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Monteiro, Claudete Ferreira de Souza; Vargas, Divane de; Castelo Branco, Fernanda Matos Fernandes

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## RESEARCH

### Conhecimento dos graduandos de enfermagem sobre drogas e políticas de enfrentamento às drogas

Knowledge of nursing students about drugs and drug control policies

El conocimiento de los estudiantes de enfermería sobre las drogas y las políticas de control de drogas

 Fernanda Matos Fernandes Castelo Branco<sup>1</sup>, Claudete Ferreira de Souza Monteiro<sup>2</sup>, Divane de Vargas<sup>3</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Describe the knowledge of nursing students about drugs and the drug control policies. **Method:** Descriptive study with a qualitative approach, in which we applied the methodology of action research. Conducted in a University Center seventeen graduating nursing. **Results:** Results emerging speech showed empirical knowledge and general, constructed from information from the media or their own common sense, devoid of scientific and away from the current public policies that address this issue. **Conclusion:** The study shows the need for further intervention in the academic phase for better care professional. **Descriptors:** Staff Development, Illicit drugs, Nursing students.

#### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Descrever o conhecimento dos graduandos de enfermagem sobre as drogas e sobre as políticas de enfrentamento às drogas. **Método:** Estudo descritivo com abordagem qualitativa, no qual se aplicou a metodologia da pesquisa-ação. Realizado em um Centro Universitário com dezessete graduando de enfermagem. **Resultados:** Resultados emergentes na fala evidenciaram um conhecimento empírico e generalista construído a partir de informações oriundas da mídia ou próprias do senso comum, desprovido de bases científicas e afastado das atuais políticas públicas que abordam esta problemática. **Conclusão:** Estudo mostra a necessidade de intervenção ainda na fase acadêmica para melhor atuação profissional. **Descritores:** Desenvolvimento de pessoal, Drogas ilícitas, Estudantes de enfermagem.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Describir el conocimiento de los estudiantes de enfermería sobre las drogas y las políticas de control de drogas. **Método:** Estudio descriptivo con abordaje cualitativo, en la que se aplicó la metodología de investigación-acción. Se realiza en un centro de diecisiete años de graduación de enfermería de la Universidad. **Resultados:** Resultados discurso emergente mostró conocimiento empírico y general, construido a partir de la información de los medios de comunicación o su propio sentido común, carente de los conocimientos científicos y lejos de las políticas públicas actuales que abordar esta cuestión. **Conclusión:** El estudio muestra la necesidad de una mayor intervención en la fase académica para un mejor profesional de la salud. **Descriptor:** Desarrollo de Personal, Las drogas ilícitas, Estudiantes de enfermería.

Study from the Labor Completion of the Master's work entitled: Knowledge of nursing students about drugs: a contribution to vocational training. Presented to UNINOVAFAPI University Center on February 28, 2013

1 Nurse. Master in Family Health. PhD student in the School of Nursing Sciences, University of São Paulo (EEUSP). Member of the Center of Studies and Research in Nursing Addictions Alcohol and other drugs (NEPEAA). Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Amapá (UNIFAP)Email: fmfernandescb@gmail.com 2 Nurse. PhD in Nursing from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Associate Professor at the Federal University of Piauí's undergraduate and Graduate Program in Nursing. Head of the Research and Technological Innovation, University Hospital of Piauí (HU). Coordinator of the Professional Masters in Family UFPI / RENASF / FIOCRUZ Health. Email: claudetefmonteiro@hotmail.com 3 Nurse. Doctor of Nursing Psychiatric EERP - USP. PHD in Nursing additions from New York University College of Nursing, is currently Associate Professor, School of Nursing, University of São Paulo - EEUSP Leader in the Center for Studies and Research in Nursing Addictions - Alcohol and other drugs (NEPEAA-CNPq )Email: vargas@usp.br.

## INTRODUCTION

**W**ith scientific and technological transformations for which the world is passing, new ways of learning are required, because competitiveness and professional qualification are facets observed in the labour market. It is in this context that the initial training of professionals is inserted, considering that plays a role of great importance for the future acting, in that it provides to these potential professionals skills required for the efficient performance of its functions.

However, it is observed that the old educational paradigms in which still guide some formative processes, must be overcome. One must think of a new way of doing and thinking in education through a critical-reflexive training where the students can combine theoretical knowledge with professional practice, as well as recognize itself as subject in the process of formation of human resources, providing a range of knowledge focused on the criteria of a broad training complex and socially conscious. In this context to understand human beings holistically, the graduate must understand the social space in which the individual is inserted, be able to detect the risk factors that lead to physical illness, psychic and its aftermath. Among the risk factors, we highlight the consumption of substances that alter the social conviviality and human health.

