

**Abuse of alcohol and other substances***Abuso de alcohol y otras sustancias**Uso abusivo de álcool e outras substâncias***Silvana Cristina Oliveira da Silva<sup>1\*</sup>**

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The general objective of the study was to understand how nursing should act in assisting patients who abuse alcohol and other substances. The research of the work has a descriptive and critical-reflexive character through an integrative review in the LILACS, Google Scholar, SciELO, and MedLine databases. Of the 114 studies found, 100 were pre-selected and the title and abstract were read, then 46 were selected, of which 25 were in duplicate or not available in full text, totaling 23 studies to compose this review. It demonstrated that nursing plays an important role, helping drug users to remain well, overcome or face the disease, recover functions, find meaning and purpose in life, in addition to mobilizing internal and external resources.

**Descriptors:** Nursing; Drugs; Mental Health; Treatment; Psychiatry.**Resumén**

El objetivo general del estudio fue comprender cómo debe actuar la enfermería en la asistencia a los pacientes que abusan del alcohol y otras sustancias. La investigación del trabajo tiene un carácter descriptivo y crítico-reflexivo a través de una revisión integradora en las bases de datos LILACS, Google Scholar, SciELO y MedLine. De los 114 estudios encontrados, 100 fueron preseleccionados y se leyó el título y resumen, luego se seleccionaron 46, de los cuales 25 estaban en duplicado o no disponibles en texto completo, totalizando 23 estudios para componer esta revisión. Se demostró que la enfermería juega un papel importante, ayudando a los usuarios de drogas a permanecer sanos, superar o enfrentar la enfermedad, recuperar funciones, encontrar sentido y propósito en la vida, además de movilizar recursos internos y externos.

**Descriptorios:** Enfermería; Drogas; Salud Mental; Tratamiento; Psiquiatría.**How to cite this article:**

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## Resumo

O estudo teve como objetivo geral compreender como a enfermagem deve atuar na assistência ao paciente que faz o uso abusivo de álcool e outras substâncias. A pesquisa do trabalho tem um caráter descritivo e crítico-reflexivo por meio de uma revisão integrativa nas bases de dados LILACS, *Google Scholar*, SciELO e MedLine. Dos 114 estudos encontrados, 100 foram pré-selecionados e realizada a leitura do título e resumo, em seguida foram selecionados 46, em que 25 estavam em duplicata ou não disponibilizados em texto completo, totalizando 23 estudos para compor esta revisão. Demonstrou que a enfermagem desempenha um papel importante, auxiliando o usuário de drogas a continuar bem, vencer ou enfrentar a doença, recuperar as funções, encontrar sentido e finalidade na vida, além de mobilizar recursos internos e externos.

**Descritores:** Enfermagem; Drogas; Saúde Mental; Tratamento; Psiquiatria.

## Introduction

This study addressed mental health and the abusive use of alcohol and other substances. Mental health approaches aim to see the user beyond their diagnosis, respecting the individual representations of that subject, focusing on their uniqueness, that is, assistance is necessary that values the individual being served<sup>1</sup>.

The nature of mental health care is reported as an extremely important factor in the lives of drug users. Therefore, nursing professionals play an important role in the recovery process of this patient<sup>2</sup>.

Acceptance of drug addiction therapy still represents a major challenge not only for drug users but also for health professionals. Currently, public policies indicate as an auxiliary tool the development of a humanized treatment model, which recommends the practice of welcoming<sup>3</sup>.

The rapprochement between mental health and Basic Health Care (PHC) contributes to the training of professionals in the care of people in psychological distress at the primary level, as well as promoting efficiency in the use of personal and structural health resources. This qualification favors the reduction of prejudice related to the care of people with psychiatric disorders in PHC<sup>4</sup>.

The welcome, the concern of the health professional, demonstrating to the drug user how important their life is and the reason for all this is improvement, self-esteem, giving the elderly person back their confidence and getting back on their path<sup>5</sup>.

Nursing plays an important role, in helping drug users to remain well, overcome or face addiction, recover functions, and find meaning and purpose in life, in addition to mobilizing internal and external resources. In the role of healing agent, the nurse recognizes that most human beings value health, and have responsibility and an active role in maintaining it and managing the disease<sup>6</sup>.

The nursing approach develops from the perception and understanding of the objective of nursing. This objective is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to real or potential health problems<sup>4</sup>.

