



## Alcohol and tobacco use and abuse: the ways of prevention

The promotion of mental health and the prevention of psychoactive substance use are crucial elements that generate a positive impact on the health and well-being of the individual, family and community<sup>(1-3)</sup>.

The problems related to alcohol and tobacco use are among the leading causes of disability, death and global burden of disease, which are still significant in several countries<sup>(1-3)</sup>, generating high social and health costs. For this reason, they are considered as priorities in public health agendas<sup>(1-2)</sup>.

One of the articles of this issue highlights alcohol and tobacco use using a sample of Mexican adolescents. This is a global reality which involves the most commonly used psychoactive substances by various groups of the population, particularly adolescents and young adults<sup>(1-2)</sup>.

Data from the Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health<sup>(2)</sup> estimates that approximately 16% of drinkers aged over 15 years in the world consume alcohol in a heavy and episodic way, which represents intoxication. In that report, the heavy consumption of alcohol among adolescents draws attention. This data suggests that alcohol is, increasingly, present in the lives of persons associated with factors that may be modifiable. The abuse of these substances, at this important stage of the life cycle, can impair brain function and development in critical areas such as the control of motivation, memory, learning, judgment, and behavior<sup>(4)</sup>. On the other hand, there is a growing body of evidence pointing to the impact caused by the consumption of substances by children and adolescents (early stages of human development).

It is not surprising that adolescents who use alcohol and other drugs often present serious family and social issues, including situations of violence, negligence and abuse in childhood, impoverishment of school performance and dropouts, as well as issues related to health and violation of the law. Therefore, it is imperative the work that involves preventive actions directed to this population<sup>(1,5-6)</sup>.

Prevention is based on principles, such as greater efficiency of preventive practices, ability to impact other spheres of the lives of persons beyond addiction, as health, social and legal problems, in addition to the potential for a real change of the indicators of prevalence of drug use.

As the popular adage goes, prevention is still better than cure. The cost-effectiveness of investments in prevention and early intervention programs for addiction and mental disorder varies from 1:2 to 1:10. This means that an investment of one dollar can generate savings of two to ten dollars in health expenditures, the judiciary system, educational costs and loss of productivity<sup>(7)</sup>.

Nurses and other health professionals working in the field of mental health, in particular alcohol and drugs, may help in the prevention, early identification, treatment and rehabilitation of the problems related to alcohol and drug use among the various groups of the population in health settings<sup>(8-9)</sup>.

These professionals can insert screening and assessment tools into their routines to identify persons who use or abuse substances, or who meet the criteria for psychoactive substance addiction, offering brief interventions and specific referrals<sup>(8-9)</sup>.

Prevention programs engage their efforts to increase the protective factors and minimize or reduce as much as possible the risk factors facing drug use. The programs are planned universally, that is, for various ages, but they can also be drawn to specific individuals or groups, such as school, work, and community groups<sup>(8-9)</sup>.

Therefore, it is necessary to assess mental health issues related to psychoactive substance use in detail

in the various environments and establish the initial step towards the adoption of ongoing policies aimed at promotion and prevention so as to minimize future social and health problems.

This issue of the SMAD consists of seven articles (five original studies and two review studies) that bring a broad and diverse contribution on the subject of psychoactive substance use. The studies gathered in this publication have assessed the prevalence and risks related mainly to alcohol and/or tobacco consumption among adolescents and workers, such as bank employees, workers (seamstresses) of sewing factories and health professionals linked to the Family Health Strategy program. A study of qualitative approach can also be highlighted, as it tries to understand, under the light of Phenomenology, how persons that are self-realized in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) experience community experience, personal fulfillment and formation.

Finally, there are two studies on the integrative review of the literature that talk about mental health nursing consultation on health services and the construction and monitoring of Single Therapeutic Projects (PTS) by professionals of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS). The rethinking of the ways of prevention and intervention, by seeking effective programs of prevention and treatment models, can contribute to the reduction of factors that lead individuals, families and communities to substance use and abuse.

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