The drugs is undoubtedly a public health problem that prevails in our society today, especially in between the crack. In Brazil, about 0,7% of the population use crack, estimating the third most widely used illicit substance, second only to marijuana and solvents.<sup>1</sup>

In this way, the use of drugs is something far more complex, because it covers the entire social context, becoming a multidimensional and global problem in which does not involve solely the user, but also the family, work, health, beyond the sectors of legal parameters. Based on this situation, policy measures were emerging in order to unveil the existing social environment, such as the movements that seek to change mental health assistance, allowing the promotion of community-centric models and on social networks, highlighting the family health Strategy (FHS).

So the basic attention is differentiated and quality it is necessary to invest in the training of future professionals who will be part of the family health teams, including nurses, important professionals in the process of social transformation, in the implementation of programmes aimed at the promotion of health and prevention of diseases. In this way, an issue which deserves to be investigated is if the training nursing students receive during graduation is able to provide appropriate knowledge to become nurses with satisfactory professional performance before the phenomenon of drugs. Thus, this study aimed to describe the nursing student's knowledge about drugs and on policies for combating drugs.

## METHOD

This study is an integral part of the Work of master's Conclusion submitted to the University Center UNINOVAFAPI and obtained approval in the Committee of ethics in research of centro universitário with CAAE nº 0445.0.043.000-11.

It is a descriptive research with qualitative approach, relevant in this case. Applied the methodology of action research, with the purpose of producing knowledge and information that would be difficult through other procedures. Through action research can lead to knowledge, gain experience and contribute to the discussion and to extend the debate on issues addressed.<sup>2</sup>

The study was conducted in a University Centre, located in the city of Teresina, in the State of Piauí in the Northeast region. Is a private higher education institution, whose mission is to form ethical citizens, competent and politically responsible, contributing to improving the quality and life of the population and sustainable development of the State of Piauí in the Northeast region.

To compose study participants inclusion criteria were used: be a student enrolled in the last period of the course on which were curricular internship II in the basic attention to health and to accept voluntarily the dialogue to contribute to research, have availability to attend the activities, not opposed to schedule. Were thus selected 17 nursing graduates that signed and read an informed consent. Thus consented to write lines and photographed the artistic productions from the Thematic Seminar I and II, since it is a research-action. To preserve the identity of the participants, was used the letter P referring to participant and followed by a sequenced numbering to ensure anonymity, confidentiality and ethical precepts, as the National Health Council.<sup>3</sup>

The strategy applied in this study goes through three phases: the exploratory, where it is carried out the survey of the situation problem and negotiation with study participants, the Development Bank, which is constituted of the seminars and finally the conclusion, where the analysis, interpretation, argumentation, internal and external disclosure.<sup>2</sup> For operationalization of this research was conducted, with the nursing graduates, a negotiation meeting, three seminars, being this the method applied for data collection with the use of posters, observation groups and semi-structured interview where the questions were dissolved in the dynamics performed during the same and a conclusion meeting for internal disclosure of the data. It is worth noting that the meetings and seminars were held in classrooms of the institution itself after the theoretical classes in order to facilitate the meetings.

In this way, to seminars, the researcher requires preparation, which is not only gather people in a group, so the work should be organized and the information to be related with the subject matter covered.<sup>2</sup> the themes of the seminars were planned taking into account the main focus of the investigation so that the objectives of the study were

achieved and through the methodology applied there was a contribution to the formation of future nurses. The topics of discussion were: the trajectory and horrors of crack and other drugs, policies for confronting the drugs and crack and other drugs and approaches to professional performance

In this study we used the technique of the analysis of discourse and it came to pass in two moments, a priori by the observation of the activities carried out in the Group and then the lines of the participants. Then the interviews were grouped by similarity generating the categories and so faced with the existing literature.

Thus emerged two categories: nursing graduates knowledge about drugs and the knowledge of undergraduates about public policies for combating drugs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attentive reading of the lines of the participants was made repeatedly by several times, until it took a significant sense. The basis of the reports from the dynamics performed, can show that knowledge is based on definitions about the drugs, with evils and consequences, as well as mentioning the policy about the drugs of generalist way, mentioning some ways of prevention.

