

SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES WITH ADDICTION PROBLEMS

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INTRODUCTION

Children growing up in families with addiction issues face numerous psychosocial challenges. This research explores how children perceive and subjectively experience life in such families, with an emphasis on identifying both risk and protective factors in their development.

RESULTS

The family can represent both a risk and protective factor in a child's development. Providing targeted support programs for children and families affected by addiction is crucial in reducing harm, strengthening resilience, and fostering long-term psychological well-being.

More than half of the interviewees were girls (57,69 %). Almost a half of the children (47,06 %) reported on their experience of the father's addiction, 38,24 % of the mother's addiction, and less than 3 % talked about the addiction issues of their stepfathers, brothers or grandparents.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Risk factors:

- **Family secrets** (e.g., "We weren't allowed to tell anyone what was happening at home.")
- **Parentification**: children taking over adult roles (e.g., "I was a mother and a teacher to my brother.")
- **Parental neglect**: emotional unavailability and lack of interest (e.g., "Mom didn't care I had problems in school...")
- **Parental health issues**: children bearing emotional burden (e.g., "I still believe we could have helped dad.")

Protective factors:

- **Secure attachment**: warmth and consistency (e.g., "Now I'm happy to come home. They hug me.")
- **Resilience**: coping strategies through role models, sports, music (e.g., "My uncle saved my life.")
- **Supportive environments**: positive social experiences outside the family system

CONCLUSION

Based on the children's statements in the research, it can be seen that for them the family is a risk factor in several areas and manifests itself in family secrets, taking on the roles of adults, negative parenting and health problems in the parents. However, we also confirmed the protective factors: secure attachment, strengthening of resilience, sources of strength that help children deal with situations and new challenges on a daily basis, and yes, the involvement of parents in various help programs for addiction problems affects the positive trend of changes in the experiences of children.

REFERENCES

Sorko, N., 2025, Risk and protective factors in the psychosocial development of children from families with addiction problems: Doctoral dissertation. Ljubljana.

KEYWORDS

risk factors, protective factors, addiction, family, children, psychosocial development

01

The purpose of the research was to investigate the subjective insight into the experiences of children in families with addiction problems, and to consider risk or protection factors that affect their psychosocial development.

02

We used a qualitative approach based on constructivist theory, we conducted semi-structured interviews 26 children aged 8 to 14 from families in which one or both parents struggled with addiction issues.

03

Using open two-level coding, text marking and forming categories.

04

The main research, in which we answer two research questions: whether family is a risk factor in the psychosocial development of children in families with addiction issues, and whether family is a protective factor in the psychosocial development of children in families with addiction issues.

Figure 1: Distribution of the sample by gender.

