

# ŽIVLJENJE JE RADOST, NE LE UŽITEK

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## Uvodnik

Ta številka Zdravstvenega varstva je namenjena zasvojenostim. Uporabljam izraz »zasvojenost«, čeprav mnogi uporabljajo izraz »odvisnost«. Pove namreč več in pušča manj dvoma o samem pojavu. Ljudje smo namreč fiziološko povsem odvisni od mnogih stvari (ne pa zasvojeni), včasih tudi od ljudi (npr. dojenček). Bivanjsko smo odvisni od hrane, tekočine, kisika in še marsičesa - brez vsega tega umremo. Bolnik s sladkorno boleznijo tipa 1 je odvisen od inzulina - brez njega ne bi preživel, ne moremo pa reči, da je zasvojen z insulinom. Nekateri primerjajo zdravljenje z insulinom dajanju metadona ljudem, odvisnim od opiatov, kar je v osnovi zgrešena primerjava.

Pri vseh zasvojenostih gre za povsem nekaj drugega. Nihče ne umre, če ne more zadovoljiti hrepenenja po tistem, s čimer je zasvojen (je nekaj malega izjem, npr. možni smrtni zapleti pri deliriumu tremensu). Zasvojenost je motnja, bolezen možganov, za katero so nekateri bolj dovzetni od drugih zaradi genetskih, osebnostnih, socialnih, kulturnih ali drugih vzrokov, večinoma gre za preplet več dejavnikov, ki jih lahko združimo v znano trojico: človek - okolje-agens.

Zakaj so ljudje v tisočletjih uporabljali različne snovi, za katere so iz izkušenj, zapisov modrecev ali pa izročila lahko vedeli, da jim povzročijo lahko težave in jih lahko zasvojijo? Zakaj so se ohranjale, čeprav so mnogim ljudem zmanjšale možnost za preživetje? Zakaj ljudje sploh iščejo snovi, ki vplivajo na njihovo počutje, doživljanje? Pa saj ne gre samo za psihotropne snovi, kajti nekatere zasvoji hrana ali določene dejavnosti (npr. računalniške igrice, gledanje TV, igre na srečo, nakupovanje), na nek način so nekateri lahko zasvojeni celo z odnosom do sočloveka.

V maternici dobi človek ponavadi vse, kar potrebuje. Vse se zgodi samo od sebe - brez njegovega truda. Ko pa se rodi človek, naenkrat niso več izpolnjene osnovne potrebe. Sedaj se mora sam potruditi in pokazati, da je lačen, žejen, moker, utrujen, osamljen. Če mu v družini ljubeče izpolnjujejo njegove potrebe, otrok pridobiva zaupanje do sveta, do drugih ljudi in do sebe. Odvisnost od ljubezni staršev in od stvari, potrebnih za življenje, lahko z leti spontano preide v spoznanje, da je s trudom in ljubeznijo življenje lepo, hkrati pa v spoznanje, da na svetu nisi sam in da zaradi tega obstajajo omejitve. Prvotna sebičnost, ki je v zgodnjem otroštvu potrebna

za preživetje, lahko postopoma preide v duhovno rast, ko prevlada svobodno odločanje o zadovoljitvi potreb (ali odložiti zadovoljitev ali celo ne izpolniti potrebo, če v tem vidi smisel) in občutek za sočloveka, razumevanje in sprejemanje drugih. Tako lahko starši prenesejo na otroka radost in veselje do življenja samega in do življenja z drugimi ljudmi.