### Nursing graduates knowledge about drugs

The abuse of drugs, especially crack, is undoubtedly a serious and complex phenomenon. The study subjects conceptualize the drugs clearly, however most widespread knowledge, informing demonstrates damage to physical and mental health, as well as citing some examples of drugs.

*Drugs are substances that cause changes in the human body. There are several types of drugs including: alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, crack, LSD, heroin, among others. There are licit and illicit drugs. The crack is an illegal drug and is a by-product of cocaine, is a disturbing drug (P6)*

*And all lawful or unlawful substance is capable of producing changes in our body (P17)*

Scholars strengthen the concept of drug as any substance that is able to change the functioning of the individual, by account of physiological and behavioral changes, and the

substances that cause changes to the psychic functioning and behavior are referred to as psychotropic drugs, causing changes in thinking, affection and humour, as well as in behavior, differentiating itself by drug type.<sup>4</sup> Drugs can be licit or illicit, defined as substances consumed by any form of administration, provided medicines, marijuana, tobacco, alcohol and other solvent.<sup>5</sup> Cause functional impairment and cite the changes of mood, perception and functioning of the central nervous system as the modifications resulting from the use of drugs.

*Drugs are substances that harm human health, are divided into licit and illicit, bring individual, family and financial injury. Cause neurological changes, renal, cardiology, humor, among others (P2)*

*Drugs are psychoactive substances that cause various behavioral changes in individual and or user. Depending on which is, they cause fear, euphoria, hallucinations, delusions, depression, feeling full of ecstasy (P3)*

Thus, it is evident that the concepts given by some nursing graduates are consistent with scientific approach, however these concepts were cited by most students. Most quotes of generalist way, stressing more changes to physical, mental, social and economic than the very definition pointed to in the literary sources.

Highlights that abuse of these substances brings numerous physical problems, psychiatric and social, notably changes in cognitive function, changes in ability to absorb and manipulate information in mind, deficits in decision-making, changes of mood, which can be evidenced on the lines of some nursing graduates.<sup>6</sup>

*Mental disorders as: learning disability (P1)*

*As also the health ranging from memory difficulties "losses", concentration difficulties (P7)*

*Destruction of the central nervous system with continuous use, dependence (P9)*

Other amendments mentioned by some of the nursing students are seen in another study<sup>7</sup> in which claim that more organic problems reported among users are the lack of appetite and weight loss in surplus.

*Are extremely debilitated, in State of thinness (P5)*

*No appetite, lose weight quickly (P6)*

*Losses of labour activities, slimming, neurologic losses, respiratory diseases, suicide (P14)*

Also among the changes, cognitive changes of mention felt sense, thought and increased vulnerability to opportunistic diseases resulting from drug abuse.

*The person gets completely destroyed (...) some contract contagious diseases (P8)*

*Cause depression, addiction, cirrhosis, mental disorders and hallucinations (P11)*

*Depression. Hallucinations, memory affected (P12)*

*Death, susceptible to various diseases, among them STDs, can cause mental disorders, suicide or suicidal ideation, sadness, hopelessness, despondency (P16)*

Second authors table of paranoia with the hallucinations and delusions often persecute nature in which the individual adopts hostile postures and aggression are some of the effects caused by drugs.<sup>7</sup> Along it, mention the sexual behavior exposed to risk, as evidenced by the entry of women in the "world of drugs", often causing unwanted pregnancies with abortion attempts. In addition to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and hepatitis, the latter being fact mentioned by very few of the undergraduates.

It is worth remembering that the nursing graduates have a structured knowledge about the social and economic implications of the use of drugs, until data relevant, however are information that are linked into social media and electronics, showing therefore a limited scientific knowledge.

*Violence, unemployment, family desestruturamento (P4)*

*Addicts abandon their families and end for live on the streets. They steal to get money and buy more dope (P6)*

*Destruction of families, loss of identity, lack and loss of work, social and economic harm to the subject, family and society (P10)*

*The link with families is lost or unbalanced. Life in society is determined by exclusion and prejudice. Financial instability happens due to buy more dope (P15)*

Scholars comment in its study that the thefts, assaults, violence and illicit acts situations are fairly common as "world" of drugs, often causing the disruption of relations and links of users with the environment in which they live.<sup>8</sup> Contend that given the

difficulties of away from drugs, the user experience significant losses in life, such as employment, the warmth and relationships with friends and family.

