

Selected causes of lone parenthood in Poland - social  
analysis

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## **Selected causes of lone parenthood in Poland - social analysis**

In 1979, alcoholism was defined as „alcohol dependence syndrome” by World Health Organization. A characteristic feature of this disease is the family involvement in the problems of the alcoholic-person. This introduces a relationship full of tension and fear in every sphere of life, both mentally and physically in alcoholic's family. In a family with alcohol problems are significantly impaired social roles of parents and children.

Alcohol has a strong impact on human health and it weakens the will and the cause of the negative effects of life. Pleasant effects felt after drinking alcohol make safe drinking limits are difficult to feel. Loss of control over drinking can cause alcohol intoxication, or to addiction with all the negative consequences and, in extreme cases, death.

There are three basic patterns of harmful drinking<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) Risky drinking.
- 2) It occurs when the influence of alcohol is carried out activities that require a lot of concentration, physical fitness, quick reflexes and precision. Under the influence of alcohol increases the formation of a risk to health or life such as driving, operating dangerous machinery, at heights etc. Risky drinking occurs when we realize that the influence of alcohol will have contact with such activities. Even small amounts of alcohol consumption can cause great risk.
- 3) Alcohol abuse. We have to deal with him at the time when regularly repeated patterns of abnormal drinking, which consequently lead to clinical physical harm, mental or suffering. Alcohol abuse is a phenomenon where during the last 12 months, there is at least one of the following symptoms<sup>2</sup>:
- 4) repeated alcohol consumption leads to not fulfill their important roles and responsibilities at work, school or home
- 5) recurrent drinking in situations that pose a health risk
- 6) repeated conflicts with the law due to alcohol abuse
- 7) continued drinking despite interpersonal conflicts and social problems

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1 Pospiszyl I., *Patologie społeczne [Social pathologies]*, Warszawa 2009, s.127

2 Ibidem, s. 128

## 8) Addiction to alcohol

It is most important form of faulty use of alcohol, treated as a special case, requiring treatment.<sup>3</sup> In psychological terms, alcoholism is a disorder in the development of person. Characteristics are: the physical damage, psychological and moral damage, changes social attitudes in antisocial, changes in the hierarchy of values with criminal tendencies such as stealing, aggression, including self-injury (suicide). The definition of alcoholism according to the World Health Organization (WHO) calls for greater attention to the problems of loss of control over drinking and that the increase in reduced tolerance to alcohol is not a prerequisite for the diagnosis of addiction to alcohol. According to the WHO definition of alcohol dependence syndrome is a mental state, and usually also physical caused by alcohol and with a certain behavior or other reactions, which periodically or whenever there is compulsion to drink alcohol. Alcoholic drinks because he wants experience of the substance on the psyche, and sometimes also to avoid the discomfort associated with withdrawal from alcohol<sup>4</sup>.

The development of alcoholism runs in four phases<sup>5</sup>:

- 1) Phase 1 – social drinking, also called initial phase - occasionally, giving pleasure to drinking alcohol, which consequently increases the desire to drink. People at this stage looking for companies with which they can drink. The increasing use of alcohol causes causes, among others reduced resistance to stress, which makes that person more often reach for alcohol.
- 2) Phase 2 – Warning

There is a growing need for and amount of alcohol consumption. Gaps begin to appear in the memory, alcoholic realizes the problem and she starts to drink in secret so not to fight the stress, but because there is a withdrawal syndrome. There is craving that causes feelings of guilt. The alcoholic tries to hide the problem and deceive family

- 3) Phase 3 – Critical

Increasingly, there is loss of control over drinking after the first glass. There is a strong physical dependence. There is still able to control when getting started drinking, but eventually loses craving. The unit is trying to make a stop drinking, but they are always ineffective. They begin to crumble and family and social ties.

- 4) Phase 4 – chronic

The alcoholic loses complete control over drinking and his life. There are mental disorders such as alcoholic psychosis, depression, paranoid alcoholic insanity Othello syndrome. The body is wasting which results in such trembling hands, loss of control over physiological activities. The patient

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3 Urban B, Stanik J.M., *Resocjalizacja t.2 [Rehabilitation]*, Warszawa 2008, s.22

4 Pospiszyl I., *Patologie społeczne [Social pathologies]*, op.cit., s.129

5 Urban B, Stanik J.M., *Resocjalizacja [Rehabilitation] t.2, op.cit., s.25*

consumes chemical alcohol, eg liquid Borygo, methylated spirit, colognes, etc. Family ties are completely broken down. There are financial problems and living, until there is total helplessness in the face of addiction.

Alcohol causes the breakdown of family ties, and on single parenthood. The family as the first notes alcoholic problem. But the family is not asking for help, but experts trying to solve the problem within the family. Alcoholism is a disease of the whole family, because its effects are harming other members. Alcoholics under the influence of liquor consumed become aggressive. It manifests itself in violence against the family. Some of them blame for their situation of children and a wife and unload their anger on them. It is mostly women, in the interests of their children decide to move away from an alcoholic husband. Often, this decision comes when the next outbreak of violence and assault her husband. Most women seek refuge with a family friend who knows about the problem or in shelters for victims of violence. It is a liberation from the haunting their family member. But these women need to need support in the restoration of security and return to normal life without violence.