Humanizing means aligning technical competence with human tenderness so that the heart manifests itself in daily work relationships. Communication must be used to understand the user's life story, their way of being and acting, and understanding them as a human being in all their dimensions and manifestations<sup>5</sup>.

It is expected that, in all healthcare establishments, especially those specifically for the elderly, they provide humanized, ethical, and individualized care. Furthermore, health professionals, especially those in nursing, seek to promote humanized assistance to elderly people from a holistic perspective in their professional practice<sup>7</sup>.

The objective was to understand how nursing should act in assisting patients who abuse alcohol and other substances.

## Methodology

This is an integrative review of the literature with a descriptive nature and a critical-reflective approach to mental health and drug abuse.

To prepare the work, indexed articles from scientific journals, books, conference proceedings, technical reports, and other types of materials were used using the LILACS, MEDLINE, SciELO, and Google Scholar databases. Thus, the keywords used were: "Nursing", "Drugs", "Mental Health", "Treatment", as well as their synonyms were classified hierarchically.

The inclusion criteria were studies in article format or documents from competent bodies, such as the Ministry of Health, that answered the guiding question, published in journals indexed in the selected databases, and published in the time frame from 2012 to 2022. As inclusion criteria: duplicate studies in the databases that were not available in full-text format.

A total of 46 articles were found on the topic of mental health and abusive use of alcohol and other substances, from this total, the articles were identified and cataloged, and 23 articles were selected to resolve the above theme, as they all met the objectives proposed. 23 articles were selected. The results were evaluated using an instrument to collect information that aimed to answer the study question.

Furthermore, Figure 1 shows the study search and selection flowchart.

## Results and Discussion

The Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS), as a component of a protective network, are an important strategy in providing care to this population. The Psychosocial Care Centers for Alcohol and other Drugs (CAPSad), even more so, in the use of specialized equipment

