

# Damage reduction: the role of the crack user family

**RESUMO** | Objetivo: Verificar na literatura científica o papel da família de usuários de crack na redução de danos como rede de apoio. Método: Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa. Realizou-se a busca por artigos; com delimitação nos últimos 5 anos (2015-2020); nos idiomas português, inglês e espanhol; disponíveis na íntegra. Nas seguintes plataformas de dados: BDNF, DOAJ, LILACS, MEDLINE, SciELO, SCOPUS e Web of Science. Resultados: Os dados foram organizados e apresentados em figuras e tabelas. Dos 611 estudos encontrados, 7 estavam disponíveis na BDNF, 33 na DOAJ, 20 na LILACS, 160 na MEDLINE, 2 na SciELO, 154 na SCOPUS e 235 na Web of Science. Contudo, após a leitura permaneceram apenas os que atendiam aos critérios para inclusão e exclusão descritos na metodologia, 6 estudos. Conclusão: Pode-se evidenciar neste estudo a importância da família, como elemento-chave imprescindível no auxílio na rede social de apoio frente a redução de danos.

**Descritores:** Usuários de Drogas; Família; Redução do Dano.

**ABSTRACT** | Objective: To check the scientific literature the role of the Crack users family in harm reduction as a support network. Method: This is an integrative review. The search for articles was carried out; with delimitation in the last 5 years (2015-2020); in Portuguese, English and Spanish; available in full. On the following data platforms: BDNF, DOAJ, LILACS, MEDLINE, SciELO, SCOPUS and Web of Science. Results: Data were organized and presented in figures and tables. Of the 611 studies found, 7 were available from BDNF, 33 from DOAJ, 20 from LILACS, 160 from MEDLINE, 2 from SciELO, 154 from SCOPUS and 235 from the Web of Science. However, after reading, only those who met the criteria for inclusion and exclusion described in the methodology remained, 6 studies. Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of the family as an essential key element in helping the social support network in the face of harm reduction.

**Descriptors:** Drug Users; Family; Harm Reduction.

**RESUMEN** | Objetivo: Verificar la literatura científica sobre el papel de la familia de usuarios de Crack en la reducción de daños como red de apoyo. Método: esta es una revisión integradora. Se realizó la búsqueda de artículos; con delimitación en los últimos 5 años (2015-2020); en portugués, inglés y español; disponible en su totalidad. En las siguientes plataformas de datos: BDNF, DOAJ, LILACS, MEDLINE, SciELO, SCOPUS y Web of Science. Resultados: Los datos se organizaron y presentaron en figuras y tablas. De los 611 estudios encontrados, 7 estaban disponibles en BDNF, 33 en DOAJ, 20 en LILACS, 160 en MEDLINE, 2 en SciELO, 154 en SCOPUS y 235 en Web of Science. Sin embargo, después de la lectura, solo quedaron los que cumplieron con los criterios de inclusión y exclusión descritos en la metodología, 6 estudios. Conclusión: Este estudio destaca la importancia de la familia como elemento clave fundamental para ayudar a la red de apoyo social ante la reducción de daños.

**Descriptores:** Consumidores de Drogas; Familia; Reducción del Daño.

## Iara Alves Feitoza de Andrade

Master in Nursing from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). Specialist in Hematology Nursing at the University of Pernambuco (UPE). Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil.

ORCID :0000-0003-3495-0613

## Liniker Scolfild Rodrigues da Silva

Specialist in Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs from the ALPHA Faculty. Sanitarist, Specialist in Public Health in the Residence modality by the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FCM)/UPE. Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3710-851X

## Marta Maria Francisco

Master in Nursing from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil.

ORCID: 0000-0001-8938-9179

## Monique Léia Aragão de Lira

Master's student in Public Health at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). Specialist in Family Health and Specialist in Public Health from Faculdade Santa Maria. Natal, Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil.

ORCID: :0000-0002-6945-6394.

## Renata Rosal Lopes da Cruz

Specialist in Health Situation Analysis from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). Sanitarist at the Brazilian Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Extension (IBPEX). Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil.

