

## **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND KINDRED AREAS - A HISTORY OF SUCCESS**

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The misuse of drugs phenomenon can be considered one of the many forms of violence with which modern society constantly coves. This situation generates morbid processes with repercussions on individual and social-collective health. The magnitude, transcendence and vulnerability of this phenomenon becomes an important national and international public health problem.

Globally, deaths caused directly by drug use increased 60% between 2000 and 2015. The use of drugs without medical prescription is becoming a major threat to public health and to the application of specific policies. Opioids have also caused a lot of damage and represent 76% of deaths associated with the consumption of psychoactive substances. As for the vulnerabilities in the various age groups, it is noted that the harms associated with drug use are higher among young people.<sup>1</sup>

The challenges posed by the drug phenomenon require the creation of innovative partnerships and approaches both in the design of policies and strategies to combat the problem and to educate health professionals and related areas, preparing them to analyze the problem and present solutions with scientific evidence to deal with the specificities of each situation / case.

Most States members of the Organization of American States (OAS) generally do not have a sufficient group of professionals with scientific knowledge and experience to conduct research in the field of drug use and related matters. Facing this reality, the OAS, through the Multidimensional Security Secretariat (SMS) and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) initially associated themselves with the University of Alberta/Canada (2003-2004) and later, with the Center for

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Addition & Mental health (CAMH)/Canada (2006-2015), to provide a single training program for health professionals and kindred areas in advanced research methods to study the drug phenomenon at the prospect reduction in the demand for drugs in Latin American and Caribbean countries. This type of training in advanced research methods allowed program participants to conduct multicenter studies on priority topics in the five areas of drug demand reduction: promotion of healthy and sustainable lifestyles, prevention of drug use and abuse, treatment, rehabilitation and social integration.<sup>2</sup>

The International Research Training program for health professionals and related areas to study the drug phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean had the objective of creating a group of specialized professionals with technical skills of conducting researches on different issues related to the reduction of drug demand. The set of these specific technical knowledge and skills should be used to support policy design, decision-making, research programs, implementation, management and evaluation of projects.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean represented in the different offerings of the program were: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Health professionals and related areas who participated in the program were: Nursing, Psychology, Medicine, Public Health, Education, Law/Criminology, Sociology, Social Work, Political Science, Statistics, Pharmacy, International Relations and Occupational Therapy.<sup>3</sup>

The Journal *Texto & Contexto Enfermagem* has collaborated with CICAD/CAMH in the publication of the results of the multicenter studies and articles generated from the research carried out in these countries by the participants of the program in the periods 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012.<sup>3-4</sup>

In this supplement of *The Journal Texto & Contexto Enfermagem* were present the results of two multicenter studies carried out by the participants of the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 classes. The participants of this 2012-2013 program class developed a multicenter study entitled "Drug consumption, knowledge of its consequences and academic achievement among university students". Participants in the 2013-2014 program developed a multicenter study called "Attitudes of people with problematic drug use in an urban community". These two studies present innovations and important contributions about the use and abuse of drugs among university students and the importance of preventing drug abuse at community and family level. The comprehension of drug use and abuse by urban communities will contribute to the formulation of policies and strategic actions against the specificities of these problems.

The importance of recognizing that the phenomenon of drugs is one of the main scourges of contemporary society is a constant challenge to the current governments of the Americas and the world. The phenomenon of illicit drugs can be considered an epidemic, in which many other determinants of deterioration of the quality of life are associated, especially those related to violence. Nowadays, violence can be manifested in different ways, and the drug-violence binomial has been a constant in the everyday life of societies.

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