

# **ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES PROBLEMATIC APPROACHES IN TEXTBOOKS OF 16 COUNTRIES**

**Graça S. Carvalho, Artur Gonçalves and Catarina Dantas**  
Child Studies Institute, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal  
graca@iec.uminho.pt

## **1. Introduction**

All kinds of addictive substances can lead to a physical and psychological dependency and consequently to affect different social systems: microsystem (health, self-esteem, responsibility, freedom...); mesosystem (family, work, friends, respect...) and macrosystem (rights, freedoms, collective's resources...) (Bronfoembrenner, 1979; Negreiros, 2000; Ferreira-Borges e Filho, 2004).

Addictive substances as alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs represent a serious problem in the actual society. Young people – because of their physical, psychological and social stages related to the process of growing – are very vulnerable to these substances consumption. In this context, UNESCO (1986) has recognized the school as an important centre for addiction prevention (included in the global plan of the Health Education) since it is the place where young students may contact with drugs and fall into such world. In contrast, it may also be the place where young people may become aware of this reality and become empowered to make choices in a responsible way towards a healthy lifestyle (Kemn e Close, 1995; Pike e Foster, 1995; Tones and Tilford, 2001; Aragão e Sacadura, 2002).

Drugs represent a biopsychosocial problem therefore it is important to analyse national programmes approach to the problem (external didactical transposition) and consequently textbooks approach, as they are the main support to the internal didactical transposition. (Clément, 2004). These two domains are fundamental in students' empowerment and critical literacy in order to provide them with the necessary knowledge to face this problematic (Carvalho, 2002).

According to the information presented by each team, in general the textbooks reflect the national programmes concepts and ideas for Health Education. Thus, it is relevant to analyse school textbooks as they translate the national programmes guidelines, which are the expression of the educational policies. Furthermore, textbooks represent the pedagogical resource mostly used by teachers and students.

In general students ignore the content of national programmes, although in some countries they are available in the internet and at schools. Teachers tend to use the textbook with a double function: as a didactical resource and as a mirror of the national programme (Cabral, 2005).

The aim of this work was to identify differences and similarities in textbooks drug prevention approaches within 16 countries involved in the European project “Biohead-Citizen”. The present work is innovating in 2 ways:

- It is the first work concerning Portuguese and fifteen other countries textbooks analyses;
- It allows inferring about the commitment between the educational interactions represented by textbooks and the substance abuse prevention in the 16 countries.

## 2. Research design and method

### Samples

Teams were asked to analyse the most used textbook(s) (up to 5 textbooks) for each school level presenting the drugs thematic. Generally, Biology (and equivalent or similar disciplines) textbooks were the analysed ones.

A total of 78 textbooks were analysed, as it can be seen in the table 1.

**Table 1. Analysed textbooks**

Total of textbooks analysed in each country													
Countries	Age												Total
	5/6	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	
Cyprus										1			3
Estonia								1		1			2
Finland									1				1
France	1			3	1			1					6
Germany	1	1	1								1		5
Hungary					1				2			1	5
Italy							3		2	1			11
Lebanon					1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	14
Lithuania						1					1		2
Malta								2					2
Morocco							1			1			7
Mozambique				1		2		1					2
Poland												1	1
Portugal		2	2	2	2		2			2	2		14
Romania									1				1
Senegal							1				1		2

### Methods

For the textbook analysis, a specific grid on “Health Education” was constructed by the Biohead-Citizen project. To accomplish the present work we grouped data in three major groups: **Physical effects**, **Psychological effects** and **Social effects**.

Data analysis: we calculated the percentage of Physical, Psychological and Social effects in each country and among all countries, taking in account the total number of text and images references.

### **Results and discussion**

In all participant countries textbooks are in agreement with the national programmes even in the countries having a textbook free market.

Generally in the 16 countries textbooks, the educative approaches include the three dimensions referred in the OMS health definition: physical, psychological and social effects. Countries textbooks present mainly text related to drugs abuse as compared to images but some countries textbooks present it in text only.

