SOCIAL AND PEER GROUP INFLUENCE ON SEEKING AND ADHERING TO TREATMENT FOR DRUG USE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

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RESUMO

To study, through literature review, how peer and social support influence the initiation, adhesion, and effectiveness in drug treatment, during COVID-19's pandemic. A period where social isolation and online interventions became the norm. A literature search was performed in MEDLINE/PubMed database, considering publications in the last 4 years. Searching terms were "peer support", "online treatment" and "substance-related disorders". The selection was performed by title and abstract, followed by an abstract and full-text read. Main findings are presented. Quality and type of support showed a very important role in remissions, notably in online forums for drug user support, a recent strategy that has increased during the social distancing period. Were also disseminated, in this context, improved telehealth alternatives counting with the aid of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Turning point events in users' lives and psychosocial markers, proved relevant for seeking and attending to treatment online but were not well explored yet. Characteristics individualizing users' relationship with drugs and their influence on online search for specialized treatment networks are widely debated. New ways of delivering peer and social support online seemed to work efficiently during the social distancing period, and promise to be good complementary therapies for future care. Further studies are still needed to evaluate how can online methods work in safe and beneficial ways for frail users. Implementing deeper regulations in online cares and seeing their results are tasks for future research and social measures aiming at remission yet not accomplished.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: On-line Treatment, Peer and Social Support, Substance-Related Disorders

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