ORCID:0000-0001-7222-6875

## Elânia Maria da Silva Simões

Specialist in Nursing in Infectious Diseases in the Residence modality at the Nossa Senhora das Graças Nursing Faculty/University of Pernambuco (FENG/S/UE). Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil.

ORCID: :0000-0003-3328-1737

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## INTRODUCTION

The family is a person's first important space, the main reference for anyone, from childhood, where they receive education until adulthood. It is in the family, where moral values are studied and implemented, as well as where emotional experiences, expressions, evaluations and expectations are lived, that the family is important because it allows each member to become an autonomous unit. Children acquire many of their parents' behaviors, such as attitudes and values, through imitation and identification. We will have a better society if we start to change this society with the help of our children. (1, 2)

Harm Reduction (HR) is a set of policies and practices aimed at reducing the harm associated with the use of psychoactive drugs in people who are unable or unwilling to stop using drugs. On June 1st, 2010, RD was adopted as a public health strategy for the first time in Brazil, when high rates of HIV transmission were related to injecting drug misuse. (3)

Brazilian Association of Reducing and Reducing Damage (ABORDA - Associação Brasileira de Redutoras e Redutores de Danos) was created in 1997, during the 2nd Brazilian Congress on AIDS Prevention, in Brasília. The objectives, from that time until today, have not changed much: the implementation and strengthening of HR as a public policy, and the defense of the dignity of the harm reducer. (3)

Over the past 10 years, there have been major changes in HR prospects. (4,5) According to studies, HR is a strategy for approaching drug problems, which does not assume that there should be an immediate and mandatory extinction of drug use within society, but that formulates practices that reduce harm to those who use drugs and for the social groups they live with. The risk of suicide, overdose and the evolution of harmful effects of the psy-

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choactive substance must be constantly monitored, considering involuntary hospitalization and detoxification. (6)

The diversification of health care offers for drug users received a significant boost when, as of 2003, HR actions ceased to be an exclusive strategy of the STD/AIDS Programs and became a guiding strategy of the Ministry of Health Policy (MH) for the Comprehensive Care Policy for Users of Alcohol and Other Drugs (PAIUAD - Política de Atenção Integral aos Usuários de Álcool e Outras Drogas), as well as the Mental Health Policy. (17)

Therefore, this review aims to verify in the scientific literature the role of the family of crack users in harm reduction as a support network. In the certainty that together they will be able to identify the causes, roots that puncture them to abusive practices of legal and illegal drugs.

## METHOD

This is a bibliographic descriptive study of the integrative review type, with a qualitative approach that offers opportunities to investigate the scientific literature and broadly understand the research topics, thus contributing to patient care practices based on scientific knowledge. (8)

From the following steps: (1) elaboration of the guiding question and objective of the study; (2) definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria for scientific productions; (3) search for scientific studies in databases and virtual libraries; (4) analysis and categorization of the productions found; (5) results and discussion of findings. (9)

To raise the guiding question, the PICO strategy was used, a methodology that helps in the construction of a research question and search for evidence for a non-clinical research, where P = Population/Patient; I = Interest; and Co = Context (P: Crack user I: Role of the family; Co: Harm reduction). Thus, the

following guiding question of the research was defined: “What is the role of the crack user's family in harm reduction?”.

For selection of articles, the following inclusion criteria were used: original article, available in full, published in the last 5 years (2015-2020) in Portuguese, English or Spanish, that met the objective of the study. Gray literature, as well as repeated publications of studies in more than one database, and articles that did not answer the study's guiding question and that allowed access through the Virtual Private Network (VPN) of the University of Pernambuco (UPE) were excluded. The temporal delimitation in the last 5 years is justified, aiming at the survey of more recent articles.

Data collection took place during the month of June and July 2021 in the following databases: Database in Nursing (BDENF); Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ); Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS); Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE); SCOPUS, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and on the Web of Science.

Articles indexed from the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) were searched for: “Drug Users”, “Family”, “Harm Reduction”. The respective terms from the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) were used: “Drug Users”, “Family”, “Harm Reduction”. The operationalization and the search strategy were based on the combination with the Boolean operator AND and OR, carrying out the search jointly and individually so that possible differences could be corrected (Chart 1).