Adds that research are multiple dimensions of the subject's life that are affected as a result of drugs, as the social relationship, work and health.<sup>9</sup> In this context, one can realize that the drugs bring serious consequences with devastating effects in the social, economic and health, not limited only to the individual who consumes. The abuse, the large-scale production and distribution have converted the drugs in a marketing product, involving an increasingly larger number of people in this kind of illicit, doing drugs a serious public health problem.

In this way, the students demonstrate knowledge in relation to the harms and consequences of drugs. However, it is evidenced in the words no longer used terminology as it was shown with the words "drug addicts" and "infectious diseases". From these reports, we can realize the limitation of scientific knowledge, exposing, for the most part, ideas that are exposed in the media and common to the population of generalized way.

Interesting fact found in this study was the characterization of drug users in actuality that corroborates with studies carried out recently in which it was found that users are predominantly young people, single, unemployed and low schooling. 10 other reality brings a sample consisting of young men, singles, low socio-economic level and school, without formal employment links.<sup>11</sup>

*Being consumed in greater public by young, poor, marginalized, without education and without family structure (P2)*

*Most users are young lower middle class (P7)*

*Men with low educational level, single, non-religious, homeless or low-income, peripherals (P9)*

*Currently is without restriction, as man, woman, children and teenagers are consuming drugs, being that the man is more uses (P14)*

In their study the crack user profile, it was evidenced that these: have an average age of 27,3 years, with an average of 9,4 years study, monthly income of 1,45 minimum wages, being mostly comprised of unemployed or self-employed, single and predominantly use among men.<sup>12</sup>

In this way, it is evidenced the use of drugs as a pattern of intensive, continuous and repetitive, in which the urgency and need to consume the drug put the user in a situation of fragility, in which undergo risky strategies to obtain the drug, such as a hazard. This trail traversed, break emotional relationships and employment links. Next to this, the students mention correctly the users' profile, corroborating with the studies presented.

### The knowledge of students about public policies for combating drugs

Drugs is a subject that requires special attention, because it directly or indirectly affects society in General. So devote themselves to this topic requires responsibility and knowledge. The nursing graduates, when asked about what is being done to change the problem of drugs in the community and in society in General scored some actions that are consistent with the public policy of confrontation the drugs, however the minority appoints such data.

*Is increasing the number of people qualified to deal with drug users and more investment on the part of Governments to combat drugs in General (P1)*

*Combating trafficking has intensified with large amount of prisons which leads to shortages of points of sales, decreasing the drug user access. The society has been mobilizing for the treatment of patients already and prevention of new developments of cases (P2)*

*Prevention campaigns. Intervention in sales points and in places of highest concentration of users (P7)*

The National Policy on drugs represents a breakthrough in public policies on drugs, being a milestone of a new stage of activity of the federal Government in addressing the matters relating to the reduction of demand and supply of drugs.

According to legislation and public policies on drugs, published in the year 2008, in 2003 was instituted the policy by national anti-drug Secretariat (SENAD), organ connected directly to the Institutional Security Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic. In 2005, going on to be named National Policy on drugs (PNAD), emphasizing the intersectoral approach and decentralization of actions on drugs in Brazil. In 2006, the Brazilian Congress updates the legislation on drugs by overriding the laws previously in force in the country, by law n° 11.343/06, which established the National System of public policies on drugs (SISNAD), with the purpose of articulate, integrate, organize and coordinate the activities of prevention, treatment and social reintegration of drug users and addicts as well as the repression of trafficking, being in perfect alignment with the National Policy on drugs and with the international commitments of the country.<sup>13</sup>

Prevention is an important factor and the coping Plan to crack and other drugs focuses on education, information and training as essential elements for a good performance. Mentions still care based on the increase in the supply of health treatment and attention to users, prioritizing actions that meet the user in the places of concentration of drug use, specialized care and foster care. CITES authorities to counter trafficking in drugs and organized crime.<sup>14</sup>

*Programs exclusively to the issue, both by the Government, schools and governmental organizations. Greater oversight of legalized drugs for sale to minors such as alcohol and cigarettes. Greater opportunities for social inclusion and employment. Monitoring of greater intensity the risk groups (P1)*

*Educational activities in the school and community. Family counselling. Federal and municipal laws with more force. Intensification in communication - media (television, electronic media such as Web sites, radios) and flyering (P2)*

*Must address early in school life. Lectures, fairs where the topic is approached (P10)*

*Preventive actions, promotion of health education (lectures, campaigns, dissemination of the harm that drugs can bring and the consequences of abuse (P11)*

Prevention, treatment and education are actions that should be grounded in the field according to the policy of comprehensive care in the Ministry of health, requiring next to it an organized society with awareness that the problem of drugs is a public health problem. 15 However, this organization and awareness still fall short. And can be evidenced in the lines of the subjects of this study that are people in process of formation, which articulate a generalist knowing. This fact is the result of teaching model adopted, as well as the thematic prioritization of drugs not in academic life. And to achieve a model of care focused on health promotion and prevention of diseases, the professionals involved must be prepared and able to recognize the problems related to drug use and develop assistance actions.

