

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Treatment Integration System

At the **5th Conference of the European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association (EUROPAD)**, we found two differentiated tendencies amongst Substitution experts. The scientific evidence of recent years indicates that some 50% of patients in treatment with Methadone or Buprenorphine in Europe, around 400,000, do not improve with this model of intervention. Against this, we have a small fraction supporting the relaunch of the Therapeutic Community as an ideal therapeutic method for these patients (we are talking about short-duration or non-residential TCs). This stance is supported by the most important university psychology circles in Europe (E.g. Universidad of Ghent, Belgium, Professor Iris De Groote, Professor Ann De Rick and Professor Eric K. Broekaert) and by North American and European researchers who offer positive evidence for treatment in TC (E.g. Anthony Slater, Director of the "Phoenix House Haga TC in Norway; or Dr. George de Leon, from the Center for Therapeutic Community Research, USA). The second fraction of Substitution professionals indicated that the 50% of patients who do not respond to Methadone or Buprenorphine should be treated with heroin, a stance led by Dutch professionals such as Wim van den Brink, from the Amsterdam Institute for Addiction Research.

The stance of Spanish representatives at the Conference, such as Marta Torres (Hospital del Mar), was more inclined to continue trying substitution drugs than to steer the mentioned patients towards facilities where they would be oriented towards abstinence. They justify this tendency, like the remainder of those in favour of this route, with the scientific evidence presented by some studies, that reflect that many patients improve in their work, healthcare, family and police relations and their relations with the community, when treated with heroin.

In any case, the Therapeutic Community is already exploiting its therapeutic data, and briefly, we will see that its methods provides highly effective results for treating thousands of patients who at present suffer deterioration of their physical and mental health, and waste part of their own time and that of their families, on Substitution Programmes.

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