, which corresponded with the reason for application of piercing in case of pierced individuals.

„*Desire to be IN*“ was the most frequented reason for application of piercing by informants aged 14 to 18, further „*other reason: I like it*“ (34,4 %).

From the total amount of informants 33,6 % was of the opinion, that *the reason for application is goodness of piercing (they like it)*, 32,8 % stated the reason „*to be IN*“ and 29,7 % of all informants *set out the reason to be different*.

Tab. 3 Opinion on pierced individual

Opinions	Age					
	14–18		19–35		36 and older	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
strange person, he/she destroys his/her body	4	6,6 %	0	0	2	6.7 %
the same as without piercing	46	75,4 %	34	91,9 %	24	80 %
other opinion	11	18 %	3	8,1 %	4	13,3 %

Informants could express their opinion further in the opened question.

In majority of cases (87,9 %) informants stated that **the individual can't be specified on group of piercing, it is individual**, in remaining 13,1 % were stated different kinds of music, styles of dressing and behaving that are characteristic for individuals with piercing (punk, extravagant hair dress, rudeness, violence, and so on).

Tab. 4 Suspected existence of prejudices of society against individuals with piercing.

	Age											
	14–18				19–35				36 and older			
	with piercing		without piercing		with piercing		without piercing		with piercing		without piercing	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
Yes	7	87,5 %	32	60,4 %	9	60 %	13	59,1 %	3	20 %	6	40 %
No	1	12,5 %	21	39,6 %	6	40 %	9	40,9 %	12	80 %	9	60 %

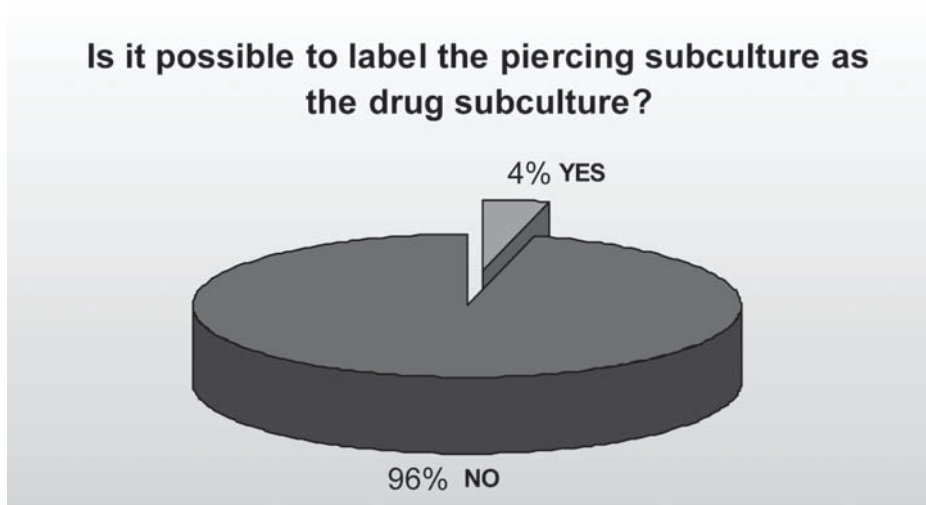
By comparison of answers of informants with piercing with answers of those piercing it was realized that:

- half of informants with piercing have realized some prejudice against themselves;
- individuals without piercing are of the opinion, that pierced people are object of prejudices, persecution from the society in higher degree (56,7 %), than the pierced people are feeling.

Can the piercing subculture be labelled as drug subculture?

