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THE IMPACT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE QUALITY OF CARE FOR DRUG-DEPENDENTS

Thanks to their knowledge, the nature of their profession and close ties with family, health professionals are well-placed to care for drug addicts.

The aim of this study is to analyze how healthcare professionals' attitudes, perceptions and knowledge influence the care of drug addicts.

An exhaustive review of the literature review was carried out in 2010-2011 and searches were conducted in databases such as PUBMED, Spanish Medical MeSH, Cochrane, CINAHL, Cuiden, EBSCOhost, PSICODOC and IBECS. A total of 59 articles were selected from the resulting 371 scientific articles.

The outcomes of the review highlight several aspects: (a) individual beliefs, age, gender, ethnicity and religion influence professional attitudes towards drug addicts (1) (2); (b) professional attitudes depend on the different roles, socialization and type and nature of contact with these patients (3); (c) the institution where professionals work affects care (4); (d) the need for professionals to separate themselves from their preconceived notions when attending drug dependents' needs (5); (e) health professionals' lack of training in substance abuse (2) and the need for the strong presence of this kind of training in undergraduate and postgraduate curricula (6); (f) the need to change the training currently being provided (7); the need to act on early detection and preventive intervention in this area (8) (9); and nurses' historically greater role in caring for drug addicts, compared with other groups of health professionals, and the fact that they are the key workers in drug-dependence (10). Therefore, we consider further research proposals in this area necessary because evidence providing solutions is lacking.

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THE IMPACT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE QUALITY OF CARE FOR DRUG-DEPENDENTS

Four years ago, as part of a collaborative project between the University of Balearic Islands, the National University of La Plata in Argentina and the Argentine Foundation for the Advancement of Nursing launched a group of nursing research in drug addiction .

After a year earlier work in which an analysis of needs in this area in both environments, was established as a line of inquiry: "THE IMPACT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE QUALITY OF CARE FOR DRUG-DEPENDENTS"

The present work has involved conducting an exhaustive literature review about factors condition to know that the care provided to drug addicts.

Initially, have collaborated in this review, the hospital in Manacor in Mallorca and the Balearic Islands University.

Currently, drug addiction has become a major public health problem in most countries. In addition, as reflected in some data from the WHO, the drug is causing high rates of death and disability among the population. This situation has to be established in all European countries, special programs and plans of care and prevention of drug addiction.

After analyzing the needs in Argentina and Spain, as some authors argue, we have observed that:

The training curricula of health professional about drug-dependence is very low.

The training programs can improve confidence in working with drug addicts and professional attitude towards them

Research in the field of attitudes is relatively low, however, influence the quality of care. The attitudes and knowledge can play a crucial role in treatment failure

So the main objective of the literature review was: Analyze the factors involved in the professionals' attitudes from the Substance-Related Disorders.

There were 4 stages in the review:

First, we conducted a literature search of major databases in health sciences including PubMed, Cochrane Library Plus, CINAHL, Cuiden, Cuiden Plus, EBSCOhost, IBECS y PSICODOC, Spanish Medical MeSH. For the proper use of the Thesaurus of the databases, we proceeded to the translation of keywords to descriptors through the database of the WHO called Descriptors Health Sciences. We proposed the following flowchart: Metasearch Engine, including: EBSCOhost including CIHNAL, FRANCIS, Psycinfo and Academy Search Premier, then Specific Date bases such as Pubmed, Ibecs and IME and finally Evidence-BasedPractice date bases as Cochrane Library Plus.

Second, the references in the articles selected in the previous search, were chosen and agreed to those items that were relevant to our investigation and were not in the last 10 years.

Once the previous two phases, we proceeded to analyze the articles, first with a preliminary reading and then by a critical reading of them, getting basic information such as type of study and methodology.

This review of the literature had as a secondary objective, to get all those instruments which in one way or another, to measure or assess the attitudes and skills of professionals to drug abusers. For this reason, we included a fourth phase that collected.

The descriptors used in the search were:

These descriptors were combined with Boolean AND or OR as the search strategy as shown in this slide.

A total of 451 references obtained from the literature search and after the critical reading of the articles in terms of content and design, were selected a total of 59 articles. The assessment of each article was performed in pairs and applying a Likert scale

Notes that most of the articles reviewed are descriptive and literature reviews. From a viewpoint of evidence-based practice, these studies don't provide enough scientific information to be considered lines of action in the field of attitudes and knowledge of professionals.

Furthermore, most studies have used quantitative methodology and only 6 articles studies the phenomenon of attitudes and knowledge from a qualitative perspective.

This puts us in history, the need to delve into this field, according to studies undertaken so far, is of utmost importance to know the quality of care provided to drug addicts.

Of the 59 selected articles, established a series of thematic categories, which classified the studies according to the topics covered and provides useful information to analyze the phenomenon under study.

There were two several categories:

Which referred to the attitudes and skills that brought together studies examining the phenomenon from the perspective of several professionals. Thus we find, which made reference to health professionals in general and their relationship between them and specifying the attitudes and knowledge about drug addiction professional groups like nurses, doctors, social workers, students and others.

And that made reference to the perception of drug addicts including aspects such as models of care, justification of consumption, the social perception of the phenomenon, the tools for measuring these perceptions, and so on.

Finally, each study was extracted from the instruments used to assess attitudes and/or knowledge of professionals about drug addiction. A high number of instruments were only to assess the perception of practitioners in alcoholic patients.

13 questionnaires were found that assessed attitudes and knowledge professionals. We have encountered several difficulties in assessing the quality of questionnaires for several reasons:

Some questionnaires were not available and it has been necessary to contact authors to get them.

Most of them are not scientifically validated.

Only one questionnaire is validated in Spanish but not in our environment.

Most of them refer only to knowledge and attitudes of professionals towards alcohol and not the rest of dependencies.

The scientific rigor of the studies is very low.

What has been of interest, have been qualitative studies that examine aspects of the phenomenon with deep enough to go considering challenges.

As general conclusions of the literature review, we can say that:

Individual beliefs, age, gender, ethnicity and religion influence professional attitudes towards drug addicts.

Professional attitudes depend on the different roles, socialization and type and nature of contact with these patients.

Health professionals' lack of training in substance abuse.

The institution where professionals work affects care of drug-dependents.

We believe that the literature reveals some needs in this field:

The need for professionals to separate themselves from their preconceived notions when attending drug dependents' needs

The need to change the training currently being provided and the need for the strong presence of this kind of training in undergraduate and postgraduate curricula

The need to act on early detection and preventive intervention in this area

Nurses' historically greater role in caring for drug addicts, compared with other groups of health professionals, and the fact that they are the key workers in drug-dependence

Finally, the results of this literature review has led to a proposal that is being designed and approved by commissions of inquiry in our country that includes two phases:

The first phase, quantitative which have been designed:

A prevalence study which includes the validation of a Spanish questionnaire on attitudes and knowledge of professionals about drug addicts.

After validation of the questionnaire will be a cohort analytical study to establish an association between certain professional attitudes and the quality of care to drug addicts.

Simultaneously, there will be a qualitative ethnographic study from a poststructuralist perspective to further professional attitudes and the impact on patient care of drug addicts.