

Procrastination is a failure of self-regulation in which people delay some actions despite knowing that their behavior will lead to discomfort. The problem is very common. Scientists estimate that 15-20% of a total population, and up to 50% (or even 80-95%) of students is affected by procrastination. Procrastination leads to a significant decrease of performance level and life quality. Negative effects of procrastination are noticed at the socio-economic level and in health care due to delayed seeking of treatment.

Previous research indicates that there is no one simple reason why people are procrastinating. It turned out that procrastination is associated with an increased level of anxiety and depression, difficulties in emotion regulation and coping with stress as well as lower self-esteem and achievement motivation. Also, similarities between procrastinators and people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are more and more often indicated. Moreover, recent research indicate positive relationship between procrastination and impulsivity suggesting that procrastinators prefer behaviors that aim at experiencing pleasure in favor of less pleasant experiences connected with achieving long-term goals. Our own studies confirm the strong relationships between procrastination and impulsivity and indicate that procrastinators have problems to control and correct their behavior – especially when the risk for negative consequences of their behavior increases. The aim of this project is to study brain activity associated with this kind of functioning. We hope that better understanding of the neuronal mechanisms of procrastination will improve the ways of dealing with this common problem. We also hope that our research will enable to better understand the problems with behavioral control and correction in other disorders that are related to problems with emotion regulation and excessive impulsiveness, such as ADHD or some types of addiction.