



Gesundheit Österreich
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International Case Study: Austria's health-led approach

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First Addiction Clinic in Austria

1956 Non-Profit Foundation: „Special Clinic for Alcoholics”
65 patients – primarily male



- Founded and directed by **established psychiatrists**
- The board consists of **federal ministries**, federal state administrations **health insurance**, labour union, catholic social foundation, etc.
- **Research obligation** – Boltzmann Institute for Addiction Research
- **Totally covered** by the **government regulated health insurance system**

Inpatient drug treatment, start of a women department more inpatient clinics

1974 Department for female alcoholics in Kalksburg

1976 first similar institution evolved in other state

... more and more addiction clinics

... more and more addiction counselling centres

- Strictly **inpatient** and **abstinence-oriented** (alcohol 6 – 8 weeks)
- **Inpatient beds** created **as needed**
- **Outpatient** treatment primarily for **admission management** and **follow-up care**
- **Regional counselling** centres evolved regionally (**publicly funded**)

Drug treatment started

1972 Foundation of longterm **inpatient drug clinic** (1 year treatment)

- **Different staff** than alcohol units – **social workers** with different attitude
- also strictly **inpatient** and **abstinence-oriented** (drugs 1 year)
- **Inpatient beds** created **as needed**
- specific **outpatient** treatment primarily for **admission management** and **follow-up care**
- specific **regional counselling** centres evolved (**publicly funded**)

Slogan “Treatment instead of punishment”

1971 new narcotics act says “Treatment instead of punishment”

- Problem: Persons **not needing treatment** are being **pseudo-treated**.
- **Absurdly low quantities of drugs** interpreted as “crimes against public health”
- “**Treatment instead of punishment**” even for **crimes to finance drug use**
- Changes: Stepwise from **very restricted** towards almost **depenalisation of use**.

Opioid Substitution

1987 first time legal substitution after a court case was won resp. lost

- Shortly before **2/3** of addiction treatment staff were **against substitution**
- Shortly after **2/3** of addiction treatment staff in **favour of substitution**
- 1992 **5-years evaluation** of substitution approach
- Stepwise from **very restricted** to **include everybody**
- Initially open end – but abstinence offer if realistic
- **Problem: old GPs and psychiatrists not being replaced**
- **Problem: old substituted patients (private and in retirement homes)**

Delphi-Study as basis for addiction prevention strategy (2013)

Delphi-Studie

zur Vorbereitung einer „nationalen Suchtpräventionsstrategie mit besonderem Augenmerk auf die Gefährdung von Kindern und Jugendlichen“



Österreichische Suchtpräventionsstrategie

Strategie für eine kohärente Präventions- und Suchtpolitik



The idea is to get almost everybody into the boat → consensus of experts

Harm Reduction became mainstream

- Aim: As few problems as possible for addicts and environment
- Street work, drop-in centres, acceptance-oriented treatment, syringe exchange, etc. became state of the art
- Important to cooperate with police on local level

Trend towards Integrated addiction treatment

- An addiction co-ordinator per state with funding power
- A federal drug commission including all addiction co-ordinators, courts (ministry of justice) and police (home office)
- One central institution for screening and treatment allocation per state (problem in rural areas)
- Liaison services connecting all parties
- Divergent approaches considering needs and capabilities of clients
- More outpatient treatment funded by insurance
- Stepped care
- Integrating social work: housing first, finding (parttime) jobs, etc.