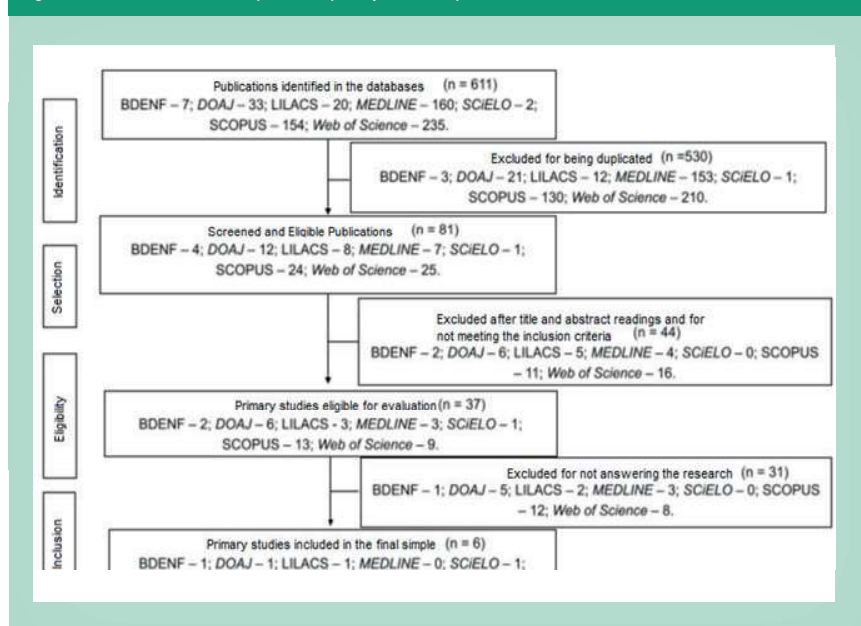
Articles were selected based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) in order to assist in the development of articles. (10) At first, duplicated studies were eliminated by reading the titles and abstracts. Of these pre-selected ones, a full reading was carried out, in order to verify which ones meet the guiding question and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The final sample was then constructed with studies relevant to the pre-established criteria (Figure 1).

**Chart 1 - Database search strategy. Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil, 2021.**

Database	Research terms	Results	Selected
BDENF	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	7	1
DOAJ	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	33	1
LILACS	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	20	1
MEDLINE	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	160	0
SciELO	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	2	1
SCOPUS	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	154	1
Web of Science	Drug Users AND Family AND Harm Reduction	235	1
Total		611	6

Source: Research data, 2021.

Figure 1 - Flowchart of the selection process for primary studies adapted from PRISMA. Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil, 2021



Source: Research data, 2021.

ted ones, a full reading was carried out, in order to verify which ones meet the guiding question and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The final sample was then constructed with studies relevant to the pre-established criteria (Figure 1).

After reading the articles, the selected ones were categorized, classifying the knowledge produced in levels of evidence according to Melnyk and Finneout-Overholt (11): level I, evidence

is related to systematic review or meta-analysis of randomized controlled clinical trials or from clinical guidelines based on systematic reviews of randomized controlled clinical trials; at level II, evidence derived from at least one well-designed randomized controlled clinical trial; at level III, evidence from well-designed clinical trials without randomization; at level IV, evidence from well-designed cohort and case-control studies; at level V, evidence

**Table 1 - Synthesis of the main findings on the role of the crack user's family in harm reduction. Recife, Pernambuco (PE), Brazil, 2021.**