*Lectures, hikes on drugs (P4)*

*Lectures with guidelines and incentives to stop using drugs (P9)*

*Educational lectures, videos showing the consequences of drug abuse (P11)*

*Educational campaigns. Education (P12)*

The nursing students mention the educational lectures and education as measures of governance or reducing damage caused by drugs. The chemical dependency requires a model of attention that includes health promotion with a focus on prevention of use and abuse, aiming to produce social transformations, causing an improvement in the quality of life of the population in General.<sup>16</sup> Showed that knowledge about preventive actions cites

the schools, family or governmental entities as a priority of action. Few students cite health professionals as key player in acting on the problem of drugs, still very shy.

*Educational actions. Trying to reintroduce him to the social conviviality, familiar. Search for the purpose of inserting that individual to treatment. Try listening to these users. Establish a bond of trust with a professional (P3)*

*The healthcare professional tries to intervene also in damage caused by the use, distribute condoms, talking and guiding to the risks caused by the drug (P9)*

Thus, none of the cites the policy for graduates attention to drug users or the policy of confrontation to crack, being the knowledge of public policies rather limited. In this context, study justifies this fact stating that the teaching about the use of these substances during the formation of nurses not answering, particularly what the theme is imposing to society in recent years, since this content is discussed with more breadth in the disciplines involving mental health, whose workload does not allow you to enable the nurse to act adequately on measures such as promotion, prevention, treatment and social integration of drug users.<sup>17</sup>

Research developed in another reality confirms that academics claim the need for drug issues be addressed with more theoretical consistency because they are mentioned only in specific disciplines of mental health as well as approach the theme in practice only in lectures, community work and educational sessions.<sup>18</sup> This lack of knowledge, is also evidenced in study in which claim that health workers were not ready at graduation to act on the drugs. Comment that received preparation at graduation is low, being administered quickly, impregnated by prejudice, making it a taboo.<sup>19</sup> The little attention given to the subject reflects the consequences of today, making the drugs a public health problem, and should be worked in all spheres, being graduation step essential for good performance and raise awareness about prevention.

Prevention is an attitude in which there must be a shared responsibility since the drugs are a personal problem, social, cultural, among others that permeate the theme. They add that the school process must be covered with health promotion actions, being professor the mediator of this process, thus making pupils capable with specific training to deal with the issue of drugs, absorbing a philosophy with which students identify themselves as true guiding axis in the promotion of health and prevention of drug abuse.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, professionals should be enabled to an approach in front of users and their families, with preventive measures, guidelines and consistent with the forwards if found in the various health services. Among the professionals, we can highlight the nurses in his first contact with customers are able to meet the current history of drug usage on the client accompanied, as well as the pattern of consumption and use and related issues from this can promote host-centric care and awareness through the account of the user and their relationship with the use of the substance in the meantime mentioning that the training of

professionals requires specific skills and abilities and for this to happen it is necessary to continuously training, theoretical and pedagogical preparation inserted in the economic, social, cultural context and for there to be political transformations in nursing education.<sup>21</sup>

We see, therefore, that the role of the nurse is based on traditional perspective and assistance focused on the comorbidity. The work is not directed to actions that promote health or prevent aggravations as is advocated in the basic attention to the detriment of the lack of necessary training at the Academy, reporting that the theme of drugs even when she approached in classrooms, but in the traditional way with education based on the theory. He also stresses the importance of empowering teams, the importance of creating specific programmes for drug users, such as the inclusion of this clientele in the information system of the basic attention, work shared with bond between the family health Strategy and out-patient treatment services.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, for a performance of nurses with drug users with reception and identification of the customers, actions based on educational activities, work in the community and the social network of support is necessary to break barriers and rebuild this way if thinking and acting that still predominate among most professionals and health services. These changes should be initiated in schools, during education, because there are spaces for the development of health education. The educator can build knowledge based on differences in knowledge, resulting from personal experiences not limited only to repost content and ready knowledge which were produced by other people. So it is important that this "Exchange" of knowledge happens also in the community and to promote behavioral changes. However are based almost exclusively on transfer of academic disciplines.

