

# Employment influence in recovering people who use drugs during opiate substitution treatment

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This research is inserted in an european project, **D.U.R.E.S.S.**  
(Drug Use Recovery, Environment and Social Subjectivity),  
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European project.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1

- Is there a relation between recovery from heroin misuse and occupational activities?
- If so, what are the **psychosocial processes** involved in that relation?

2

- What would be the **factors to consider** while offering those occupational activities?

3

- Are there (and which) **obstacles** to overcome when it comes to develop an occupational activity during the recovery process?
- What are the reported **benefits** of occupational activities?

# RESULTS

## ■ 3 main occupations

- **Employment** (18 participants)
- Professional courses (8 participants)
- Occupational activities (7 participants)

“Employment is an occupation and keeps people away from drugs” FU62

“The formation (...) helps me to manage the craving” OQ53

“[I knew that] occupying my free time could help a lot, as it really helped” UN01

- Being occupied is seen as a **strategy to avoid thinking of drug use** (“With much time to think, one only thinks about bad things. Or about good things, as drugs” JD35).

# RESULTS

## ■ Advantages

Advantage of employment	$N_E$
<b>Appreciation</b> (from others and their selves)	8
<b>Useful to society</b>	5
<b>Stabilization</b>	3
<b>Evolution</b>	1
<b>Responsibility</b>	1

Advantage of professional courses	$N_{PC}$
<b>Schooling</b>	4
<b>Learning</b>	3

Common advantages	$N_E$	$N_{PC}$
<b>Money</b>	9	4
<b>Self-fulfillment</b>	6	3
<b>Social contact</b>	4	1

$N_E$  – number of participants that referred the advantage about employment

$N_{PC}$  – number of participants that referred the advantage about professional courses

# RESULTS

## ■ Difficulties

Difficulty on employment	$N_E$
Health	6
Stress and preoccupations	5
Search	3

Difficulty on professional courses	$N_{PC}$
Operation	5

Common Difficulties	$N_E$	$N_{PC}$
Tiredness	4	3
Money	4	3
Injustices	4	2
Relationships with colleagues	5	1
Schedule	3	1

$N_E$  – number of participants that referred the difficulty about employment

$N_{PC}$  – number of participants that referred the difficulty about professional courses

# RESULTS

- **Other aspects** to consider about employment during drug misuse recovery

Factor	$N_E$
<b>Adequacy</b> (health, interest e recovery time)	7
<b>Employers</b>	2

$N_E$  – number of participants that referred the aspect about employment

# RESULTS

- **Occupational activities** that have influence on drug misuse recovery

Occupation activity	N <sub>OA</sub>
Recreation activity	4
Physical activity	3
Nature	2
Management	2



Since they are useful  
and interesting (3)

N<sub>OA</sub> – number of participants that referred the occupational activity



# DISCUSSION

- **Filling the days** is a good strategy (APDES, 2014; UKDPC, 2008);
- Occupations can be used as a mechanism to **regulate** substance use (Manita & Silvestre, 2008);
- In scientific literature, only **employment** is recognized as an important influencer;
  - Important even before treatment (Lorenzoni, et al., 2013; Nosyk et al., 2013; Vogel, et al., 2016)
  - It must be adequate to individual and socioenvironmental characteristics

# DISCUSSION

- Few references to **professional courses** in scientific literature

- **More important factors**

- ▲ Money, self-fulfillment and social contact

- ▼ Tiredness, money, injustices, relationships with colleagues and schedule

**They were referred about employment and professional courses**

- Learning and schooling → more possibilities to find a job

# DISCUSSION

- **Non mentioned** on scientific literature:
  - Evolution
  - Importance of interest
  - Health adequation
  - Difficulties (injustices, relationship with colleagues, schedule, lack of time, search of employment)
- **Occupational activities**
  - Social contact
  - Cognitive competences



**Projects that promote  
EMPLOYMENT**

# CONCLUSION

**Socioenvironmental context is very important on recovery**

- Occupational activities and professional courses should be explored as a **response** for drug misuse recovery;
- Creation of **occupational support services**
  - New and various occupational activities
  - Job tracking
- Education and involvement of **employers**

Thank you!

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