Vsa živa bitja imamo v genih zapisano življenje in tudi smrt. A smrt pride vedno šele po življenju. Bistvo življenja je živeti, kot je zapisal Srečko Kosovel. Veselje do življenja je »biti«, ne imeti (1). Če si to, kar si s svojim bivanjem, ne pa to, kar imaš, si v bistvu svoboden. Ljudje v nacističnih koncentracijskih taboriščih niso imeli ničesar, a so vsi hoteli živeti - hoteli so »biti«, izpolniti svoj smisel. Kljub vsemu trpljenju so bili mnogi globoko v sebi radostni, kljub vsemu so videli smisel življenja in so svojo radostnost izražali na različne načine (2). Kot ugotavlja Viktor Frankl, je velika težava sedanje družbe pomanjkanje smisla, kar številne posameznike vodi do bega od aktivnosti za samouresničitev v pravo nasprotje človekovega bistva - v potrošništvo, pridobitništvo s kopičenjem materialnih dobrin in v iskanje kratkotrajnih užitkov, kar ne prinaša umirjenosti in pravega zadovoljstva. Zadovoljitev vseh človekovih individualnih potreb in številnih umetno ustvarjenih potreb ne izpolnjuje smisla človekovega bivanja, ampak nasprotno, vodi do bivanjske praznine, kar so mnogi misleci ugotavljali že v preteklosti (3).

Pomanjkanje smisla pa je dobra osnova za razvoj različnih zasvojenosti. Kot je zapisal bivši »zasvojenec«: »Ko sem imel vse, nisem imel ničesar - v meni je bila praznina. Droga je izpolnitev praznine. Samo, da te uniči.« (4)

Kdor ne nosi v sebi radosti življenja, kdor išče le način za doseganje individualnih ciljev in golo zadovoljevanje potreb, ne more biti srečen. Nejc Zaplotnik (5) je zapisal: »Kdor išče cilj, bo ostal prazen, ko ga bo dosegel, kdor pa najde pot, bo cilj vedno nosil v sebi«. Življenje ni cilj, ampak pot - ni užitek, ampak radost. Danes se poudarja individualnost, tekmovalnost, komercialna miselnost, koristolovstvo, pohlep, pozablja pa se, da je človek odnosno bitje; vse se spreminja v porabniško blago, celo odnosi med ljudmi. Zanimarja se kakovost medsebojnih odnosov, solidarnost, sodoživljanje - empatija, ljubezen, ki temelji na dajanju, ne na

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posedovanju. Tako prihaja do motenj v doživljanju samega sebe, soljudi, narave, dela, družbe, kulture in lastnega smisla (6).

Že otroci se danes bolj kot kdaj koli prej učijo, kako se izogniti naporom, odtujujejo se dejavnim oblikam preživljanja prostega časa, neposrednemu druženju z vrstniki in ustvarjalnemu življenju s posedanjem pred TV sprejemniki, videokasetami, računalniki, z iskanjem kratkotrajnih užitkov in se naučijo osnovnih vzorcev vedenja, ki lahko vodijo v zasvojenost (7). Izgublja se učenje s pridobivanjem lastnih izkušenj in z izmenjavo izkušenj z drugimi (vrstniki in odraslimi), zaradi česar se zmanjšuje njihova sposobnost za konstruktivno reševanje težav, s katerimi se srečujejo v življenju.

Človeku lahko raznovrstne težave zbudijo občutke tesnobe, skrbi, žalost, bolečino, utrujenost, osamljenost, nesprejetost, občutke krivde, sramu in strahu. Vse to je neke vrste alarm, ki nas opozarja, da je nekaj narobe (8). Brez alarma bi imel posameznik kakor tudi skupine manj možnosti za preživetje. Po naravni poti te alarme izklapljam z odstranitvijo njihovega vzroka, kar ponavadi zahteva trud, nekatere pa lahko samo ublažimo z aktivnostjo ali preseganjem samega sebe. Ljudje so že v davni ugotovili, da lahko te občutke in doživljanja vsaj začasno ublažijo tudi na drugačen način - z umikom v »drug svet« s pomočjo različnih psihotropnih snovi. Če človek za blaženje takih občutkov večkrat uporabi takšne umike, je vse več možnosti, da naravni načini »izklapljanja alarmov« postajajo vse manj učinkoviti. Z drugimi besedami: vse tisto, kar drugim ljudem prinaša zadovoljstvo, pomiritev in notranje ravnovesje, postopoma postaja neučinkovito in za vsa neprijetna občutja vse bolj ostaja ena sama pot pomiritve - takšna ali drugačna droga.

