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## Features of Child-Parent Relations of Women of Early Adulthood Convicted of Drug Trafficking

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* the article presents results of the study of characteristics of child-parent relations among women convicted of drug trafficking serving sentences in a correctional facility in their early adulthood. Knowledge of these features is necessary for penitentiary psychologists, since resolution of family crises is the leading task of the period of the greatest sensitivity of convicted women. A positive resolution of the crisis of the appropriate age period is the key to healthy development of the convict's personality in the future. The study is important for building socio-psychological forecasts, developing psychotherapeutic practice and improving effectiveness of training specialists. *Methods:* the Parental Attitude Research Instrument by E. Schaefer and R. Bell as adapted by T.V. Neshcheret and the "Kinetic Family Drawing" by R. Burns and S. Kaufman were applied in the empirical study, primary statistics and the nonparametric statistical Mann-Whitney U-test were used as mathematical methods of data processing and analysis. *Results:* women aged 21–25 convicted of drug trafficking have excessive emotional distance in child-parent relationships, increased optimism and fantasy. In the same category of convicted women, passivity, rigidity and reduced emotional significance prevail in child-parent relationships. Women aged 26–35 convicted of drug trafficking are characterized by a decrease in the severity of features characteristic of the age of early adulthood. They are more characterized by balance, conflict-free attitude, and a desire for an open discussion of family, in particular, child-parent problems. In relation to children, the manifestation

of strictness and the desire to develop the child's activity is less pronounced. *Conclusion:* in the child-parent relations of women of early and middle maturity convicted of drug trafficking, there are features that should be taken into account when planning and implementing psychological corrective action in correctional facilities and institutions that execute criminal penalties without isolation from society.

**Key words:** child-parent relations, convicted of drug trafficking, personality traits of women, early adulthood, middle maturity, periodization of E. Erickson.

### 5.3.9 Legal psychology and accident psychology.

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### Introduction

According to official statistics of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation, there is a steady trend towards a slight decrease in the number of crimes for drug trafficking. At the same time, their share of the total number of crimes remains and ranks second. The basis for ensuring stability of the drug supply process is being improved through the use of information and telecommunication technologies and the expansion of the role of women in supporting this process. Researchers describe personality characteristics of women convicted of illicit drug trafficking as key figures ensuring stability of the drug supply process. There is a symptom complex specific to this category, determining the nature of behavior in various socio-cultural conditions.

Problems of women's crime and drug crime are studied by Adushkina K.V. [1], Antonyan Yu.M., Goncharova M.V., Kurguzkina E.B. [2], Baychorova F.Kh. [3; 4], Belaya O.P., Shcherbakova L.M. [5; 6], Bovin B.G., Moskvitina M.M. [7], Elfimova E.I. [8], Zautorova E.V., Kevlya F.I. [9], Kirillova T.V. [10], Kodaneva M.S. [11; 12; 13; 14], Ovsyannikova M.V. [15], Rakitskaya O.N. [16; 17], Romanova N.M., Syritso A.S. [18], Sochivko D.V., Sochivko O.I. [19], Tsvetkova N.A. [20], Cherkasova M.A. [21], Chertovikova A.S. [22], Canter D. [23], Lombroso C. [24] and others. However, such a factor as the family, acting as one of the most important social institutions, is insufficiently covered, mainly within the framework of describing statistical data on the sample, and is not considered as a full-fledged social phenomenon affecting crime, namely, having an anti-

criminogenic effect. In our country, interest and attention to the structure and development of the family and patterns of child-parent relations have acquired a huge scope in recent decades. In addition to the fact that the value of the family in Russian society is increasing, interest in this topic in Russian psychology is also associated with the fragmentation of theoretical and applied research, and the need to create effective methods of working with the family.

