

## PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS FOR REINSERTION OF INTERNAL STAFF FROM A DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER IN THE LABOR MARKET

Oficinas profissionalizantes para reinserção de internos de um centro terapêutico de toxicômanos no mercado de trabalho

Cursos profesionales para la reinserción de internos de un centro terapéutico de toxicómanos en el mercado laboral

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** to develop activities that facilitate social and labor market reintegration of drug addicts residing in Fazenda Paraíso, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center in the northwest of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

**Methods:** this qualitative/quantitative study of descriptive character included 15 interns aged 16 to 49 years who participated in workshops of theoretical/practical nature taught by educators of the Pharmacy graduation course. **Results:** most participants were over 30 years old, and 80% had only basic education. Employment was shown to allow for financial stability, as well as to provide dignity and recognition by society, and it is considered important for drug addicts. **Conclusion:** pharmacy professionals can be great allies in the reintegration of drug addicts in society by providing workshops or lectures on health education.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Vocational education; Chemical dependence; Pharmacy; Social and professional reintegration.

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## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** desenvolver atividades a fim de facilitar a reinserção social e no mercado de trabalho de dependentes químicos residentes da comunidade terapêutica Fazenda Paraíso, um centro de recuperação de toxicômanos e alcoólatras do noroeste do estado do Rio Grande do Sul. **Método:** trata-se de um estudo de abordagem quali-quantitativa, com caráter descritivo. Quinze internos com idade entre 16 e 49 anos participaram de oficinas com cunho teórico/prático ministradas por docentes e acadêmicos do curso de graduação de Farmácia. **Resultados:** a maioria dos participantes estava com idade acima dos 30 anos, e 80% tinham somente formação em educação básica. Constatou-se que o emprego é capaz de gerar estabilidade financeira, além de proporcionar dignidade e trazer reconhecimento por parte da sociedade, sendo então importante para o toxicômano. **Conclusão:** o profissional farmacêutico pode ser um grande aliado na reinserção do dependente químico na sociedade, seja pela ministração de oficinas ou palestras de educação em saúde.

**DESCRITORES:** Ensino profissionalizante; Dependência química; Farmácia; Reinserção social e profissional.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** desarrollar actividades para facilitar la inserción social y laboral de los toxicómanos que residen en la comunidad terapéutica Fazenda Paraíso, un centro para la recuperación de toxicómanos y alcohólicos en el noroeste del estado de Rio Grande do Sul. **Método:** estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo con carácter descriptivo. 15 pasantes de entre 16 y 49 años participaron en talleres teórico-prácticos impartidos por profesores y académicos del curso de graduación de Farmacia. **Resultados:** la mayoría de los participantes tenían más de 30 años, y el 80% solo tenían la educación básica. Se observó que el empleo es capaz de generar estabilidad financiera, además de proporcionar dignidad y reconocimiento por parte de la sociedad, lo cual es importante para el toxicómano. **Conclusión:** el profesional farmacéutico puede ayudar en la reintegración del toxicómano en la sociedad, por medio de la impartición de cursos o conferencias sobre la educación para la salud.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Educación profesional; Dependencia química; Farmacia; Reinserción social y profesional.

## INTRODUCTION

The consumption of substances of abuse, whether for stimulant effects, sedatives, or even for the relief of pain and pleasant effects, is an ancient and universal practice that has become a public health problem. The consumption of drugs of abuse has become a concern because of the high frequency of use and the social, economic and health damages related to illegal use and trade and trafficking.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the consumption of drugs of abuse entails high costs with justice, security, health and social assistance. In the past, drug use was directed to situations such as religious cults and integration events. However, the high number of substances available on the market has facilitated individual and abusive consumption, generating dependency and early use of drugs.<sup>2</sup>

The 3rd National Survey on Drug Use by the Brazilian Population, coordinated by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), points out that marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in Brazil, having been consumed at least once by 7.7% of those interviewed, and cocaine ranks second in the survey results.<sup>3</sup> According to the World Health Organization

(WHO) global status report on alcohol and health, worldwide more than a quarter (27%) of young people between 15 and 19 years of age use alcohol. According to the same report, research conducted in schools indicates that in many countries alcohol use begins before age 15, with small differences between boys and girls.<sup>4</sup> Beginning to use drugs during adolescence contributes to the chemical and alcoholic dependent, also called “drug addicts,” presenting greater school evasion and less demand for professionalization. Consequently, these people often end up marginalized in society, separated from what is considered moral or ethical.

Marginalization can be one of the reasons for the difficulty in accessing the labor market, leading the user to take extreme attitudes, such as crime. In the juridical-moral model, drugs are the great evil to be fought, be it from the point of view of law or moral theology, in that they are attributed to evil powers capable of corrupting the individual and removing him from the “good”.<sup>5</sup> And it is with this objective, to recover drug addicts, rescue them from the “evil” and reinsert them into society, that therapeutic communities have emerged.