Tu pride do izraza sedanja »instant« civilizacija, ki nam vsiljuje uživaštvo, ideologijo zabave, pasivnost, skrb za »fasado« brez ključnega bogatenja vsebine ter nam ponuja hitre odgovore in rešitve za »vse« težave. To se lepo navezuje na današnjo zmedo v sistemu vrednot v družbi, na številne razpadajoče družine, odtujenost od soljudi, negotovost glede prihodnosti. V tem svetu se mnogi mladi ne znajdejo, ne uspejo izraziti radosti življenja in svoje volje do življenja, ne najdejo lastne potrditve, svojega mesta med drugimi, ne najdejo bližine, možnosti za konstruktivno in ustvarjalno iskanje novih spoznanj. Tako jim pride prav instant ponudba vseh mogočih mašil in nadomestkov, ki jih odtujujejo od stvarnosti. To je zanje dolgoročno še bolj pogubno, kot je za starejše odrasle, saj pride do motnje osebnostne rasti, še preden so sploh dozoreli (9). Droge so le ena od oblik tovrstne ponudbe in so po rezultatih

raziskav med mladimi pravzaprav lahko dostopne vsem, kljub zakonskim omejitvam.

Številni ukrepi, ki so jih do sedaj izvajale različne države, za zmanjševanje rabe različnih drog, niso bili zelo učinkoviti. Odkar je Slovenija samostojna država v ta namen še ni široko zastavila nobenega programa, čeprav strokovnjaki že kar nekaj let opozarjajo, da se raba drog in nekemičnih omam hitro povečuje, kar je razvidno tudi iz prispevkov v tej številki Zdravstvenega varstva. Prej bi lahko rekli obratno: da z družbenoekonomskimi spremembami v zadnjih 15 letih celo spodbujamo širjenje različnih omamljanj. V številnih filmih in oddajah na TV bolj ali manj prikrito prikazujejo in reklamirajo alkohol (zadnji primer v oddaji Bar) in druge droge, a nihče nič ne reče. Ljudi brezobzirno privabljajo z uživaštvom pa z nasiljem, z brezosebno spolnostjo zaradi dobička. Mirno sprejemamo industrijo plehke zabave, množični konformizem, cenene alkoholne pijače, prostaštvo. Bivši »zasvojenec« takšno stanje komentira takole: »Za to družbo je to očitno normalno. Za dobiček je ta družba pripravljena tako zlorabljati lastne otroke; ko pa zaneti ogenj, pa uprizarja gašenje - čista zlaganost...« (4). Ob takšni dostopnosti in tako široki rabi alkohola in tobaka ter raznoterih nekemičnih oblik umika je bolešno govoriti še o legalizaciji nekaterih prepovedanih drog. Že tako je ilegalna ponudba prepovedanih drog veliko preobširna; legalizacija bi zagotovo ne zmanjšala njihove rabe med mladimi. Tako se je treba vprašati, kaj je cilj takšnih teženj.

Torej, kakšna naj bi bila pot, če resnično želimo zmanjšati rabo takšne ali drugačne omame? Odgovor ni preprost, prav tako tudi ni mogoče pričakovati hitrih rezultatov.

Dolgoročno je lahko uspešna le najširša dolgotrajna družbena akcija, ki bo vključila vse segmente družbe. Usmerjena bo morala biti na vsa tri področja, ki vplivajo na odločitev posameznika: na človeka, okolje in agense. O človeku, njegovi vzgoji, pogojih za samouresničevanje je bilo napisanega že veliko, udejanjenega pa bistveno manj. Vloga zdrave družine je pri tem nenadomestljiva, prav tako lahko šola oz. celoten sistem izobraževanja prispeva veliko z vzgojo za zdravje, tako da bi mladina znala doživljati radost življenja in uskladiti ljubezni do sebe, do drugih in do smisla življenja (10). Vsi ostali segmenti družbe tudi prispevajo k oblikovanju človeka, poleg tega pa vplivajo na okolje. Vplivajo npr. na stališča do raznovrstnega omamljanja in z njim povezanega vedenja (npr. pijanost v družbi pri nas ne velja za sporno, neredko prav nasprotno - za zaželeno), na življenjske pogoje, pogoje dela, na različne preprečevalne dejavnosti omamljanja