Informants were allowed to change the proposed statement or they could leave it without any changes if they were of the opinion that It was correct – „*All pierced people use drugs and they can be there for viewed as the „burden on society“.*“

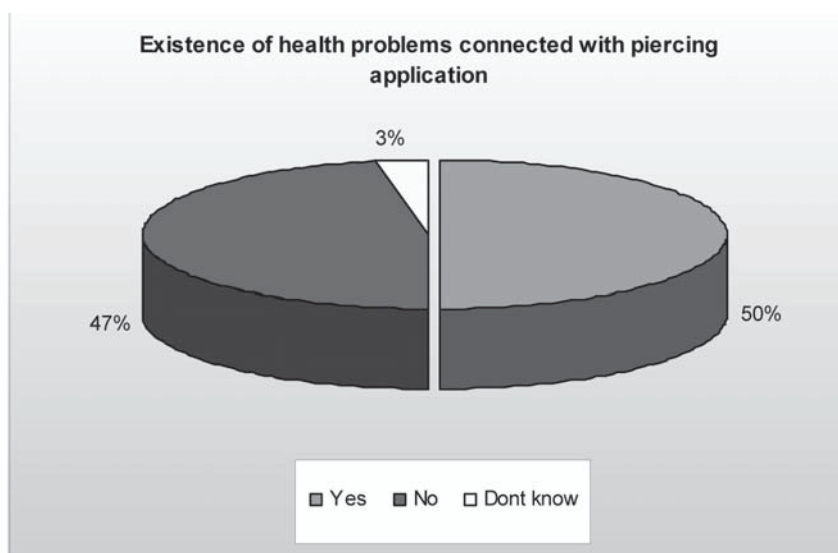
96,1 % of informants designated the statements as incorrect and changed it to (adjusted according to the questionnaire). „*Some pierced people use drugs as people without piercing do.* Even the following answer were suggested: „*It is not possible to judge the individual gauged on piece of iron.*“



Tab. 5 Existence of health problems connected with piercing

Answers	with piercing		without piercing		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
yes	9	23,7 %	55	61,1 %	64	50 %
no	29	76,3 %	31	34,4 %	60	46,9 %
don't know	0	0	4	4,5 %	4	3,1 %

Some people do realize the danger of piercing application. 50 % informants answered in the affirmative the question that should find out by informants without piercing the possible existence of some health problems connected with piercing and by informants with piercing the real existence of problems i.e. if they had some health problems after piercing application – *inflammation, allergic response, infection, damage of soft tissues swelling, etc.* Pierced informants listed the most frequent the following problems: *inflammation, purulence and allergic reaction on metal.*



Tab. 6 Toleration of informants without piercing to the incidental piercing of their partner.

Answers	with piercing		without piercing		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
yes	9	23,7 %	55	61,1 %	64	50 %
no	29	76,3 %	31	34,4 %	60	46,9 %
don't know	0	0	4	4,5 %	4	3,1 %

The majority of informants without piercing would be to the incidental piercing of their partner (54,4 %), approximately one third of informants (35,6 %) would be tolerant depending on the style of piercing and 10 % of informants would not accept piercing on their partner (in this case 2 informants from age group 19–35 years and 8 informants aged 36 and older were represented).

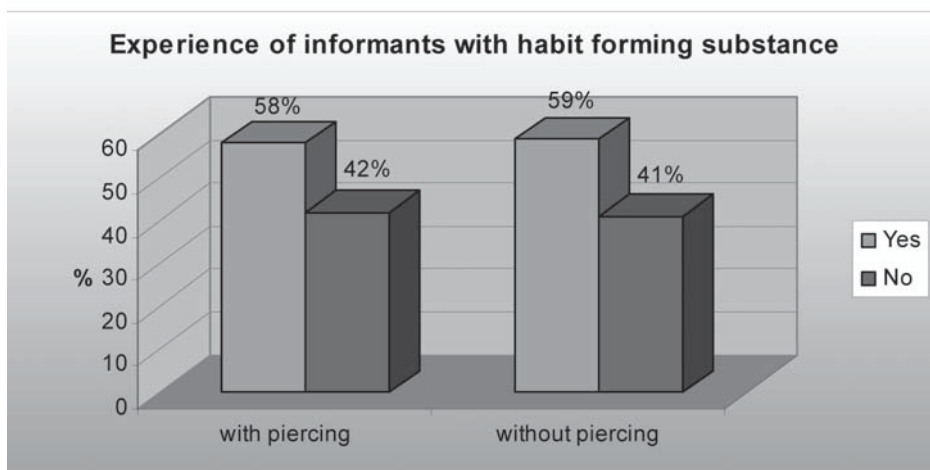
Tab. 7 Experience with drug by informants with and without piercing

