

“WHAT I NEED IS LOVE.”



# Informal Social Support as a Crucial Factor in Recovery from Drug Misuse

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# DURESS

## DRUG USE, RECOVERY, ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL SUBJECTIVITY

This research is a part of DURESS project, an international study involving **Italy, France and Portugal**, in the ambit of the 2<sup>o</sup> call of the ERANID.

**Contextual and social factors** which have impact in the **recovery from drug misuse**.

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# DURESS

## 4 METHODOLOGICAL COMPONENTS

- Systematic review of literature (Ramos et al., 2018)
- **Diaries with drug users in a recovery process**
- Focus Groups (drug users, families, technicians)
- Interviews (drug users, families, technicians)



**To the present study:**  
only data from the diaries in the city of Porto, related to social interactions of the participants

# Methodology

## **INDIVIDUAL QUALITATIVE HEALTH DIARIES**

### 22 PARTICIPANTS

Local institutions in the city of Porto- opioid replacement treatment,

### HEALTH DIARIES

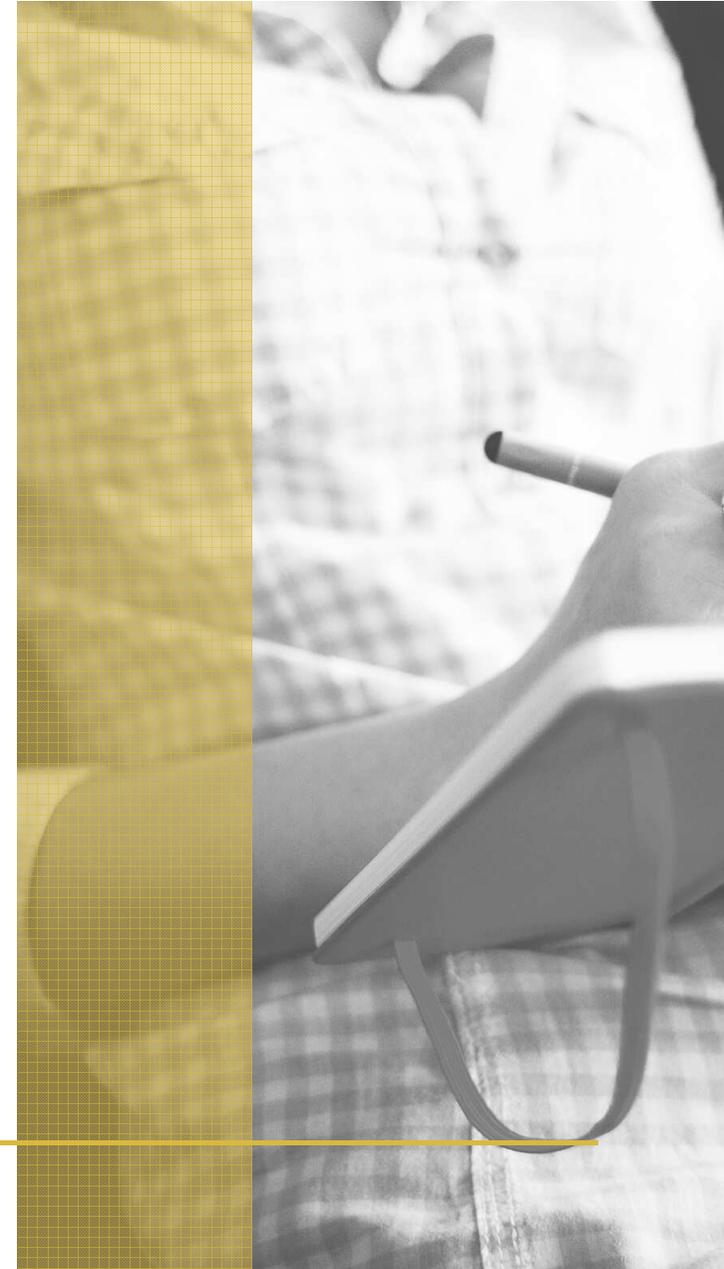
2 participants wrote their diaries individually, with the other 20 preferring to be accompanied by the researchers, due to their expressed difficulties in the writing processes

### DURATION- 7 MONTHS IN AVERAGE

From 1 entrance to 11 months

### CATEGORY THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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# Social Support

## Emergед questions

1

How important is social support for participants and for their recovery process?

2

What types of social support are referenced as important to recovery and what are the processes underlining their influence?

3

What are the sources of social support and what are the processes by which they influence recovery?

4

What social support needs aren't being met and what are the participants' suggestions to address them?

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# RESULTS



**Types of  
Social Support**



**Sources of  
Social Support**



**Isolation**

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# Types of Social Support

# Types of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSION

*"I would just like to have someone to whom I could tell everything that's in my soul, talk about what I'm feeling. I would feel much lighter, it would be much easier." KT65*

### ENCOURAGEMENT

*"It's important to have someone who gives you strength and motivation to go forward and in my case, I just needed someone who believed in me." I099*

### ACCEPTATION AND APPRECIATION

*"They say that I'm good at doing many things. So, I feel happy. I feel they appreciate me and that they notice I'm going one step forward." OQ53*

# Types of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### COMPANY

*“When you’re alone, it’s difficult to start. If I had some company to do this activities, it would be different. One person motivates the other...”* KN56

### INTERACTION

*“I miss socializing with people.”*  
BD75

### ORIENTATION

*“I wish I had someone who had a clearer head than us..., more contacts and knowledge, who would guide us to a better path.”* IO99

# Types of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### INSTRUMENTAL

*“My friends always had someone who managed their medication. I didn’t have anybody. I always have to manage everything alone and it wasn’t always easy. That’s where my addiction to benzodiazepines came from.” JD52*

