

NURSING INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND CHALLENGES TO PREPARE LEADERSHIPS FOR DRUGS RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

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The drugs phenomenon is essentially complex and surpasses national frontiers, becoming one of the most discussed items on the international agenda. This demonstrates wide-ranging efforts to reach a common agreement among different social actors, States, International Organizations and other groups about how to increase the effectiveness of decision making about the problem.

Among the adopted action strategies, socio-educational prevention is considered crucial, covering the development of true leaderships to multiply information about drugs, based on scientific knowledge and guided by successful experiences.

In view of these premises, the Organization of American States, through the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, has been investing in the partnership with Latin-American nursing teaching institutions, with a view to inserting contents about drugs into undergraduate curricula and training faculty for research in this area.

In the context of this project, faculty participation for scientific research has occurred in collaboration with Universities renowned as a continental reference in nursing research development. The University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing/WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Research Development has participated in this effort by offering, for two consecutive years, the Research Training Program applied to the Study of the Drugs Phenomenon for Nursing Faculty in Latin America.

The first Program, held in 2002, attended 18 and the second, in 2003, 15 nurses from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru¹. This edition of the Latin American Journal of Nursing presents the results of the research developed by the professionals who participated in this second course.

The organization of the Training Programs covered the fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative nursing research, establishing a relation with the drugs phenomenon and its importance in the international context. However, its greatest challenge was to turn into a space for reflection about reality, stimulating the development of educators-leaders seeking to develop themselves, who are capable of problematizing "daily" discourse and, mainly, of implementing concrete actions.

According to Alves², doing science for science's sake is a mere exercise, without considering its use to an end, whose objective is to solve important human question such as misery. The drugs phenomenon is one of these relevant questions and in need of more profound studies that stimulate creative social transformation processes.

The studies published in this edition demonstrate the first steps in this continuous search for awareness about joint responsibility for the drugs phenomenon. Hence, during the two Programs, which culminated in the development of the studies published here and in an earlier edition, the participants clearly showed their personal and professional growth, as a result of experience exchanges and the construction of permanent relations.

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After this intense work, the results of these efforts deserve to be shared, by means of this publication, with anybody who is interested in achieving a better understanding of the drugs phenomenon and its social implications.

Finally, it is important to express our gratitude to all participants in this Program, the Organization of American States/Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, to the University of São Paulo for the support granted and to faculty and employees at the Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing / WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Research Development for their investment in the formation of nursing leaders in the field of drugs.

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