Answers	with piercing		without piercing		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
yes	9	23,7 %	55	61,1 %	64	50 %
no	29	76,3 %	31	34,4 %	60	46,9 %
don't know	0	0	4	4,5 %	4	3,1 %

Presence of problem connected with application of piercing, especially in the recovery period. *The experience with some illegal drug stated 75 informants (58,6 %) from the total amount of 128 informants.* By comparison of groups of informants with and without piercing it was discovered that percentage representation of positive and negative answer is nearly the same. 8 individuals (from those 75 informants, that have experience with drug, i.e. 10,7 %) use the habit forming substances (marihuana) repeatedly. This demonstrates that it is not true, that all pierced individuals having some experience with drug are their regular users.

There are huge differences in experience with habit forming substances in respect to piercing and age. By informants having piercing is experience with habit forming substances higher at higher age.

By informants without piercing is the most frequently represented the experience with forming substances in the youngest age group of 14–18 years (75,5 %).



Knowledge about piercing

In spite of absolute knowledge of the meaning of the word „*piercing*“ just 68,8 % of all informants were the origins of this word in respect to time. Due to the lower representation of pierced individuals, which was caused by majority of individuals in the first age group (14–18 years, due to the random choice of informants, the pierced informants (71 %) were more successful than individuals without piercing (67 %).

However If we examine the table into more details, it can be observed that with the exception of the last age group (36 years and older), individuals without piercing had more correct answer, 14–18 years 56,6 %, 19–35 years 95,5 %. Interesting was the knowledge on the origins of piercing in age group 14–18 years, where none of the boys answered this question correctly that pierced individuals should have at least some knowledge on history of piercing.

Summary

On bases of the theoretical study and results of research (questionnaires and interviews with informants) It can be stated, that **the majority of present society accept piercing as usual phenomenon**. The piercing does not embarrass the majority of informants. At the same time informants realized the different attitudes toward piercing now days and in the past, existence of certain stigmatizing prejudices and forms of discrimination (depending on the position in work, etc.)

Problems with stigmatization of any subculture, not only piercing subculture is part of life of every society. There are always some individuals, who are scared different or have disrespect and who will on grounds of similar features class individual members of particular subculture to different subculture. It happens to the particular extend to the piercing subculture, whose some members are in grounds of dressing, behaviour and the music, they are listening to, classed to drug subculture.

The undertaken research brought information, which can be used in pedagogic praxis for forming of programmes to health support and prevention of social-pathologic phenomenon's at primary and secondary schools. The majority of informants do not view the pierced individuals as habit forming substances users. Therefore the main hypothesis of the whole research confirmed – **the piercing subculture is not at the same time the drug subculture**, i.e. *the pierced individuals are not at the same time the habit forming substances users*. This fact shall be taken into account while finding the effective strategies of prevention of habit forming substances misuse by children and young people.

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PROBLÉM STIGMATIZACE PIERCINGOVÉ SUBKULTURY JAKO SUBKULTURY DROGOVÉ JEHO ODRAZ VE VÝCHOVĚ ADOLESCENTŮ

Souhrn: Příspěvek předkládá výsledky řešení graduační práce, která sleduje problémy stigmatizace piercingové subkultury jako subkultury drogové. Východiskem jsou charakteristiky obou diskutovaných subkultur a trendy jejich vývoje. Jsou předloženy výsledky výzkumu zaměřeného na informovanost jedinců různého věku o piercingové subkultuře, jejich postoje k aplikaci piercingu a výskyt případných předsudků vůči jedincům s piercingem. Výsledky výzkumného šetření u adolescentů byly využity k vytvoření projektu, který lze doporučit k implementaci do školního vzdělávacího programu na středních školách (gymnáziích). Projekt nabízí návrh obsahové struktury vyučovacích hodin a doporučení výběru výukových metod, včetně motivačních didaktických her a cvičení.

Klíčová slova: piercing, trendy spojené s piercingem, piercingová subkultura, návykové látky, drogová subkultura, vzdělávací program