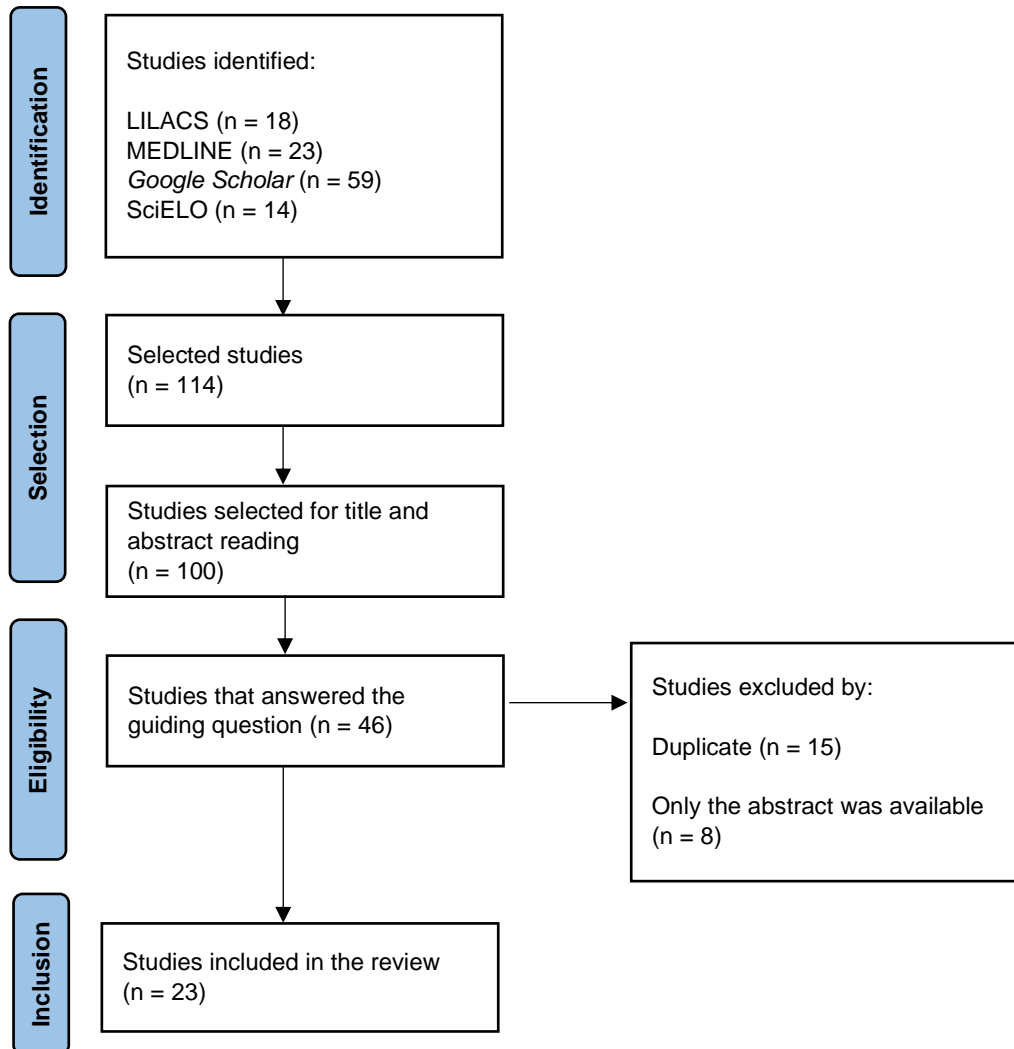


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Ordinance No. 224/1992, passed to finance and standardize new mental health services, prioritizing interdisciplinary outpatient treatment. This ordinance regulated the guidelines and standards to be followed for the implementation of Psychosocial Care Centers and Centers (NAPS/CAPSAD)<sup>9</sup>.

that replaces the hospital-centric model, offer territorialized care, with a coverage of over 70 thousand inhabitants<sup>8</sup>.

Through Federal Law No. 10,216/2001, which provides for the redirection of services aimed at mental health, more specifically on the implementation of Psychiatric Reform in Brazil, the Ministry of Health, through

Figure 1. Flowchart of search and selection of studies. São Paulo, SP, Brazil, 2022



In addition to the creation of CAPS, this new policy also regulated the minimum team that must be implemented to provide specific services in these psychosocial care centers, including the nursing team, made up of nurses, nursing technicians, and nursing assistants. This meant an expansion of space for these workers to care for people with problems related to alcohol and other drugs throughout the country<sup>10</sup>.

The Psychiatric Reform, through Law No. 10,216 of April 6, 2001, guaranteed users of mental health services, including those suffering from disorders resulting from the ingestion of alcohol and other drugs, the right to assistance, and the universality of access, as well as its completeness, valuing the decentralization of the service model<sup>11</sup>.

The recovery of autonomy, included in psychosocial rehabilitation, appears as the main challenge, in the case of individuals with disorders caused by using crack and other psychoactive substances, their psychological and physical

impairments, in addition to legal problems, exposure to risks can cause isolation and make it even more difficult to accept the problem and receive treatment at CAPS<sup>3</sup>.

Leisure activities are part of the list of actions developed as a form of treatment in mental health services, including services that provide care to people who use drugs, legal or illicit. The scientific community often argues that these activities should be a component in the prevention and treatment of drug use. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is characterized by a state of well-being by which an individual can contemplate life, work, and contribute to the environment in which they lives while at the same time managing emotions<sup>8,12</sup>.

Mental health, as well as physical health, is a part that integrates and complements the stability of organic functions. In this sense, the promotion of mental health is essential so that the individual has the necessary capacity to perform their personal and professional skills in daily life<sup>13</sup>.



A lack of knowledge about mental health can be very harmful to the user's recovery because it prevents the search for appropriate solutions to reduce the effects of the problem. Thus, weakened mental health also contributes to significant social changes and precarious working conditions<sup>9</sup>.

Psychological and personality issues also make individuals more predisposed to mental imbalances. Also, biological causes can contribute to the chemical disorder of brain cells and increase the occurrence of the disease. The compulsion of drugs and alcohol is also an influencing factor for the appearance of complications in the psychological and mental field. These addictions affect memory capacity, and concentration and indicate poor performance of brain activities<sup>13</sup>.

The disorders resulting from the relationship between alcohol and mental health challenge public health and require more efficient control of this problem. Just as alcohol and drug abuse harm the quality of life of users of all ages, socioeconomic classes, and genders. Among the problems arising from these addictions, inadequate nutrition, poor sleep quality, and decreased school or work performance stand out. Furthermore, other considerable points complement the diagnosis list for those facing these disorders. For the WHO, chemical dependence is a set of physiological, behavioral, and cognitive phenomena that can develop after repeated use of psychoactive substances<sup>4,9,13</sup>.

