



Client reality check study



Objectives

Aim: to undertake a “reality check” on the relation between economic crises and illicit drug use and related problems.

This reality check focuses on the “Drug user perspective”

Clinicians in four (three) European countries interviewed a subset of their clients on the impact of the economic crisis on their drug use.



Survey Questionnaire

- Constructed ad hoc, based on a systematic review of the literature and approved by all partners.
- Semi-structured questionnaire. 38 questions in 4 blocks:
 - Block A: demographic information
 - Block B: perception of crisis impact on one's consumption
 - Block C: perception of crisis on society
 - Block D: perception of impact on treatment facilities.
- The final English version was translated in each country to the native language.



Ethics



- The study did not imply any intervention on patients or on providers, but gathered information for social research purposes.
- Ethics were dealt locally in each country and in accordance to the local procedures.
- In Catalonia, the Ethics Committee of the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona approved the study protocol.
- Patients participated in the study on a strictly voluntary basis, and all answers were treated confidentially and anonymously, following the ICC/ESOMAR code for Social and Market research (<http://www.aedemo.es/aedemo3/pdf/codigo-inter.pdf>).



Sampling

- Addiction clinicians from Catalonia, England and Poland each asked, as part of their service role, a convenience sample of 60 clients in drug dependence treatment to participate in the study.
- All clients included were using at least one illegal substance as their primary drug when admitted to treatment.
- Clients were interviewed in a variety of out-patient treatment settings.
- Recruitment was based on a replacement basis: clients were invited to voluntarily provide information in the frame of their usual consultations and those who refused were replaced by the subsequent consulting clients.

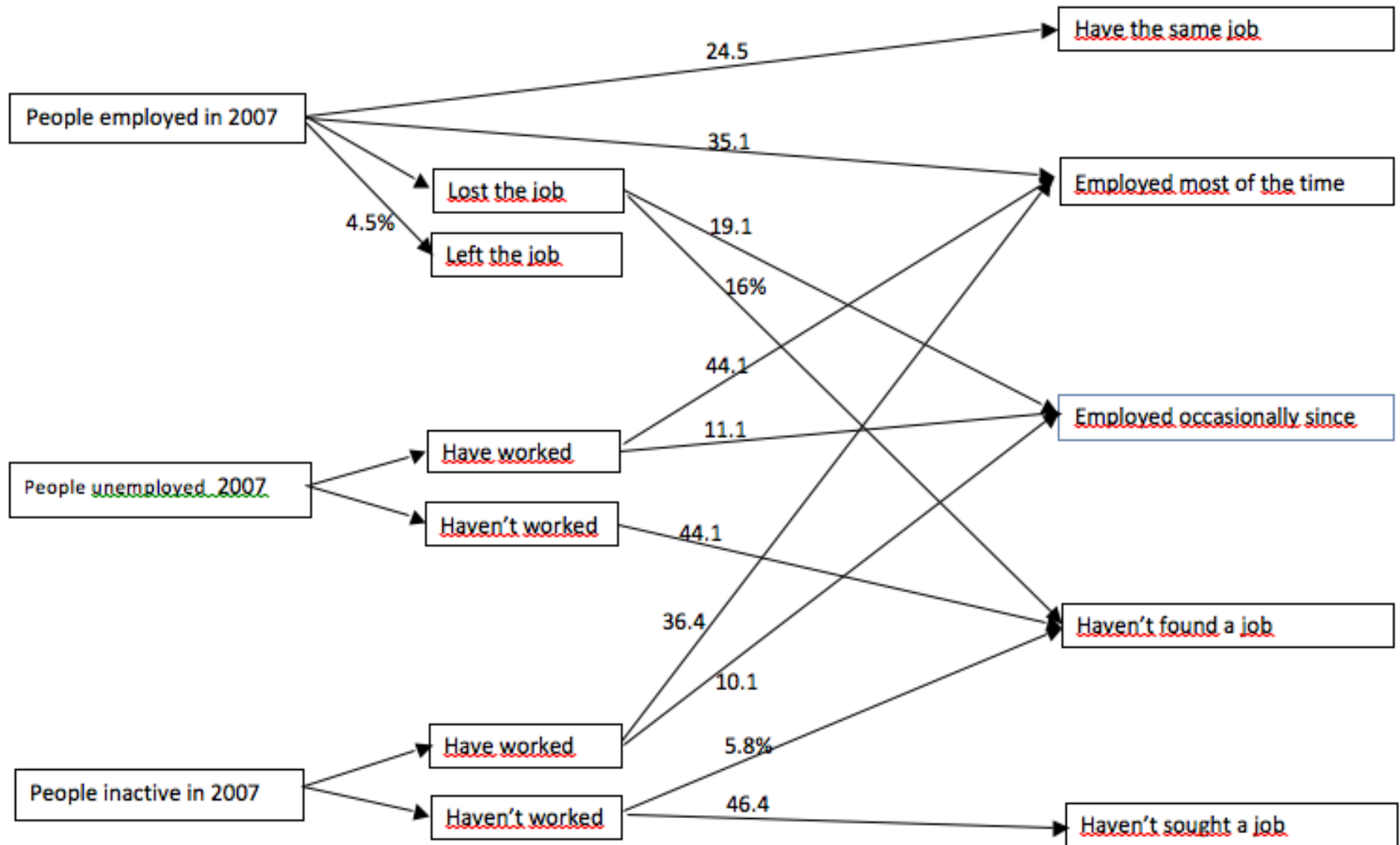


Results. Demographics.



