

Resources and adversities in *crack* users' family environment

Since the family plays a key role in the initiation and continuation of illicit drug use, the influence of the family environment in the use of crack is investigated. The cross-sectional and descriptive research featuring a series of cases was based on the theoretical framework of the General Systems Theory. The genogram identified multigenerational family issues associated with the use of illicit drugs. Although the study was conducted in Maringá PR Brazil, the cases investigated, regardless of county of origin, hailed from a Therapeutic Community (TC) in the northwestern region of the state of Paraná.

The sample consisted of users who were classified as habitual users or functionally drug-dependent males, aged 18 years or over, treated at the TC during May 2011, and their families. Half-structured surveys were employed for data collection. These comprised space for the drawing of the genogram, questionnaire for the social and economical conditions of the families and a field diary. Individual interviews were undertaken focusing on the history of the illicit drug users and their family relationships, with a subsequent construction of a two-generation genogram. Whereas quantitative data were submitted to simple descriptive statistics, qualitative data were analyzed by thematic content analysis. Genograms were analyzed in a process similar to content analysis.

Most users were within the 20 - 39 years age bracket, single or divorced, with low schooling and unemployed. Drug use pattern was

characterized by frequency, with an initial intake of licit and illicit drugs when young. Their life trajectory confirmed an escalation in the use of psychoactive substances, starting from tobacco and / or alcohol and ending with crack. The family informants were mostly mothers, aged 19 to 62 years, married, with children, low schooling, Catholics and employees. Most families belonged to the economic classes C and B, with a religious denomination, users of the government medical care (SUS) and indicated the family lunch as their most frequent recreational activity.

The genograms analyzed showed that family frames were diversified. Most consisted of nuclear or single-parent families, with at least one harmonious relationship with a family member. However, most had distant relationships with maternal or paternal grandparents, and conflicting relationships, especially with daughters-in-law, brothers, children, grandchildren, spouses and former spouses. A history of drug use, particularly marijuana, cocaine and crack, among the families analyzed was confirmed. Deficiency in parental support, a family culture in drugs and family conflicts were among the determining factors for drug use. The families studied were marked by several unfavorable issues within the family environment. In fact, these issues facilitated the use of illicit drugs, and consequently the use of crack.

Analysis of genograms confirmed multigenerational reproductive behaviors associated with illicit drug use coupled to the

influence of cultural aspects, beliefs and family values.

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