“Therapeutic community” has become an official nomenclature based on Resolution 101 of the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) of May 30, 2001. In article 1 of the resolution, the term is conceptualized as: “attention service to people with problems resulting from the use or abuse of psychoactive substances, according to a psychosocial model”.<sup>6</sup> Therapeutic communities work based on labor therapy, community coexistence, professional workshops, and cultural and artistic programs, with music and spirituality standing out.<sup>7</sup>

In the treatment modality used in therapeutic communities, at the end of the intervention process, which lasts approximately nine months, the individual, now recovered, faces another challenge: the return to the sociofamily environment and the job market. Because of the treatment period, individuals experience a process of social exclusion,<sup>7</sup> which can be used to learn how to deal with frustrations, acquire skills and qualifications that avoid occupational inactivity in the future, reducing the chance of relapses - very frequent among chemical dependents.<sup>8</sup>

The objective of this study was to develop activities aimed at the social reinsertion and labor market of chemical dependents living in a therapeutic community, through cooking workshops and exposure classes on good food handling practices.

## METHODS

It is a quali-quantitative approach study, with descriptive character. Fifteen interns, aged between 16 and 49, from the therapeutic community Fazenda Paraíso (FP), a recovery center for drug addicts and alcoholics from the northwest of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, participated in the study. The choice of this recovery center for study site was mainly due to the authors’ relationship with the institution through previous projects. The participants were selected by the social worker responsible for Paraíso Farm and invited to participate in the workshops during the months of June and July 2019.

To collect the data, a structured questionnaire was first applied, with three closed questions, to identify characteristics of the participants, such as age, education and occupation. Afterwards, workshops of a theoretical/practical nature were held, ministered by teachers and academics of the Pharmacy course, with a total duration of 16 hours, divided between four weekly meetings of four hours each.

On the first day of the workshop, an explanation was made in the form of an easy-to-understand slide presentation about the importance of personal hygiene in the kitchen and work environment. After that, an activity was carried out to analyze the microbiota, bacterial and fungal from the hands of the participants. In the occasion, the participants positioned their hands, before and after the correct washing, in plates containing culture media for microorganism research. The plates were sent to the university's microbiology laboratory for incubation and growth observation. After this activity the practical part of the bakery workshop was promoted.

The second day of the workshop began with the presentation of the results of the collection of microbiota from the hands of the participants and the visualization of the microbial colonies on the plates, reinforcing the importance of hand hygiene for food handling. Soon, subjects such as waste management and selection of raw materials and ingredients were discussed. At the end of the day, sprinkle cookies were made.

The third day brought knowledge about pest control and food conservation, such as maintenance and calibration of instruments, besides the practical confection of cookies.

The last day started with the dairy workshop, in which the participants produced frescal type cheese. On this day, each project participant was given a cookbook prepared by academics and teachers, as well as a certificate of completion of the workshop "Good Food Handling Practices and Bakery and Dairy Workshops".

At the end of the workshops, participants were invited to answer another questionnaire, with six open questions. The questionnaire presented questions such as "perception of work by the user of psychoactive substances" and the "impact of the professional course on the individual marginalized by society". In order to preserve the identity of the participants, they were identified as A1, A2, A3, up to A15.

For the discussion of the results, the answers were classified by content analysis, following the stages of pre-analysis, exploration of the collected material and treatment of the results. In the initial phase, pre-analysis, the material is organized. At the time of exploration of the material, the data are coded. The treatment of the results comprises codification and inference. Then the need arises to evaluate the collected data, categorize it and discuss it.

With the help of a spreadsheet in Excel® (version 1910, Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2016), the answers to each question were classified and aggregated by categories, as they presented terms or fragments of sentences that represented the unity of meaning. For the question "what was your

perception of work before entering Paradise Farm?", the answers were classified and grouped as they presented the following categories: dignity, need, money. In the second question, "after the workshop given, what was your current perception of work?", were considered: opportunity, dignity and money. For the third question, "do you think about the possibility of following a culinary career?", the terms were extracted: interesting area, I intend to follow, I do not intend to follow. For the fourth question, "what the workshop has given you", the following terms were considered: motivation, willingness to learn, new experience. For the question "what is the importance of workshops like this?", the categories were considered: knowledge, opportunity, qualification, future perspective. In the last question, "which vocational course would you like to do?", the answers were: beekeeping, first aid, computing, medicinal plants.