N	Title/Database	Authors (Year)	Country	Level of Evidência	Objective	Results
1	Reasons for the action of the harm reducer with the drug user: a phenomenological study. / BDEF	Tisott, Zaira Letícia et al., (2019)	Brasil	VI	To apprehend the reasons for the action of the harm reducer when performing their activities with the drug user.	The reason for the harm reduction action is related to the family, the search for a house, a job, access to health, rights and stigma, as well as, through the return of their actions, personal satisfaction and learning with drug users.
2	Autonomy and social reintegration: perception of family members and professionals who work with harm reduction. / LILACS	Silveira, Maria da Penha Da rosa da et al., (2017)	Brasil	VI	Identify the perception of family members of alcohol and other drug addicts and health professionals about the concepts of autonomy and social reintegration that underlie the HR approach.	Autonomy and social reintegration are, without a doubt, important concepts for working with drug addicts, as long as they involve the family and a social support network.
3	From policy propositions to service practices: are there news in Psychosocial Care Centers for Alcohol and Drugs? / SciELO	Machado, Ana Regina, Modena, Celina Maria e Luz, Zélia Maria Profeta da. (2020)	Brasil	VI	Understand which care possibilities have been supported in the CAPs AD (Psychosocial Care Centers - Alcohol and Drugs)	The difficulties they have in regulating drug use and the marks of different social processes - criminalization, stigmatization, exclusion, social declassification - in the production of their subjectivities contribute to this. Therefore, the reception and the production of bonds contribute to ensure the presence of care.
4	Expanding conceptualizations of harm reduction: results from a qualitative community-based participatory research study with people who inject drugs. / DOAJ	Boucher, L. M. et al. (2017)	Reino Unido	VI	Explore how people who inject drugs think about HR and consider the critical equity imperative in the delivery of health and social services to this community.	The importance of social or peer support and improving self-efficacy was evident.
5	Physical and psychosocial factors associated with psychostimulant use in a nationally representative sample of French adolescents: specifics of cocaine, amphetamine and ecstasy use / Web Of Science	Celine, Bonnaire et al. (2019)	Estados Unidos	VI	Analyze patterns of use of psychostimulants (PST), psychological and physical factors and family relationships.	The results indicate that certain parenting characteristics (such as living with both parents) and parenting behaviors can dissuade adolescents from using substances.
6	Profile of crack users in Santos City. / SCOPUS	Rodrigues, Luciana Oliveira V et al. (2017)	Brasil	IV	Describe the profile of commercial crack in the city of Santos / SP.	The discovery of such a profile suggests that interventions based on HR strategies carried out in loco with educational and preventive objectives may be the most appropriate ways to achieve integration and reduce damage in this population.

Source: Research data, 2021.

from a systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; at level VI, evidence derived from a single descriptive or qualitative study; and at level VII,

evidence derived from the opinion of authorities and/or report from expert committees.

The summary of information in

the corpus was constructed using an instrument: identification of the original article; article authorship; year of publication; parents; methodological



characteristics of the study; and study sample. Allowing itself to obtain general conclusions due to the gathering of several studies, through the process of systematic analysis and synthesis of the researched literature. When well elaborated, it can represent the current state of the researched literature. Furthermore, it highlights the knowledge gaps that need to be filled with further studies.

Aiming at a better understanding and visualization of the main findings, the data were organized presenting them in figures and tables, exposed in a descriptive way.

## RESULTS

The selected studies are arranged so as to highlight their titles, authors, years of publication, levels of evidence, objectives and results. After reading the selected articles, the studies were categorized, classifying the knowledge produced on the topic, in levels of evidence, mostly level VI - evidence derived from a single descriptive or qualitative study. The main findings set out in the objectives and conclusions are directly associated with the role of the crack user's family in harm reduction (Table 1).

Given the above, it was possible to observe that the family has an essential role in terms of harm reduction. However, one must take into account the entire context present within the family environment, this may not only be the inhibitor but also, in some cases, the trigger for drug use.