One of the important factors influencing family relations is the image of the family, which is primarily formed by a person in the parental family. Features of child-parent relations as a variety of interactions between parents and children are described by Abramenkova V.V., Abramova G.S., Darinskaya V.M., Druzhinin V.N., Zakharov A.I., Kovalev S.V., Kulikov L.V., Leonard Shierse L., Savina E.A., Sinyagina N.Yu., Smirnova E.O., Sokolov I.S., Solodnikov V.V., Spivakovskaya A.S., Suvorov A.V., Figdor G., Khachaturian S.D., Khomentauskas G.S., Schneider L.B., Eidemiller E.G., Minuchin S., Fishman C.H., etc. The conceptual framework is quite broad and ambiguous. In our study, we adhere to the fact that child-parent relations constitute the most important subsystem of family relations as an integral system and consider them as a system of diverse feelings towards the child, behavioral stereotypes practiced in communication with him/her, as well as the specifics of perception and understanding of the character and personality of the child, his/her actions.

The concept "parental attitude" is fairly broad, but it primarily characterizes an emo-

tional side of these relationships. Thus, E.S. Schaefer and R.A. Bell proposed a dynamic two-factor model of parental relationship based on the identification of emotional (love-hate) and behavioral (autonomy-control) factors, and E.G. Eidemiller singled out three main types of parental relationships: an excessive involvement type (authoritarian control); an excessive detachment type (emotional rejection); and an optimal type.

It is important to pay attention to child-parent relations of those convicted of crimes related to drug trafficking during the period of greatest sensitivity, when resolving family crises is the leading task of age, namely in the period of early adulthood (20-25 years according to the periodization of E. Erickson). A positive resolution of the crisis of the appropriate age period is the key to healthy development of the personality of a convicted person in the period of serving the sentence and after release. Despite a large number of studies on the personality characteristics of women convicted of crimes related to drug trafficking, the topic of child-parent relations in early adulthood remains insufficiently studied. This is important for building socio-psychological forecasts, developing psychotherapeutic practice, and improving specialist training effectiveness.

#### *Research structure and methods*

The purpose of this research is to study characteristics of child-parent relationships of women in early adulthood convicted of drug trafficking.

The hypotheses of this study are the assumptions that in child-parent relationships women in early adulthood convicted of drug trafficking are characterized by excessive emotional distance, increased optimism, fantasy and increased emotional significance; women in middle maturity convicted of drug trafficking – by passivity, rigidity and reduced emotional significance.

The study was conducted on the basis of the Correctional Facility No. 1 of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia in the Vologda Oblast. It is the institution of general regime for the detention of convicted women serving a sentence of imprisonment for the first time. The sample is represented by 84 convicts. When dividing respondents into age groups, we relied on the

periodization of E. Erickson, which presents the periods of early and middle maturity.

Experimental group No. 1 (EG 1) – 42 women aged 20–25 convicted of drug trafficking.

Experimental group No. 2 (EG 2) – 42 women aged 26–35 convicted of drug trafficking.

To solve the tasks set, the following methodological tools were used: the Parental Attitude Research Instrument by E. Schaefer and R. Bell as adapted by T.V. Neshcheret and the “Kinetic Family Drawing” by R. Burns and S. Kaufman. Primary statistics and the nonparametric statistical Mann-Whitney U-test were used as mathematical methods of data processing and analysis.

#### *Results of the study*

According to results of the “Parental Attitude Research Instrument” by E. Schaefer and R. Bell, no high or low average values were revealed; however, the following features were found in the studied groups.

1. The most pronounced indicators of child-parent relations among convicted women for crimes related to drug trafficking, regardless of age, are “verbalization”, “fear of hurting”, “leveling of relations”.

2. Indicators, such as “feeling of self-sacrifice”, “excessive rigor”, “over-authority of parents”, “development of child activity”, “desire to accelerate child development”, are more characteristic of women of early adulthood than those of average maturity. According to the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test, the values were marked as reliable at the level of  $p \leq 0.05$ .

3. Indicators, such as “family conflicts”, “irritability”, “dissatisfaction with the role of hostess”, “avoidance of conflict”, are more observed among convicts of early maturity. According to the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test, the values were marked as reliable at the level of  $p \leq 0.01$ .