(primarne, sekundarne in terciarne prevencije) itd. Uspešno lahko družba vpliva na same agense, v tem primeru na droge, če le hoče. Z ustrežno zakonodajo, s celovito nacionalno politiko (za alkohol, tobak, prepovedane droge in nekemične zasvojenosti) in seveda njenim resničnim izvajanjem lahko bistveno omeji dostopnost na več različnih načinov, kar se je doslej že izkazalo za učinkovito (11), pri čemer je treba preprečiti kakršno koli morebitno vpletenost javnih delavcev v dobičke od prometa z drogami. Nenazadnje je treba v ta kompleksni program vključiti civilno družbo z različnimi skupinami in dejavnike v vseh lokalnih skupnostih, saj si je dolgoročno težko predstavljati uspeh brez njihovega trajnega dejavnega sodelovanja. Sedanji ukrepi se vse preveč usmerjajo v zmanjševanje škode - kot je zapisal bivši zasvojenec (4): »S tem, da ti dajo metadon, drogo, in si tako zagotovijo, da bo manj vlomov, tatvin, manj kriminala, manj okužb, te še niso rešili; še manj se ti ljubi spreminjati življenje.« Bistveno več bi bilo treba narediti za ustvarjanje boljših pogojev za ustrezno odločanje posameznika v današnji tako raznovrstni in protislovni ponudbi življenjskih izbir, v kateri se še zelo kritičen človek težko znajde (9). Čeprav na koncu koncev je vsak sam odgovoren za svoja dejanja in tudi za nedejanja. Če pa je nekdo že zasvojen, saj on ni več on: »Otrok ni več vaš otrok, partner ni več vaš partner. Droga (alkohol, loterija, internet, ...) ga je ukradla - v njem ni več čustev, ljubezni, v njem je samo še takšen ali drugačen zadetek.« (4) Zato potrebuje pomoč, da se lahko odloči, ali bo nadaljeval

po starem ali pa bo sprejel pomoč in se rešil; ali bo namesto umika v trenutni užitek oziroma takšno ali drugačno omamo, izbral »trpljenje odvajanja« zaradi življenja, ki vključuje oziroma obsega njega samega, soljudi in naravo, in dal temu trpljenju smisel, da bo našel svojo pot.

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## LIFE IS JOY, NOT MERE PLEASURE

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Editorial

This issue of *Zdravstveno varstvo* is dedicated to the problem of addiction. I deliberately chose the term »addiction« instead of the more widely used »dependence«. The word »addiction« tells us more about this phenomenon, and raises less doubt about its true meaning. Humans are physiologically dependent on - rather than addicted to - many things, even on people (e.g. a baby). We are vitally dependent on food, fresh water, oxygen and many other things. When deprived of them for long enough we will die. Patients with Type 1 diabetes are dependent on insulin. They depend on insulin injections to stay alive, but they are not addicts. Insulin therapy has been compared to methadone maintenance treatment in opiate addicts, yet this comparison is entirely wrong.

The nature of addiction disorders is completely different. People do not die if they cannot satisfy their urge for a stimulant (there are only a few exceptions, e.g. delirium tremens). Addiction is a brain disorder that some people are more liable to develop because of their personality traits, and genetic, social, cultural and other causes. Generally, several factors intervene in the phenomenon of addiction; they constitute a well-known triad, involving man, environment and addictive agent.

Why have addictive substances been used over so many centuries despite their traditionally known harmful effects and addictive properties, described in detail by sages and old scripts? Why have so many people continued to take addictive substances even if they reduced their chance of survival? People become addicted not only to psychoactive substances but also to food or certain activities (playing computer games, watching TV, gambling, shopping); and even to relationships.