### SOCIO-AFFECTIVE IN GENERAL

*“I didn’t have any support at that time. If I had, I wouldn’t have relapsed.”*



# **Sources of Social Support**

# Sources of Social Support

- **FAMILY**  
19 participants  
271 references
- **PARTNER**  
17 participants  
147 references
- **FRIENDS WITH PROBLEMATIC DRUG USE**  
12 participants  
62 references
- **FRIENDS WITHOUT PROBLEMATIC USE**  
5 participants, 22 references
- **HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROFESSIONALS**  
8 participants, 27 references
- **ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPORT**  
8 participants, 35 references

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### POSITIVE IMPACT OF FAMILY IN RECOVERY

*"The relationship I now have with my mother helps me to not consume." JD52*

*"This Saturday I was with my brother and my nephew. It's funny that when I'm with them I don't drink." KN56*

*"I survive because I have my mother's help. If I didn't, I'd have to go beg." JD52*

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### NEGATIVE IMPACT OF FAMILY IN RECOVERY

*"I've been drinking a lot more these last few weeks, because my brother is at my house, and it's the only way to deal with certain things." JD35*

*"I relapsed because I lacked family support."BD75*

*"I remember that in all these attempts, for me, the main relapse factor was to return home to my mother with whom I had a very toxic relationship."OQ54*

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROFESSIONALS

*"I think of him [a psychologist] as a friend and not as a psychologist. I never told him that, but if it wasn't him, I hardly would've gotten out of drugs."*

**BD75**

*"To the psychologist I say things that I don't tell anyone else. The psychologist is where I open up the most: my fears, my phobias."*

**JD52**

*"I often talk to the Doctor (social worker). She's like my sister, like my family. She helps me a lot, in good times and bad, (...) it's as if she was my family."*

**DT96**

*"I had a social worker who took me for a "cold turkey" treatment and it was the first step. He believed in me, even when I was very weak."*

**OQ37**

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### ALTERNATIVE SOURCES

*"But there was a neighbor who looked me with eyes that really see and said, 'You need help.'"*

BD04

*"That woman did for me what my mother didn't."* IO99

*"One positive thing this week is that I have started a friendly relationship with 2 neighbors on my way home. It's good to get along with the neighbors."*

JD52

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### ALTERNATIVE SOURCES

*"In the end, now I'm there with her talking and 'snacking'. It was the same lady who used to buy me wine when I went there to do some work. She doesn't even drink, so I couldn't say no. Now, I always say no and she makes me some tea instead."*KN56

*"Another good thing in my week. (...) I went there for breakfast and she paid for it. That was a beautiful gesture. She eventually gave me more than what she received.."*MT11

# Isolation

**17 participants**  
**127 references**

# Isolation

## EXAMPLES

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*"The hardest thing about all treatments is feeling lonely."*  
IO99

*"I've been very sad ... Very lonely. (...) Christmas time is coming soon, and I don't know where I'm going to spend it, or who with ... Maybe on my own."  
"MT11*

*"I have no one to turn to... I am very lonely." TQ30*

# Isolation

## EXAMPLES

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*People don't know how bad I feel, how much suffer, how bad I am, alone. I feel completely alone." JD52*

*But a lot of people isolate themselves because everyday life is the same, it starts to be routine. Most live in rooms, leave the room, go to lunch, go back to the room, go to dinner, go back to the room and spend a lot of time in isolation." JD52*

# Sources of Social Support

## EXAMPLES

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### DIFFICULTIES IN CREATE RELATIONSHIPS

*"I have difficulties in facing society"* JD52

*"I lack openness to socialize with people of my generation who don't consume."* BD75

*"I'm 38 years old and afraid to talk to people."* XH22

*"I would like to be able to express myself more. I've never been good at it."* KN56

# Discussion

## SUGGESTIONS

Interventions in social networks;

Health professionals' roles;

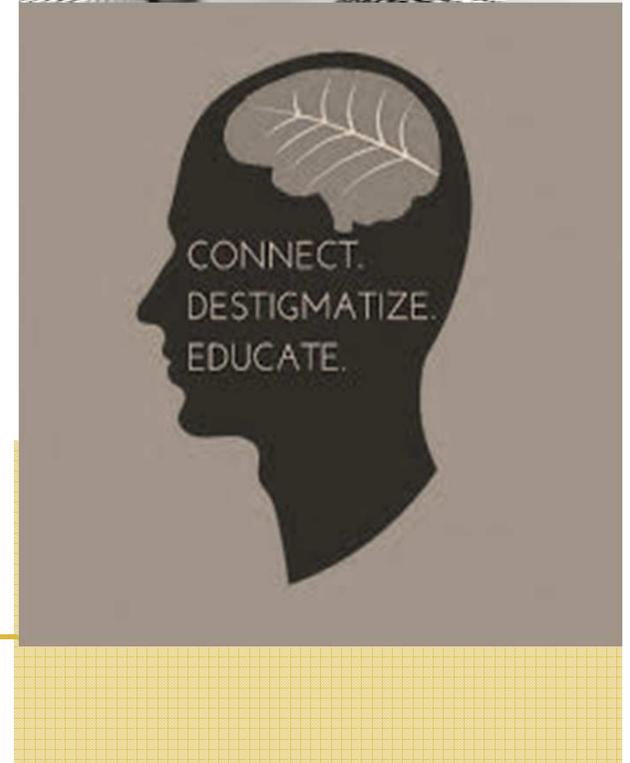
Humanistic approaches- Unconditional acceptance, empathy, congruence;

Empowerment of drug users;

Break the stigma;

Volunteers capable of build an helping relationship

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# Thank you



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