4. The most prevalent type of parent-child relationship among convicted women for crimes related to drug trafficking, regardless of age, is “optimal emotional contact”, and the least one is “excessive emotional distance with the child”. However, the type of parent-child relationship, such as “excessive emotional distance”, is more characteristic of women of early adulthood. According to the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test, the values were marked as significantly

expressed ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Also, the so-called "pedagogical" relationships that ensure upbringing of children are more characteristic of women of early adulthood (a statistically significant indicator  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Thus, it can be concluded that women convicted of drug trafficking are characterized by such indicators of child-parent relations as the ability to verbalize, fear to hurt and desire to level relations in the child-parent dyad, regardless of age.

At the age of early adulthood (from 20 to 25 years old), convicts have a stronger sense of self-sacrifice being a mother and are dissatisfied with their own role as a housewife. They are characterized by irritability, short temper, more frequent occurrence of conflicts on family grounds, but also they express a desire to avoid open confrontation in the conflict. In relation to children, they are prone to excessive strictness, there is an exaltation of the authority of parents, as well as a more pronounced desire to develop a child.

At the age of middle maturity (from 26 to 35 years), this category is characterized by a decrease in the severity of features characteristic of the age of early maturity. They are more characterized by balance, non-conflict, and the desire for an open discussion of problems. In relation to children, the manifestation of strictness and striving for the development of the child's activity is less pronounced.

The most prevalent type of parent-child relationship among women convicted of drug trafficking, regardless of age, is "optimal emotional contact". However, the indicator "excessive emotional distance with the child" is most often observed among women of early adulthood, as well as relationships that ensure upbringing of children.

When analyzing structural and formal elements of the "Kinetic family drawing" by R. Burns and S. Kaufman, we identified a number of features subsequently combined into the symptom complexes "Favorable family situation", "Anxiety in the family", "Conflict in the family", "Feeling of inferiority in the family situation", "Hostility in the family situation" and compared using the nonparametric statistical Mann-Whitney U-test.

Pressing on the pencil allows us to judge the level of psychomotor tone, general activ-

ity, and emotional tension. The force of the pressure is reflected in the fatness of lines. For women of early adulthood, the predominant types of pressure are both strong and weak in equal proportions. Strong pressure is interpreted as a strong mental stress that has an outlet through ambition or aggressiveness with a tendency to manifest them; perseverance, assertiveness, a tendency to get stuck on certain experiences. Weak pressure demonstrates a lack of self-confidence, timidity, indecision, defenselessness, and also reflects restraint, low energy levels, often signals a decrease in mood, depression. A weak type of pressure is less common for middle-aged women.

As for women of early adulthood, we observe multiple lines and slightly less incomplete lines. The multiplicity of lines is characteristic of a situationally conditioned increase in the level of anxiety. It also indicates that the relevant area is of increased importance to a person and associations with it cause him/her a stress reaction. A line that generally goes in the right direction, but is not completed, also often serves as a manifestation of increased impulsivity. Incomplete lines are less common for middle-aged women.

The predominant size of drawings of convicted women, regardless of age, is medium (from 1/3d to 2/3ds of the sheet). However, the second most common option is different. Enlarged drawings that occupy almost the entire sheet and are common for women of early adulthood are characteristic of people in a state of emotional arousal. Reduced drawings, common for middle-aged women, reflect a sense of humiliation, timidity, and a tendency to some inhibition when interacting with people. A decrease in the size of drawings may indicate a low mood, general lethargy, passivity and reduced self-esteem.

The upward shift of the drawing on the sheet are more common for women of early adulthood and demonstrates a high level of aspirations and an active fantasy life, extreme optimism, which is often not justified. For middle-aged women, the predominant position of the pattern is the central position and upward displacement. The absence of a drawing at the bottom of the sheet indicates perception of the impossibility of real actions regarding family members during the

period of serving sentences in correctional facilities.

