

## INTERINSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: THE INVESTMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MULTICENTER PROJECTS ON LEGAL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

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This volume joins the contributions of nursing faculty from Latin American higher education institutions who, with the support of CICAD, spent a period in Canada, specifically at the University of Alberta-Faculty of Nursing, to receive training for research on legal and illegal drugs, as well as to find partnerships among them and with professionals from that institution, with a view to the development of joint projects.

The University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing participated in the CICAD/OAS Project of Nursing Schools as a collaborating institution and received, in 2003, eleven Latin American researchers for the I International Research-Training Program for Nurses to Study the Drugs Phenomenon. As a center of excellence in research, the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing received faculty from Nursing Schools in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru for an innovative three-month program that focused on the development of nursing researchers and leaders.

The articles that resulted from this initiative evidence, to different extents, advances in these partnerships and reveal women as the priority subject of research. This priority is based on demographic data produced by global<sup>(1)</sup> and local<sup>(2)</sup> studies, which indicate women, children and adolescents as vulnerable population groups and subject to abuse or exposed to pauperism.

In Brazil, studies<sup>(2-7)</sup> show that families headed by women are increasing and that, with children and without other adults except for the mother, range between extremely poor and very poor.

On the other hand, domestic violence (which includes family violence) frequently seems to be associated with the excessive use of alcoholic drinks. A Brazilian study<sup>(8)</sup> showed a 52.7% association, which is similar to global estimates about this issue<sup>(1,9)</sup>.

Due to being a legal drug that is stimulated by publicity and cultural traditions, alcohol benefits from a social permissiveness that illegal drugs do not possess. Precisely due to the fact that its consumption is highly popular among different social layers and population groups, it prevails in almost all situations that involve violence, except in robberies, when cocaine is more frequent<sup>(8-9)</sup>.

However, the relation between violence and psychoactive substance abuse should be faced prudently, given that various violent situations do not display any association whatsoever with these substances. In spite of its frequency, this association should not be seen as a cause-effect relation<sup>(10-11)</sup>.

The articles evidence women's preoccupation with their children, confirming their position as bearers of the greatest responsibility for their children, which they assume directly or indirectly, due to cultural standards and values, due to the social context and history, which has consolidated women as the main caregivers to family members.

This issue offers the opportunity to evaluate these investments in terms of interinstitutional political negotiations on financial and logistic support, human resources and other investments needed to accomplish interinstitutional partnerships, demonstrating that the result paid off, as it produced possibilities to tighten the bonds initiated through this process.

Working in partnership presupposes a great challenge<sup>(12)</sup>, as bonds are constructed and established in a process that requires time for the sides to get to know one another, to trust in each other's competence and involvement, to understand and respect their own rhythm, so that, in the end, one side's work complements the other's. This is particularly important in partnerships whose main aim is research development.

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This issue evidences the lack of nursing research on alcohol and other drugs in the Brazilian reality and also indicates some little explored areas of this theme.

In this sense, the Latin American Journal of Nursing contributes to two subjects about which few studies have been produced, publishing two articles by non-nursing researchers, which discuss elderly and comorbidity: psychiatric disorders and use of psychoactive substances.

Besides the above mentioned, the inclusion of these texts confirms the journal's position as an international and multidisciplinary journal, in view of the fact that some themes (such as the phenomenon of psychotropic drugs use), more than others, need this approach.

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