

# What Views of Health Care Professionals are Barriers to Providing Quality, Therapeutic Care to Individuals with Addictions?

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## INTRODUCTION

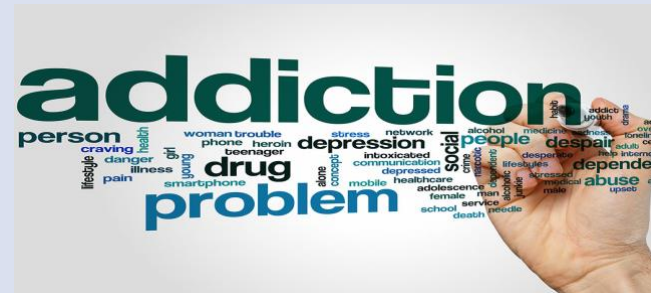
As students involved in the Psychiatric Nursing Research Interest Group (RIG) at Douglas College we are interested in the views and beliefs that healthcare professionals have towards individuals with addictions, and ultimately how this affects the care they provide. This year's project is a literature review looking worldwide at the common themes that appear with healthcare workers views on addictions. Out of the 28 studies we looked at, 10 ended up being in a psychiatric or addiction specific setting, 12 in a combination of both general medical and psychiatric setting, and 6 in a general medical only setting. We have noticed many common themes, such as; lack of education and training, existing stigma or negative attitudes, self-identified "role inadequacy", and need for additional support when working with this challenging population. This project is the first phase in a study we plan to complete next year on the views of working with individuals with addictions among the PNUR and BSN students at Douglas College.



## SAMPLE & POPULATION

**Countries:** United States of America, Scotland, Australia, England, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Taiwan, Netherlands Brazil, Jordan and Egypt.

**Health care professional:** Nursing students, Registered Nurses, Pharmacists, General Physicians, Social workers, Support workers, and community drug workers.



## METHOD

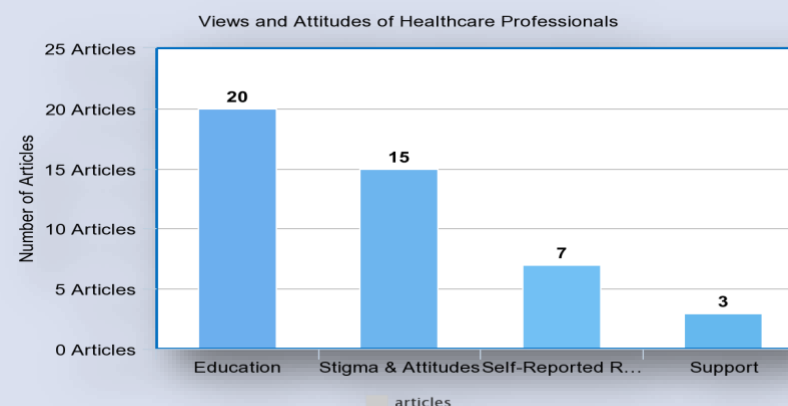
We have completed a comprehensive literature review of 28 scholarly, peer reviewed articles.

We used several databases to find this information such as: PubMed, CINAHL, PsychInfo, MEDLINE, Psychiatry Online and Science Direct. We utilized a matrix format to gather and organize the information.

## RESULTS

After reviewing the literature four main themes were identified in relation to the views of healthcare professionals towards working with individuals with addictions. These themes are:

- The need for more education and training.
- Stigma and negative attitudes existing within healthcare providers
- Self-identified "role adequacy", implying that confidence in your own skills in working with this population is essential
- The need for more support services on the job such as having a mentor figure.



## DISCUSSION

From the articles we reviewed, the data suggests nurses working with individual with addictions often have negative views of their patients. These negative attitudes can influence the care patients receive as nurses play a crucial role in these individuals acquiring quality therapeutic treatment. Some of the factors contributing to these attitudes include a lack of education and training both in school and work environments, a lack of supports in the work place and a low self-identified role adequacy, which can be related to the aforementioned factors.

Healthcare professionals who had adequate training and a supportive work environment were more likely to view working with individuals with addictions as a positive experience. Education on practical considerations but also education to foster an understanding of the underlying factors causing addictions is essential for providing genuine care. Currently our program explores theory behind substance and alcohol use throughout many classes such as Psychiatric Nursing Concepts, Therapeutic Relationships, Addictions, and perhaps most importantly Trauma Informed Practice. In the next phase of this research we want to conduct a survey on students in the later semesters of the PNUR and BSN programs to determine if they feel they are receiving the education they need in order to confidently preform therapeutic care for these misunderstood and vulnerable individuals.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RESEARCH

-Negative views related to believing that drug users have "control" over their behaviours aka "why don't they just quit?" (Brenner, Hippel, Kippax & Preacher, 2010).

-Those working in addictions units need to become advocates for their clients to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity (Lovi & Barr, 2009).

-Healthcare professionals were slightly more negative in their expectations than clients regarding healthcare provision inequalities (Van Boekel, Brouwers, Van Weeghel & Garretsen, 2014).



## CONCLUSION

Informed, competent, therapeutic care is crucial in providing individuals with alcohol and substance use disorders with the treatment and resources they need. In order to provide this kind of care it is paramount to provide education and experience both beginning in school and continuing in work environments. Furthermore, the need for support services, such as mentorship and guidance in the work place, can help nurse navigate working with this often-challenging population.

## REFERENCES

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