

## **Summary**

### **Introduction**

Complications resulting from alcohol abuse and addiction pose a serious health and social problem, both for a given individual, his family and the entire society (Habrat, 1996; Woronowicz, 2008).

At present, there are many theories that describe this addiction in the context of biological, mental, social and spiritual factors (Jędrzejko, 2009; Cierpiałkowska, 2001; Franczak, Wilde, 2011). More and more research proves that traumatic experiences may be the root cause for the development of addiction and, as a consequence, may cause therapy to fail (Najavits, 2010). The relationship between traumatic experiences and alcohol addiction is now the subject of study among many researchers and practitioners (Ouimette, Read, Brown, 2005; Coffey i in., 2007; Staiger i in., 2009). However, an empirical analysis that includes the issue of emotional life in the context of alcohol addiction and traumatic experiences is still lacking.

Within the scope of the problem under analysis, the primary objective of the research undertaken in this thesis is an attempt to provide an answer to the question of whether there are any differences in emotional functioning between alcohol addicts in relation to sex and traumatic experiences. The results of the research may serve as an indication for therapeutic work focused on patients who suffer from both alcohol addiction and from post-traumatic symptoms (e.g. PTSD) resulting from the trauma they have experienced.

### **The participants in the research**

240 people participated in the research, including 120 who were addicted to alcohol (clinical group), consisting of 60 women and 60 men and 120 non-addicts (control group).

### **The procedure of the research**

The participants in the research took part in it voluntarily. They were informed about the objective and the procedure of the research.

### **The tools used**

All participants were asked to complete the following:

SIE-T – a scale that allows for measuring the ability to recognize emotions based on facial expressions; PSS-10 – a scale that measures the intensity of the stress felt; SE – a scale of emotional empathy; BDI – the Beck Depression Inventory; CECS – The Courtauld Emotional Control Scale, TAA-SR- a questionnaire of traumatic event assessment, a structured interview that verifies the presence of post-traumatic symptoms and a personal information sheet.

### **The summary of the research results and the conclusions**

The conducted research showed that the emotional functioning of the alcohol addicts differs from the emotional functioning of the non-addicts.

The average level of negative emotion control, depression, stress resulting from one's own situation in life appeared to be higher among the people addicted to alcohol in comparison to the non-addicts. In turn, the results of the ability to recognize emotions based on facial expressions and empathy level were higher among the non-addicts than among the people addicted to alcohol.

The analyses undertaken in this thesis were supplemented with research that focused on the emotional functioning within the context of the sex under research. The differences refer to the level of emotion control (higher among the addicted men) and in the level of empathy (higher among the addicted women).

The results indicated that the emotional functioning of people addicted to alcohol who had previously experienced trauma, in comparison to the addicted people who had not declared such experiences, differed in the range of stress intensity level assessment, depression symptoms level and the ability to recognize emotions based on facial expressions. These variables were higher among the addicted people who had previously experienced traumatic events.

The people addicted to alcohol experienced more traumatic events than the non-addicts.

Conversely, the verification of the differences in the amount of traumatic experience between the addicted women and the addicted men showed that the average number of traumatic events they participated in was significantly higher among the addicted men than among the addicted women.

The level of post-traumatic symptoms resulting from the experienced trauma was higher among the women addicted to alcohol compared to the men of the same group. This was similar to the results among alcohol addicts in general compared to the group of non-addicts.

The hypothesis that the symptoms of alcohol addiction are derivative of the first experienced trauma was confirmed. The vast majority of the people in the clinical group (addicts) declared that the symptoms of addiction appeared after the experience of the first trauma.

Factors that may promote the emergence of addiction are: the severity of depression and the amount of traumatic experience. The higher emotional intelligence and empathy, the less risk of alcohol dependence.