Chemical dependence consists of the relationship a person has with drugs and the way they consume a certain type of substance. When this person develops impulsive behaviors to alleviate sensations in their life, the development of addiction can occur and affect them in a general way. There are two groups of drugs, which do not group them according to their characteristics, but according to practices and social conditions. These are the groups of legal drugs and illicit drugs. Legal drugs are those authorized by law, meaning they are essentially purchased freely, and their trade is legal. Illicit drugs are those subject to commercialization prohibited by the courts, being known as "hard drugs" and causing strong dependence among their users<sup>11,14</sup>.

Although alcohol is a legal drug, it is not substantially different from other illicit drugs in the formation of dependence. It is the dependence between the user and any type of drug such as alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, and amphetamines, among others, that needs to be the center of any debate on this topic<sup>15</sup>.

According to a study<sup>16</sup>, the use of alcohol and other drugs is a cross-cutting issue in the health, justice, education, and social assistance systems, therefore, it is necessary to strengthen affirmative actions that aim to reduce stigma, exclusion, and discrimination, as well as reducing cognitive, financial, educational and relational losses from problematic alcohol and drug use.

The use of alcohol and other drugs is a problem that has surrounded humanity since its earliest history and is influenced by a serious public health problem, with consequences that not only affect the personal but all spheres that permeate humanity, such as the social sphere,

The use of tobacco and alcohol, being classified as legal drugs, legally permitted for sale to adults, often being sold illegally to young people. The use of these substances is normally seen and accepted by society when it comes to minors. These often lead young people to become curious about trying illicit drugs, being of great relevance for early addiction, which can lead to various social and physiological problems. The use of legal and illicit drugs is a growing concern in several countries, with alcohol and marijuana being the most consumed drugs worldwide. In Germany, marijuana is used by approximately 4.5% of adults<sup>15,18</sup>.

The types of illicit drugs can be divided into natural drugs such as marijuana, which is made from the cannabis sativa plant, and opium, which originates from poppy flowers, synthetic drugs, which are produced artificially in laboratories, such as ecstasy and LSD and semi-synthetic drugs such as heroin, cocaine and crack, for example<sup>8</sup>.

In the search for integrated and humanized assistance, nurses have in their essence and within the scope of their professional training, the ability to assist these users, ensuring a holistic vision necessary for the treatment and monitoring at the forefront of this type of service<sup>5</sup>.

The participation of nurses is ensured by law that establishes the inclusion of mid-level and higher-level nursing professionals in the multidisciplinary team of the Psychosocial Care Centers for Alcohol and Drugs (CAPS AD), including providing them with care in therapeutic workshops and others. modalities of assistance to service users, which allows the nursing team and nurses to maintain continuous contact with users in the most different activities carried out in these services. In the context of primary health care, the role of nursing is fundamental in promoting health education, achieving a healthier standard of living, and, consequently, reducing the risk of licit and illicit drug consumption, as well as the of other sub-drugs through motivation for self-care<sup>3,10</sup>.

Nurses are of great importance in detecting this public, due to their direct and indirect involvement with the community, thus being able to involve them with the topic and with more vehemence in educational and preventive lectures, to improve the current situation, relevant activities during the treatment and monitoring of this public<sup>19,20</sup>.

Humanize user service and recognize human beings in all their stages of life with the same importance. Nursing plays an important role, in helping the patient to continue well, overcome or face the disease, recover functions, and find meaning and purpose in life, in addition to mobilizing internal and external resources<sup>7,21</sup>.

The health professional is responsible for improving the quality of care and consequent user satisfaction; however, one must think about the production of care and humanizing practices considering the specificities of this job, which involves the intensive use of physical and mental capabilities. psychic, intellectual, and emotional, including the exchange of affection and knowledge<sup>8</sup>.

## Final Considerations

Knowing the techniques and theories of humanizing



care for the drug user population has never been more necessary, due to their increase in number and degree of vulnerability. Consider the complexity of everyone, bearing in mind that humanizing means meeting integral needs and basic human needs.

The humanization of user health has been the subject of many scientific works, given the precariousness of health supplies and the growing demand for health care from users, due to the increase in this population.

Nursing plays an important role, in helping the drug user to remain well, overcome or face the disease, recover functions, and find meaning and purpose in life, in addition to mobilizing internal and external resources. Thus, this study aimed to contribute to the academic community and society about the importance that nurses have in relation to drug users and how humanization can contribute to a better quality of life for older people.

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