

Forest recreation against addictive factors: Using hunting and environmentalism as an illustration

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Abstract

“Outdoorsies” are often regarded as people leading a physically and psychologically healthy life. Particularly, it is a common belief that “life in nature” protects from addictive factors. Aim of this research is to critically examine possible influence of hunting and environmentalism against three addictive factors: a) smoking, b) alcohol and c) gambling. 429 questionnaires of hunters and 58 questionnaires of members of environmental organizations from Northern Greece have been statistically analyzed. Most important results: *Smoking*: a) No strong correlation has been found between smoking frequency and the capacity of “hunter” or “environmentalist”. Only hunters who prefer more quiet places than places with more game species, tend to smoke, as they mainly hunt in order to relax and consequently they combine smoking with relaxing in hunting. Hunters who desire to have more hunting tools allowed, tend to avoid smoking. This is understandable, if we consider this desire as a sign of special motivation for hunting. b) *Alcohol consumption*: Hunters seem to consume less alcohol than environmentalists. Even within the environmental groups, members who consume less alcohol are those who were hunters. It is also noticeable that the environmentalists’ frequency of making excursions is neither strongly correlated with smoking nor with alcohol consumption. On the contrary, hunters who frequently spend night outside home avoid drinking. Hunters who desire to have more hunting tools allowed, also avoid consuming alcohol. c) *Gambling*: Environmentalists present a stronger interest in gambling than hunters.

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