The family in fact is tool used and of great importance in the process of prevention and treatment of the user, but it's not unique piece, being the professionals also participatory elements in this process, so the importance of raising awareness about the role to be played.

Students highlight the primordialidade family among the drug users, citing mainly the importance of parents in the formative process. Studious CITES that there are various forms and family structures, each of which has its own organization and meaning, depending on your political factor, social, economic and cultural; in this sense, each family member fits the demands of everyday life.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the family can be people producing healthy, happy and balanced or can be a generator of insecurity, instability and all aspects related to misuse of behavior.

*Follow-up of families with the actions of their children (P4)*

*Relationship of friendship with parents (P5)*

*Starting from an early age in schools educational activities relating to drugs, with the participation of families, since the same need to closely monitor their children, because they are the main support of help (P13)*

*The basis of prevention against drugs is family, formation of character, values that are passed to younger people or even swapped between the members (P15)*

As it turns out, the family plays an important role on the issue of drugs, but is not responsible in isolation. Educational bases beyond the family settings, extend to schools and the community in General. Educational systems are also part of knowledge of nursing graduates. In this context, schools present themselves as a protective factor for the purpose of informing about the drugs and relevant issues related to the topic, but also presents itself as a risk factor to the extent that the school setting can become a closeness with the use of substances for influence with people close to you if use of drugs.<sup>5</sup>

In the same way that the information given by the media to which the nursing students report being prevention, this can present itself in a dual, because in the same way that the media disseminate important information can come forward so vague and incomplete, arousing curiosity and desire for experimentation. Therefore should be carried out in a comprehensive manner, seeking to achieve a significant number of the population with different characteristics and in an effective way.

With regard to governmental measures, policy measures were emerging in order to unveil the existing social environment, such as the movements that seek to change mental health assistance, allowing the promotion of community-centric models and on social networks.

Accordingly, the Ministry of health has defined the Politics of Integral attention to users of alcohol and other drugs that reflects actions that ensure services to drug users, such as the Centers for psychosocial care (CAPS), in addition to assistance networks, such as standardized services attention to chemical dependency.<sup>23</sup> These services are organized in a network of attention that pervades through the family health strategy (FHS), now considered a model of assistive reorientation, operationalized by multiprofessional teams deployment in basic health units.

However, for operationalizing the assistance and preventive measures, it is necessary the formation of qualified professionals for better performance, however what is stated is the lack of preparation to counter psychoactive substances.

## CONCLUSION

The study in focus shows the knowledge of undergraduates of nursing on drugs and public policies for combating drugs of generalized way. Most of the information seems to be from the media or information systems, as well as experienced by the community contexts to which they belong, reflecting the need for greater insight into the problems once they will be future nurses who will act next to this demand. Through the words and discussions of

undergraduates of nursing on drugs, stressing the preventive actions, this knowledge highlights the need for an intervention in the academic phase of this process of awareness about the nursing intervention in the control of the use of these substances.

It is necessary that the graduate has a critical reasoning to develop a culture of prevention in relation to the use and abuse of drugs, as health professionals, highlighting the nursing, shall receive, handle appropriately, as well as promote health, prevent diseases and reenter these users on the social environment, and that prevention should be prioritized with educational and awareness measures

From the production of this knowledge, the nurse will be able to work fully, interdisciplinary, able to innovate with effective strategies in addressing the issue. Therefore this study points out the need to include specific content about the topic, invest more in the training of these students and this change must begin in schools that prepare and qualify these professionals for the job market.

Thus it is hoped that this study will contribute to the dissemination of similar research that focus on the issue of drugs, highlighting education as well as the expansion of studies with this methodology applied, which follows the steps with flexibility, always respect the ethical principles and scientific search and produce new knowledge.

As limitation of the study, cites the significantly small sample and visualized the knowledge of graduating participants, however the results cannot be generalized, either used to represent the entire population of all nursing graduates of Brazil and the world, despite the findings of several studies find similar results.

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Contact of the corresponding author:  
Fernanda Matos Fernandes Castelo Branco  
Federal University of Amapá= UNIFAP (Binational Campus)  
BR 156, nº 3051 - Km 01  
CEP: 68900-000. Email: fmfernandescb@gmail.com  
Oiapoque-AP