While in the mother's womb, the baby usually gets all he needs. Everything runs smoothly and no effort is required. After the birth the baby has to show that he is hungry, thirsty, wet, tired or lonely if he wants his basic needs to be met. Children whose needs are met promptly and lovingly develop a sense of basic trust in the world, people and themselves. Dependence on the parents' affection and on other vital things may spontaneously grow into something more: into awareness that love and commitment make the life beautiful, and that we must accept limitations because

we are not alone in the world. In the process of spiritual growth the original egotism, required for survival in the early childhood is gradually replaced by the freedom of choice between fulfillment, delayed fulfillment and even non-fulfillment of one's needs. One develops empathy and understanding, and accepts other human beings. Parents can thus instil in their children the love of life and the joy of sharing life with other people.

Life and death are written in the genes of all living creatures. Yet death comes at the end of one's life, therefore the essence of life is to live, as wrote the Slovene poet Srečko Kosovel. The joy of life is in »being« and not in »having« (1). If our life is defined by what we are rather than by what we have, we are free. Prisoners in concentration camps had nothing left but a strong will to live »to be« and to find fulfillment. Despite the great suffering many of them experienced joy in the depth of their heart, they found the meaning of life and expressed their joy in many different ways (2). According to Viktor Frankl, the sense of meaninglessness is one of the important problems facing the modern society. Many individuals abandon all endeavours to find happiness in self-fulfillment and opt for its very contrast - life of unbridled consumerism, characterized by excessive accumulation of material goods and search for transitory pleasure, which brings no peace of mind and no sense of satisfaction. Satisfying all individual and all artificially created needs cannot give meaning to one's life, on the contrary, it may lead to hollowness of existence (3).

The sense of meaninglessness is an excellent breeding ground for the development of various addictions. A former addict said: »When I had everything I had nothing - I felt empty inside. I filled my emptiness with drugs. But ... they destroy you« (4).

People who lead an existence devoid of meaning and joy, satisfying only their personal needs and pursuing only their own pleasure, are not happy. Nejc Zaplotnik (5) wrote: »Those engaged in pursuit of goals will remain empty, but those who have found the path will always carry the goal within themselves«. Life is not an aim but a path - it is not filled with pleasure but with joy. Today, individualism, competitiveness, commercialism, egotism and greed feature most highly on the list of favoured attributes, everything is changed into

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consumable goods, even interpersonal relationships. The quality of relationships with other people, empathy and love - a gifting rather than a possessing love - are neglected nowadays. This leads to disturbances in perceiving and relating to self, other people, nature, work, society, culture and sense of being (6).

Today, children learn very early how to avoid getting involved in real-life activities. Instead of socializing with their peers and adopting healthy and creative lifestyles, they spend their leisure time watching TV and videotapes, sitting long hours at the computer or seeking short-lived pleasures (7). They avoid learning from their own experience or through interaction with their peers or adults, which reduces their ability to tackle problems encountered in their daily life in a constructive way.

There are a variety of problems that make one feel anxious, worried, sad, tired, lonely, unaccepted, guilty, ashamed or afraid. These feelings alert us to the fact that something went wrong (8). Without these warning signs people would have had less chance to survive. One's alarm system can be turned off in a natural way by eliminating the causes of alarm, which tends to be a demanding task. Unpleasant feelings can also be attenuated by involvement in various activities and by making effort to surpass oneself. Yet, since the earliest days of mankind people have known other means that allowed them temporarily to forget their problems and escape into a different world: psychoactive substances. Frequent use of this way of escape to alleviate unpleasant feelings gradually reduces the effectiveness of the natural ways available to turn off the alarm system. In other words: all activities that bring personal satisfaction and help restore inner balance to other people become increasingly less effective, and the only solution left is to resort to psychoactive substances. The modern materialistic civilisation imposes its »instant« ideology on people by encouraging constant quest for pleasure and fun, conditioning people into passivity, advertising outer form rather than self-enhancement and self-enrichment, and by offering instant answers to »all« problems. This model is reflected in a confused system of values, as well as in family disintegration, interpersonal alienation and feelings of uncertainty about future. Many young people feel lost in this society, they lack skills to express joy and willingness to live fully, and they fail to find their own place in the world. They fail to get closer to and to interact with others to be able to explore new possibilities for acquiring experience and new skills in a constructive and creative way. At this point they risk to get trapped in a world offering a vast array of substitutes and instant

solutions, a world that promotes one's escape from the reality. In the long run, young people seem to be in greater peril than adults, because their personality growth is hindered before they have reached maturity (9). Drugs are only one of the substitutes available, and research has shown that they are readily accessible despite legal restrictions.