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Regional Integrated University of Upper Uruguay and the Missions, in accordance with the consolidated opinion No. 3069643, on December 7, 2018. After a brief presentation of the project's objectives and methodology, the participants were invited to participate in the study. After agreement and signature of the informed consent form, the execution of the project began.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Characteristics of participants

The average age of participants was 32.6 years, ranging from 16 to 49 years. Most of them (66.7%) were over 30 years of age (Table 1).

**Table 1** - Distribution of participants according to age group. Santo Ângelo (RS), Brazil, 2019 (n = 15).

Age Group	N	%
15-19	1	6,7
20-29	4	26,7
30-39	7	46,7
40-49	3	20

The age range of individuals coincides with the peak of working life. Consequently, the situation of chemical dependency leads to great difficulties in individual and family support.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, low schooling among chemical dependents is associated with dependency, which generates low professional qualifications and, therefore, low life expectancy and personal self-worth.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding schooling, only one of the 15 participants reported having completed higher education. Most (80%) had only basic education, such as elementary and high school (Table 2).

**Table 2** - Distribution of participants according to schooling. Santo Ângelo (RS), Brazil, 2019 (n = 15).

Schooling	n	%
Elementary School	7	46,7
High School	5	33,3
Incomplete Higher Education	1	6,7
Higher Education	1	6,7
No answer	1	6,7

Regarding the relationship between schooling and productive insertion, it is still necessary to emphasize that, for young people, the experience is valued in the labor market, more than schooling. Thus, it seems advisable that work experience, especially from the age of 18, be stimulated in parallel with school, which would facilitate definitive productive insertion.<sup>11</sup> Technological and professional secondary education courses can bring to these individuals the work experience that the labor market is so much looking for. Great models of vocational schools also bring the student the ability to form a career plan.<sup>11</sup>

The collaborative participation in the professional workshop taught showed that the subject addressed, cooking, was of interest to the interns, who were able to obtain and share knowledge and clarify doubts. Since the first meetings, enthusiasm for participating in the theoretical and practical classes was noted.

### The perception of the work by the user of psychoactive substances

While residing at Paraíso Farm, the inmates declared themselves unemployed, with no employment or social assistance ties, and many of them were financially supported by their families. However, 14 of the 15 participants reported having a job before the internment.

The inmates were questioned about their perception of the work before the admission to Paraíso Farm. From the analyses several positive answers were found, mainly regarding the financial stability that employment is capable of generating. Among the speeches citing money as the main axis, the following stand out:

*“An honest way to acquire money”.. (A8)*

*“Acquire more life stability”. (A4)*

Unemployment can aggravate the problem of dependency due to social vulnerability. This situation is one of the main risk factors related to drugs, since it can generate secondary problems, such as crime, since the addict needs money to maintain the consumption of substances.

According to Dejours, work is that which implies, from the human point of view, in gestures, knowing how to do, an engagement of the body, the mobilization of intelligence, the capacity to reflect, to interpret and to react to situations; it is the power to feel, to think and to invent. In this way, work is not only about salary relations or employment, but

also about a way of engaging the personality to respond to a task delimited by pressures, whether material or social.<sup>12</sup>

In other reports, the inmates stated that work is more than financial support, it is something capable of changing the individual's social vision and providing dignity:

*“... is something necessary. Something that is good for life. It occupies itself, has friends and also money”. (A1)*

*“... brings dignity to the person, no matter the area or type of work”. (A2)*

*“... means the basis of a sober life... dignifies man”. (A13)*

The principle of human dignity is the basis of the democratic rule of law, where all people must have their fundamental rights respected. It is the guarantee of a just and equitable society.<sup>13</sup> The word “dignity” can be defined as honesty, honor, nobility, decency, self-respect, so we note that it represents a state of mind in which the worthy subject is deserving of good things.<sup>14</sup>

Max Weber pointed out that in capitalism work is the main axis of the life of individuals, ceasing to be part of religion and dominating worldly morality; its function is to give meaning to life in a disenchanted world.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the individual is only worthy and accepted in society if he is a worker. In the case of dependents, one realizes that work is important for self-esteem, so that the person feels valued and important again, before society and the family. The drug addict, who already has his dignity removed, without professional occupation becomes even more segregated, due to prejudice.<sup>16</sup>

The verification of only positive speeches shows that, despite drug addiction or alcoholism, work has never ceased to be seen as a reference of dignity and essential for survival - with what it offers, money - by the participants of the research.

### Impact of vocational training on the individual marginalized by society

It is known that the individual in a situation of chemical dependency or alcoholism resorts to “leaks” seeking to modify the perception of their reality, and this causes society to catalogue, pathologize and marginalize them, acting with prejudice and without understanding the experience of the drug addict.<sup>17</sup> Marginalization can even lead the individual to leave home and live in a street situation.

Users of chemicals who survive on the streets often survive on begging or temporary jobs. Greater opportunities for professional training, providing a way to regain space in society, would be an alternative to reducing the marginalization of these individuals. Thus, vocational workshops are effective methods of offering knowledge and providing a new chance for insertion into the labor market.