## DISCUSSION

### Alfred Schütz's theoretical conceptions of social phenomenology

Sociologist Alfred Schütz based his thinking on two philosophers, seen as the cornerstone of his work: Max Weber and Edmund Husserl. Max Weber



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inspired Schütz by bringing to light a perspective of interpretation of social reality based on the meaning of the acts by the subject who practices them. Schütz' contribution to Weber's postulate was to deepen the meaning of man's action in the social world. In this sense, he looked to Husserl for the philosophical framework that allowed him to understand social phenomena from the meaning attributed by the subject to the action, based on the concepts of intentionality and intersubjectivity. (12)

For social phenomenology, the everyday world is the setting where human beings live, which is already structured previously, prior to birth. The reading of this established reality makes man act in a natural way, based on what is presented as a social reality. In addition, Schütz has the ability to intervene naturally in this world, influencing and being influenced, continuously transforming and altering social structures. (13,14)

To live in this world, man is guided by the way he defines the scenario of action, interprets its possibilities and faces its challenges. This precedes the recognition of the subject's current situation, constituted by a history rooted in all of their previous subjective experiences. The matrix of all social action has a common meaning, however each person is located in a specific way in the world of life, what Schütz calls a biographical situation. (15)

This experience adds a body of knowledge that is available and accessible, according to the subject's biographical situation. One of the greatest contributions of existential phenomenological thinking is the simple but important realization that we cannot study and understand man in the same way as we do with other beings and objects. We can distinguish two fundamental conditions between these entities (everything that exists, all living beings and objects). Man knows that a day will come when he will no longer

"be" or "will exist." For existential phenomenology, this difference marks a different way of man being in the world, very different from other beings, since he is the only being that has to live with his-being-for-death and is free to perform a choice between living or dying. (14)

### Sociocultural aspects of drug use and harm reduction

According to the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), DR is a strategy to help users in reducing drug consumption that can contribute to a possible interruption in their use. It appears that there are conceptual variations on HR, resulting from the appropriation of the approach by different disciplinary fields and contexts, being recommended for the definition of the theoretical and methodological basis of the term in works that depart from this perspective. (16)

The HR is linked to the possibilities offered to this excluded population, which is only remembered when it bothers society in some way or when its visibility becomes evident. Reducing losses and damages is to give these subjects the opportunity to be encouraged within their sociocultural and family context, to overcome these conflicts and search for new proposals, albeit reduced, to enter society. (15,16)

In the field of drug education, the HR approach with the perspective of education for autonomy defined by Freire, who states that the learning process must be permeated by a critical knowledge of reality. In other words, learning transcends the storage of knowledge, being the result of a constant reflection on the global reality. According to this perspective, the educator and the student are active subjects of the knowledge construction process, learning from each other through successive approaches and reflections on a given subject. (15)

### The role of the family in harm reduction

The family is constituted based on cultural kinship relationships, being historically determined, including among the basic institutions, identified as a key element not only for the survival of individuals, but also for the



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protection and socialization of its components, transmission of cultural and economic capital and group ownership, as well as gender relations and solidarity between generations. Through it, they incorporate behavior patterns, moral, social, ethical and spiritual

values. (3)

The family nucleus participates in the formation of personality and contributes to the consolidation of character and the adoption of notions of ethics and solidarity. Because it is so complex in its structure, composition and function, the family does not escape from experiencing multiple conflicts throughout its life cycle. While it exists, it is subject to transformations, often needing to resize itself in its postures in view of the different realities and adversities to which it is subjected, in the search for overcoming and balancing. (3-5)

When using the search strategies, a small sample was found and there was little availability of scientific articles to compare the results. As well as few articles were raised as a result of the descriptors, few met the objective of the study. Furthermore, the included studies have limitations such as: single centers, different comparison systems, small sample size and lack of randomization.

Thus, it is not possible to prove the existence of scientific evidence related to the role of the crack user's family in the HR process. Making it necessary to carry out more studies containing a larger sample and enabling discussion of aspects associated with the topic.

### CONCLUSION

This review made it possible to identify the role of the crack user's family in the HR process; linked to the improvement of the patient's quality of life, which is often impaired, as the problem is almost always found in the home or around it, in social life. However, there is a scarcity of studies that give real importance to this topic, and a singular look by public health policies is still necessary, even though this number has gradually increased in recent years. This has a fundamental role, essential as a social support network

in HR, a key element, as this achievement becomes essential for the rescue of contexts, values, feelings, and the ties that were once broken. Thus, the family, health services and the community, articulated, contribute to DR.

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