Measures taken by different countries to reduce the use of various drugs have mostly proved ineffective. Since 1991 when Slovenia gained independence, no large-scale programme has been conducted, despite many warnings voiced by experts that the use of addictive chemical and non-chemical substances has been increasing at a rapid rate. Papers published in this issue of *Zdravstveno Varstvo* clearly attest to this situation. In fact, the socio-economic changes that have occurred over the past 15 years have even encouraged addictive behaviour in the population. Films and TV shows more or less overtly advertise the use of alcohol and other drugs, and nobody seems to react. For the sake of pure profit they relentlessly lure people by representations of pleasure, violence and detached sexuality. We readily accept this industry of amusement without any artistic merit, mass conformism, cheap alcoholic beverages and vulgarity. A former addict commented: »This situation seems to be normal for our society, which is prepared to abuse its own children to make profit. Once the fire is lighted, they pretend they are busy putting the flames out. Pure hypocrisy...« (4). Considering the present ready accessibility and wide use of alcohol, tobacco and various non-chemical means of escape, it is unethical to support legalization of some illicit drugs. Currently, the availability of illicit drugs on the black market is far too extensive, and drug legalization would certainly not curb drug usage among young people. Here the question arises: what are the real aims pursued?

What is then the most effective method for decreasing the use of drugs of various kinds? There is no clear, straightforward answer to this question, and it would be unrealistic to expect results overnight.

In the long run good results are obtainable by a sustained, large-scale social action, which would include all segments of the society. The activities should be primarily focused on three areas that influence one's decisions about drug use: man, environment, agent. A lot has been written about the man, education and conditions for one's self-realization, yet very little has been accomplished in this area. A healthy family plays an irreplaceable role here. School and the whole educational system can contribute largely to this goal by equipping young people with skills necessary to

experience joy of living and to develop a healthy balance between self-love, love for others and love of the sense of life (10). Other segments of the society are also involved in one's personality formation and exert effects on the environment. They have impact on how people perceive the use of drugs and what attitude they take to drug-related behaviour (e.g. in Slovenia drunkenness is socially acceptable, even more, people are frequently encouraged to get drunk). Also they affect one's living and working conditions, as well as various drug prevention programmes, both primary, secondary and tertiary. By adopting appropriate legislative measures and comprehensive national strategies concerning alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use and non-chemical addictions, and by strictly implementing the adopted policies, the society can restrict drug accessibility in different ways. The interventions have proved very effective (11), yet care should be taken that people working in this field do not take profit out of illegal drug trade. Civil society with its institutions as well as various local community factors should be encouraged to take part in this complex programme, because its success vitally depends on sustained action and cooperation of all these partners.

Most current policies on drugs are directed towards reducing harmful consequences of drug use. A former addict said: »The idea behind giving you methadone, just another drug, is to reduce the rate of burglaries, thefts, criminal acts and infections - yet you are far from being saved and you have even less motivation to change your life.«(4). Greater efforts will have to be taken to create an environment that would favour proper life choices to be made amid a number of different and often opposing options available that are baffling even to mature individuals (9). The final responsibility for the choices made always lies with each of us individually. An addict is no longer the person he/she used to be.

»Your child is no longer your child, and your partner is no longer the partner you knew. They have been stolen by the drug (alcohol, gambling, the Internet)- they are now bereft of emotions, of love - all they crave is a fix of any kind« (4). These persons need help to choose between two options: to either continue taking drugs, or to accept help and save their life - to escape in a world of transitory »high« sensations, or to take a decision to go through the painful drug withdrawal for the sake of Life, which encompasses their own self, other people and nature, makes sense of their suffering during withdrawal, and helps them find their own path to normal life.

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