Franco Basaglia, the Italian doctor responsible for leading a model of psychiatric reform, brought in his movement the possibility of reinserting “madmen” - a category in which schizophrenics, psychotics and chemical dependents then fit into the job market, in order to make them able to produce and at the same time treat their disorders.<sup>18</sup> In Brazil, Law

nº 10,216<sup>19</sup> followed Basaglia's proposal to treat without excluding, paving the way for the end of asylums. This law arose adopting a philosophy in which the treatment aims at recovering health and reinserting the patient in the social environment while protecting the dignity of the mental patient and his fundamental rights. Based on this legislation, Law nº 11.343/2006<sup>20</sup>, known as "Anti-Drug Law", was created, which in turn instituted the National System of Public Policy on Drugs (Sisnad). In addition to prescribing measures to prevent misuse, attention and social reinsertion of drug users and addicts, the system puts pressure on unauthorized production and illicit drug trafficking, defining crimes and taking other measures.<sup>21</sup>

The workshops give interns the opportunity to reintegrate into society from a specific profession, without having to resort to what the street has to offer, providing a dignified search for sustenance for themselves and their families. In this way, the dependents can live together in society without the haunting of marginalization, begging, or exercising professions that tend to return to addiction.

In view of this, the participants of the workshops held at Paraíso Farm were questioned about the importance of vocational courses:

*"[The workshop] showed that I can be a professional in any field". (A11)*

*"Another door opened of opportunity". (A13)*

The subjects presented to the interns, which consisted of good practices in the handling and preparation of food, aroused great interest of the interns in the area of cooking:

*"... I have acquired knowledge in this area. I learned how to clean the environment and make the cooking happen". (A8)*

*"I liked it a lot, I intend in the future to qualify a little more and open a bakery...". (A15)*

Participants were asked if they would like to pursue a culinary career, and 40% of the sample showed interest (Table 3).

**Table 3** - Distribution of participants according to their interest in following a culinary career. Santo Ângelo (RS), Brazil, 2019 (n = 15).

Interest in pursuing a culinary career	n	%
Yes	6	40
Não	6	40
Maybe	3	20

The inmates who answered "maybe" also added expressions like:

*"I wouldn't have any problem working with cooking, which is an interesting area". (A2)*

*"For me it would be a profession that I learned in the treatment [of chemical dependence]". (A10)*

*"... it's good to cook as a beginner". (A3)*

A positive impact of the workshop on the lives of the interns was observed, as the participants characterized the workshop as a way to obtain new experiences and a new horizon for post-treatment life:

*"I brought a new experience in an area mostly occupied by female professionals". (A2)*

*"Awoke me to a side of myself that I didn't even know". (A9)*

As for the importance of the workshop, the interns gave due value to the initiative, aware that it is capable of providing them with a better future:

*"I thought it was very important, one should always have [workshops]...". (A7)*

*"In my opinion, I think it is very important to qualify in the labor market". (A4)*

*"You can improve my life as a professional in the future...". (A11)*

*"These courses show how much we have the capacity to evolve". (A8)*

In the speech of interns, "a better future" means a new perspective for the individual, which makes him/her fit to obtain another face, different from that related to dependence. It is necessary for the subject to have discernment and the ability to recognize that personal evolution, although arduous, is not a utopian task.

In this journey, the generalist pharmaceutical professional can help in several ways, and the main one is the promotion of health in the area of food and health education. According to Resolution No. 530/2010<sup>22</sup>, which provides on the duties and technical responsibility of the pharmacist in the area of food, this professional has competence in terms of manufacturing / production process, control, research, development, regulatory affairs, marketing, quality audit, production and analysis of food, and has knowledge about good practices in food manufacturing. In this way, the generalist pharmacist is also able to offer professional workshops such as the one taught by the authors, dealing with subjects related to the food area, enabling individuals to offer food with quality and without causing damage.

Another important point of this study was the work on health education. The team played a role in facilitating the findings and reflections of the workshop participants, facilitating the construction or reconstruction of knowledge.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the experiences and sharing of knowledge with the drug addicts participating in the workshops, the project demonstrated to the students involved the current and extremely relevant issue of drug use prevention. The knowledge about the harmful effects that substances of abuse can have on the dependent individual was reinforced.

## CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the manifestations of the inmates of Paraíso Farm and the experience of the academics and teachers as a work team, the project proved to be valid,

which from the beginning aimed to improve the perspective of life of the participants of the workshops.

It is essential to offer interns from therapeutic communities the possibility of reinserting themselves in the job market, with more professional training and lectures on health education. In this process, the pharmaceutical professional can be a great ally.

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