

CHARACTERISTICS AND SERVICE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY-BASED SAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS IN AMADORA (LISBON)

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Background:

Drug consumption in public spaces proves to be less hygienic and safe, causing more damage to health. In Amadora, a municipality within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, drug use was identified among people in homeless situation. This study intended to characterize people who use drugs (PWUD) in public spaces, from Amadora, describing consumption patterns and characterizing their access to social and health services.

Methods:

PWUD were recruited to participate in a survey assessing substance use behaviors, social and health service utilizations. The teams that deliver harm reduction or homelessness responses mediated the reach out the PWUD. The data from survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including variable calculations for categorical variables and measures of central tendency and dispersion for numerical variables.

Results:

81 participants were recruited. They were mostly men (80%), with an average age of 46 ($\pm 9,01$) years. Smoked consumption had a high prevalence (86%), with injected consumption reported by 25% of individuals. Crack-cocaine use was mainly reported, with 86% in smoked consumption and 60% in injected consumption. About opioid use, 70% injected heroin in the last 30 days and 50% smoked heroin in the same period. 84% reported the street as the main place of consumption. Participants in our sample presented high levels of vulnerability, with 81% unemployed and 54% homeless. Just 25% of the participants were in current follow-up in a specialized addiction treatment team and 23% in access to an opioid agonist treatment (OAT) program.

Conclusion:

Thinking locally based on the needs, it becomes essential to respond to the problem of consumption in public spaces, as well as improving PWUD access to specialized public services, such as low-threshold OAT programs. Housing and employability are some of the social needs presented by the participants, being fundamental the construction of integrated responses.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.