All countries explore alcohol, tobacco and other drugs issues, except Morocco which does not mention the tobacco problematic and Mozambique other drugs problematic.

Finland is the country where these issues are more explored. This is probably related to the fact that this is the only country where the Health Education exists in the national curriculum as a separate teaching discipline.

In the tobacco topic the physical effects are the most explored ones, whereas in the other two topics we detach the psychological effects. These results can be related, despite others, to the physiological consequences of the different drugs consumption.

Although drinking is also a way to socialise, excessive drink is socially condemned in textbooks because of the immediately effects on the person's health and behaviour. Sometimes it is shown in textbooks as being behind murders or work and car accidents as well as others social problems. Some textbooks associate psychological effects to social effects.

Other kinds of drugs are in many countries illegal and socially unaccepted. Textbooks emphasise the immediate effects in the person's lost of behaviour control. Psychological and social approaches are the major concerns about drugs abuse among 14 countries.

## **Referentes**

- Aragão, M. J. e Sacadura, R. (2002) *Guia Geral das Drogas: explicar o seu mecanismo e as suas consequências*. Lisboa: Terramar.
- Bronfenbrenner, U.(1979)*The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cabral, M. (2005) *Como analisar manuais escolares*. Lisboa: Texto Editora.
- Carvalho, G. S. (2002) "Literacia para a Saúde: um contributo para a redução das desigualdades em saúde" *In Saúde: As teias da discriminação social – actas do Colóquio internacional: Saúde e discriminação social* (org: M. E. Leandro, M. M. L. Araújo, M. S. Costa). Braga: Universidade do Minho – IEC, pp. 119-135.
- Clément, P. (2004) *Sciences et Idéology: exemple en didactiques et épistémologie de la biologie*. In ASTER coloque « Sciences, Médias et Société » J. Le Marec & I. Babou (Eds), ENS – LSH, pp.53-69.
- Ferreira- Borges, C. e Filho, H.C.(2004) *Usos, Abusos e Dependências: Alcoolismo e Toxicodependências*. Lisboa: CLIMEPSI Editores.
- Kemn, J. e Close, A. (1995) *Health Promotion: The Theory & Practice*. London: McMillan Press LTD.
- Negreiros, J. (2000) *As acções de prevenção do abuso de drogas em Portugal: apreciação crítica e perspectivas para o futuro*, in Precioso, J., Viseu, F., Dourado. L., Vilaça, M.T., Henriques, R. e Lacerda, T. (org) *Educação para a Saúde*. Braga: Departamento de Metodologias da Educação- Universidade do Minho.
- Pike, S. e Foster, D. (1995) *Helath Promotion for All*. London: Churchil Livingston.
- Tones, K. e Tilford, S. (2001) *Health Promotion: effectiveness, efficiency and equity* (3ª edição). Leeds: Nelson Thornes.

## **Acknowledgements**

This work had the financial support of the European project FP6 Biohead-Citizen CIT2-CT-2004-506015. The authors particularly thank the other participants who gathered data or coordinated this

process concerning the topic "Health Education" in the textbooks of their respective countries: Nicos Valanides (Cyprus), Kai Pata and Tago Saraparuu (Estonia), Anna-Liisa Rauma (Finland), Dominique Berger and Pierre Clément (France-Lyon), Claude Caussidier and Daniel Favre (France-Montpellier), Christine Geier and Franz Bogner (Germany), Dániel Horváth and Attila Varga (Hungary), Luzi Daniela and Silvia Caravita (Italy), EL-Hage Fadi and Odile Saab (Lebanon), Grita Skujiene and Jurga Turcinaviciene (Lithuania), Desireè Scicluna Bugeja and Paul Pace (Malta), Sabah Selmaoui (Morocco), Elwira Samonek-Miciuk (Poland), Adrienne Kozan (Romania), Mame Seyni Thiaw and Valdiodio Ndiaye (Senegal).