Introduce the following responses to the problem of alcoholic families based on the Johanness Lindenmeyer's book<sup>6</sup>:

- denial for the need for drug treatment or asking for help to specialists
- isolation of an alcoholic in order to protect the family from its negative impact
- hiding the problem from the environment to avoid the consequences of drinking by alcoholics
- no change in behavior towards the addict despite the violence occurring

Co-dependency does not arise at once, it is dependent on the time and is subject to certain phases:<sup>7</sup>

- Phase of denial - the family believes that an alcoholic if he wanted he could stop drinking. It establishes the principle that alcoholic breaks
- Phase self-defense organization - there are psychosomatic symptoms in family members who isolate themselves from the alcoholic and trying to hide the problem from the public.
- Phase chaos - in children increases the disorder, followed by the collapse of the current way of dealing with the problem.
- The initial phase of the reorganization of the family - to minimize dependence, the drinker's partner takes over his previous roles.
- Actual reorganization phase - rebuilding family relationships and social is building a new

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6 Lindenmeyer J., *Ile możesz wypić? O nalogach i ich leczeniu* [How much you can drink? About addictions and their treatment], Gdańsk 2007, s.103

7 Pospiszyl I., *Patologie społeczne* [Social pathologies], op.cit., s.156

family system has no addict, put her isolation.

- The final phase of reorganization - the family has been operating without regard to the addict.
- Attempts to reproduce the family of phase - when the temporary abstinence of the alcoholic family is trying to restore family ties

Another reason for having an impact on single parenthood in Poland is the phenomenon of divorce marriage. A divorce is when the court decides the cessation of marriage. Early breakdown of the family is legally law sanctioned. There is a breakdown of the family and family relationships, both personal (mental and physical), parental and economic. This is a favorable condition to obtain a legal divorce as a total and irretrievable breakdown of marriage.<sup>8</sup>

The number of divorces pronounced in nearly three decades, does not fall below 30 thousand. Annually in the Poland. Since 2004 is about 60 thousand. and affects 20% of marriages. With less than 8% which did not survive the time of the year, 16.9% - 4 years, and over 70% within 14 years of marriage. 40.4% of the divorcing spouses had one child, 22.4% - two and 5.1% - three and more.<sup>9</sup> Poland, despite the increasing number of divorces among the countries with the strongest family ties (formal) in Europe.

Increase in the number of divorces, researchers seek in factors of civilization. The most vulnerable are families in economically developed countries and countries with democratic (equality and emancipation). In Poland, about 70% of applications for divorce consist of women.<sup>10</sup>

The most common causes of divorce include<sup>11</sup>:

- 1) failure to marital fidelity
- 2) alcoholism and other addictions
- 3) aggression and violence
- 4) confusion in the sexual life of spouses
- 5) leaving a spouse and be bound by another person
- 6) neglect of family
- 7) illness of spouse
- 8) economic base
- 9) different views and beliefs, non-characters
- 10) separation associated with earning foreign
- 11) desire to obtain social security benefits for single parents

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8 Ustawa z dnia 25 lutego 1964 roku Kodeks rodzinny i opiekuńczy (Dz.U. nr 9 poz. 59) Art. 56 §3 [Act of Family Code, 25.02.1964]

9 Andrzejewski M., *Prawo rodzinne i opiekuńcze* [Family law], Warszawa 2010, s.99

10 Dudak A., *Samotne ojcostwo* [Single fatherhood], Kraków 2006, s.55

11 Andrzejewski M., *Prawo rodzinne i opiekuńcze* [Family law], op.cit., s. 99

The study of Elizabeth Bielecka<sup>12</sup> to intrafamily factors important for dissolution of marriage are:

- 1) alcohol abuse
- 2) lack of love in marriage
- 3) incompatibility of characters
- 4) dissatisfaction with the division of household
- 5) infidelity, betrayal, permanent binding with another person
- 6) unsatisfactory sex in marriage
- 7) inability or unwillingness to have children
- 8) misunderstandings resulting from difficult living conditions
- 9) misunderstandings resulting from a difficult economic situation.

Divorce causes a feeling of loneliness. For many people, especially children, this condition is difficult to bear. For children it is always very painful and complex experience. A child is a witness to the various, very difficult situations of conflict, tensions, quarrels between parents in the period prior to divorce. Very often the child is pulled by their parents in conflict for him difficult to understand. It is adjustable hostile towards the other parent, bribing in order to form a negative attitude towards the other, etc. It is characteristic that the child, despite the conflicts between parents, wants to have both parents. By the end of the child has hope that there will be no divorce. It lives on hope and not allow the thought that one of the parents leave the house. The court's decision to divorce their parents for a child is always a huge, heavy and painful experience that can lead to anxiety and depression. The fear of loneliness makes the children included in the pathological structures, seeking solace in a crowd, tumult stadiums, alcohol and drugs. In extreme cases can lead to suicide because they could not fill the void.

The disintegration of a marriage usually worsens the situation of women especially with children. Is growing awareness of this phenomenon. Obtaining a divorce does not have to end with an active family life. It can sometimes find a new marriage and the rise of a new family. The degree of likelihood of re-marry before the age of 50 years divorced women is 51%.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Bielecka E., Rozwód, w: Lalak D., Plich T., *Elementarne pojęcia pedagogiki społecznej i pracy socjalnej* [Basic concepts of social pedagogy and social work], Warszawa 1999, s. s.248

13 Graniewska D., *Samotne matki, samotni ojcowie* [Single mothers, single fathers], Warszawa 1986, s.54