- A total of 180 patients, 60 from each country (Catalonia, Poland and England), answered the questionnaire.
- The majority of participants were men (132, 74.6%)
- Age: 25 to 44 years old (133, 73.9%)
- Education: secondary studies (42.2%).
- 31.7% lived alone; 28.3% lived with an adult family member. Only a quarter (26.7%) lived with a partner, and very few with children (11.7%)
- Half of the participants were working in 2015 (86, 48%), a bit less than in 2007 (95, 53%).

Evolution of employment





Results.



Drug use before crisis.

- 82.2% were polydrug users.
- 68.3% had been using drugs for more than 10 years, 24.4% for 5-10 years and 16,8% for less than 5 years.
- Half of the clients interviewed were in their first year of treatment in that center, while 15.6% had been there for more than 5 years.
- The mean years of addiction treatment was 5.1 years (huge variance).



Results.



Drug use before crisis.

	<i>Heroin</i>	<i>Amphet</i>	<i>Cannabis</i>	<i>Cocaine</i>	<i>Opiates</i>	<i>Crack</i>	<i>BZDs</i>	<i>Alcohol</i>
Main drug pre-crisis	26.1	13	31.9	22.5	2.9	10.1	-	-
Other drugs pre-crisis	34.7	31.8	65.5	48.6	6.8	10.1	6	-
Main drugs pre-treatment	38.9	17.8	16.7	15.6	5.6	0.6	-	-
Other drugs pre-treatment	14	19	60.4	48.8	9.8	12.8	17.6	52.4



Results.



Impact of crisis in drug use

Drug use during the crisis:

- 58.3% increased use
- 16.1% didn't change use
- 25.6% decreased use

Life satisfaction:

- Has increased (67%)
- Has decreased (35.8%)



Results.



Increased use during the crisis.

REASONS FOR INCREASING DRUG USE	Strongly agree	Quite strongly agree	Neither agree or disagree	Quite strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Person states this is not applicable
Seeking comfort or an escape route due to losing a stable source of income (%)	18.2	12.5	5.2	7.3	15.6	40.6
To kill time as they lost a stable source of income (%)	16.5	10.3	6.2	8.2	19.6	39.2
To cope with the loss of a stable source of income and social status	15.5	13.4	4.1	6.2	21.6	39.2
Since I was not working, I had more free time so I increased my drug consumption (%)	22.9	16.2	4.8	3.8	22.9	29.5
To cope with friends and/or family problems (%)	16.2	11.4	9.5	6.7	31.4	23.8
Because of the fear of losing my job (%)	4.2	6.9	8.3	8.3	36.1	36.1
To cope with stress at work (%)	10	21.4	4.3	2.9	27.1	34.3
Because I found drugs cheaper (%)	3.8	6.4	10.3	7.7	43.6	28.2
Because they found them easier to get hold of (%)	8.1	25.7	6.8	4.1	35.1	20.3



Results.

Didn't change use during the crisis.

REASONS FOR NOT MODIFYING DRUG USE	Strongly agree	Quite strongly agree	Neither agree or disagree	Quite strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Person states this is not applicable
Cut back and renounced other things but not drugs	15.8%	31.6%	-%	5.3%	21.1%	26.3%
Bought alternative cheaper drugs	11.1%	11.1%	-%	22.2%	27.8%	27.8%
Their economic situation stayed more or less the same	59.4%	14.8%	3.7%	14.8%	3.7%	3.7%

Results.



Decreased use during the crisis.

REASONS FOR DECREASING DRUG USE	Strongly agree	Quite strongly agree	Neither agree or disagree	Quite strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Person states this is not applicable
As they lost a stable source of money	22.2	19.4	5.6	8.3	25	19.4
To stay clean because of fear of losing my job or need to find one	12.5	12.5	3.1	15.6	28.1	28.1
To help friends and/or family out with economic difficulties	17.1	14.6	2.4	9.8	43.9	12.2
As they felt less stressed they didn't need to take as many drugs	2.9	11.8	11.8	14.7	32.4	26.5
As they found more time to receive treatment as I lost my job	11.8	8.8	5.9	8.8	29.43	5.3
Compensating the reduction by	Yes		No			
Increasing alcohol use			39.5	60.5		
Smoking more			46.3	53.7		
Using other legal drugs			5	95		



Results.



Perception of impact on society

Access to drugs:

- 50,3% thinks it is easier to hold of their main drug, mostly due to an increase of availability in the market and only a third thinks this is due to the price going down.
- 37.3% finds there are no changes
- 12.4% thinks that it is harder to hold of their main drug, mostly because there is less substance on the market.

Impact of the crisis in addictions:

- 73.9% think there is more people affected by addictions
- 4,1% think there is less people affected by addictions
- 21,4% think there are no changes



Limitations of the study



- Convenience sample
- Small sample and just from treatment settings
- Cross-sectional and retrospective data



Summary

- Polydrug users with a long history of drug use
- 58,3% increased drug use during the crisis (main reason: more free time)
- No relevant changes in employment status since 2007
- Drugs are more available but not cheaper
- No relevant impact of the crisis in the provision of medical care and addiction treatment.



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Thanks !!