In 20% of the drawings of women of early maturity, there is no image of people, instead there is an image of plants, animals, and objects. The absence of family in the drawings means that the authors lack emotional contact with their own family. This may also demonstrate the presence of unconscious negative feelings towards the absent, which are perceived by the author as forbidden (for example, jealousy, aggression). It may also indicate the difficulty of expressing oneself in relation to close people and finding one's place in the family space.

The presence of pets in 15% of the drawings of women of early maturity is a symbol of unmet needs, for example, for support and protection.

The distance at which characters are relative to each other reflects the psychological distance that exists between them. The characters who touch each other are in close psychological contact. Thus, in the drawings of 31 women of early adulthood (74% of the EG 1 respondents) there is bodily contact with all family members; in the drawings of 6 women (14% of the EG 1 respondents) contact is present between parents, but absent with the child; in the drawings of 5 women (12% of the EG 1 respondents) it is completely absent. In the drawings of 24 convicted women of middle maturity (58% of the EG 2 respondents) there is mainly no physical contact with family and in the drawings of 10 women (24% of the EG 2 respondents) it is partially present.

The depiction of a large number of small details means fixation on the rules of order, as well as the family's tendency to hold emotions for a long time. A schematic image of people without individual body parts is observed in the drawings of 24 convicted women of early adulthood (57% of the EG 1 respondents). The sex of a person is depicted by such an attribute as long hair for women and short one for men, as well as names of family members are written.

29 convicted middle-aged women (69% of the EG 2 respondents) present a more detailed image of the family, 31% of these drawings have a landscape and a house background (n=9). Names of parents, relatives, words, such as "home" and "love" are used

as inscriptions in the drawing. As additional items, balloons and hearts are the most frequent images, less frequent are objects in the hands of parents, such as a bouquet, a suitcase, etc. 27 convicted women of early adulthood (64% of the EG 1 respondents) do not have such attributes.

In general, women convicted of drug trafficking has an average level by the "Favorable family situation" symptom complex, a high level by the "Anxiety in the family" symptom complex and a low level by the "Conflict in the family", "Feeling of inferiority in a family situation" and "Hostility in a family situation" symptom complexes.

Thus, it can be concluded that women convicted of illicit drug trafficking at the age of early adulthood are characterized by the severity of hypo- or hyper-tone at the time of examination. There is a pronounced impulsivity, a high level of tendency to fantasize and extreme optimism. This category may have difficulties expressing themselves in relation to close people and finding their place in the family space, as well as their own unmet needs for support and protection. However, they find the sphere of family relations important and seek to maintain psychological contact with members of their parental families.

Women of middle maturity are characterized by an even mood, self-confidence, and conformity to plan. When interacting with people, they may manifest inhibition, passivity, rigidity, and fixation on certain rules. There is weak or no contact with the parent family, distancing, as well as a reduced emotional significance of the family.

#### *Conclusion*

The results of the study confirm the hypotheses that such a type of child-parent relationship as excessive emotional distance will be presented more often in the age group of early adulthood than in the group of middle maturity among women convicted of drug trafficking, and the topic of family has increased significance, manifested in increased optimism and fantasy. As for convicted women at the age of middle maturity, passivity, rigidity and reduced emotional significance are observed in child-parent relationships.

Based on the results of the study, recommendations are presented on the general orga-

nization of psychological work aimed at women's awareness of the role of family ties and understanding the importance of family and their own responsibility in it:

- psychological counseling on child rearing, personal development, and role responsibilities (individual, same-generation and intergenerational relationships);
- psychological correction of attitudes towards family relationships of convicted women can be implemented using methods of cognitive

behavioral therapy, transactional analysis, existential therapy, art therapy, positive and family psychotherapy. When organizing this direction, it is necessary to assist convicted women in realizing and emotionally reacting to the existing traumatic family experience, overcoming ineffective ways of interacting in interpersonal contacts with family members, changing the inadequate perception of their family and forming family life plans.

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