

THE WPA SECTION ON MASS MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

A RESEARCH WORK ON DETECTION AND MODIFICATION OF PREJUDICE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE DISORDERS, WITHIN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT.

Prof. Dr. Miguel-Angel Materazzi

Prof. Dr. Inés-Josefina Puig (Ms)

Introduction

Whenever the treatment of psychosis is approached, a fundamental aspect to be taken care of is prejudice because prejudice against drug abuse disorders, when set up within a given community, makes prognosis difficult. It is a well-known fact that home, work, and social network are the most significant hindering factors against a mental patient rehabilitation.

To this end, I resort to an instrument I have created in the 70s would be convenient –namely the Expressive/Creative Preventive Non-specific Workshops. Workshops not only serve to detecting prejudice but also generating the training of Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents inserted within the social milieu so that they can help prejudice to be modified.

This research is meant to delve into Prejudice as a variable within the social context –and, mainly, community-linked prejudice against mental sufferers. Research is based on activities that I have carried on for 37 years now together with my interdisciplinary group of professionals.

Research is based on two instruments, namely:

- Generating Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents, and
- Creating Community Crisis Care Offices within the community. These Offices will take care of Health Primary Care, as well as detecting prejudices in a first instance.

Both objectives can be carried along on the basis of two activities to be carried within communities:

- 1) Expressive-Creative Non-specific Prevention Workshops, and:
- 2) Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents Permanent Course of Study. More details to be found in Methodology.

Objectives

a) Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents.

Who is such an Agent? A trained person who is able –within a community context, to offer the first psychological-social care in de-compensation cases, besides being able to refer the mental sufferer at stake to the appropriate medical institution for his/her care and assistance.

We have a well-known example in this connection: any ordinary citizen with a first aid training knows how to administer artificial respiration, performing a cardiac massage or immobilizing a person –that is, this ordinary citizen is by no means a medical doctor, however he or she is perfectly able to save a human life. Same goes with a Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agent: he/she is neither an MD nor a psychologist, however he/she is perfectly able to avoid that any sufferer's crisis ends up lethally –besides, this Agent becomes a guidance leader among his/her peers, and he/she is a role multiplier within his/her community.

b) Community Crisis Care Offices

What is such an Office? A tangible example of Social Psychiatry –inasmuch as social psychiatry becomes effective whenever care is offered outside institutions on the one hand. On the other hand, decentralization is favored –that is, this is a real help as far as health primary care is concerned.

Group of interdisciplinary professionals in charge of research

- Research Directors (Prof. Materazzi and Prof. Puig)

with an interdisciplinary team including psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, occupational therapists, social workers, mass media technicians, and lawyers.

- Group technicians in: digital editing, digital photography, graphic editing.
- A trilingual translator

Promotion at community level

A determined community is chosen: it could be either a city, a little town, a county, a district or a "social class" (i.e. professionals, storekeepers/traders, workers, teachers, and so on). An in-depth promotion field work must be carried on so that people is made aware that, if a sound, actual non-specific prevention program is to be instated, prevention has to be based on a permanent program on the one hand.

On the other hand, all and every age ranges and "social classes" are to be implied inasmuch as nothing can be done by means of education alone, health care alone, social security alone –in other words, a social warp, a social network involving the whole community must be created.

If such actions are properly carried out, each community will be endowed with several Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents.

1. Once the first contact with the community at stake has been established, actions (where, how, and when) are designed and programmed. In general, an interdisciplinary team –a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, a sociologist, and a public health MD, are in charge of promotion. Only three team members are needed, in case it is not possible to have all five members available.

2. During promotion stage, community members are told that a workshop is to take place for the first time at this program organizing entity.

Promotion is based on the idea that the first workshop –we call it plainly a meeting, will include all the district social sectors without, however, exceeding 100 people present at this first meeting (methodology is just the same for all first meetings). Thereafter, different workshops will be organized for each different sectors once a month.

At the first meeting, people are told that session is to be 4-hour's time long, (just in order to avoid the usual audience "dropping out" because we advise that the audience is going to be evaluated at the beginning of these 4 hours' time and the end of the meeting too, by means of an opinion survey). This opinion survey is an instrument aimed at assessing the degree of prejudice in each sector.

Methodology to be applied with regard to research on prejudice, community's grade of participation, and people's ignorance about the topics to be approached

1. First of all, the audience must fill out an opinion survey. **It should be noted that this opinion survey is based on Allport's views on the nature of prejudice**, with modifications and adaptations to different aspects such as drug dependence, psychosis, alcoholism, family. A model of survey is to be found below.

As already pointed out this opinion survey will be administered to participants before the first workshop begins, and afterwards, at the end of the workshop to check out whether any modification has occurred in the mind of participants during this 4-hour' s time session.

2. Audience is given interdisciplinary information worded by members of our team, with reference to topic or topics to be approached.

3. Once the interdisciplinary information is over, a videofilm is run –a videofilm which is based on the "Psicocine" technique (i.e. "Psychocinema", I have created¹). This means that a rehabilitated psychic sufferer has been included within the Program Indeed, Psicocine is a therapeutic technique using movies for both the treatment and rehabilitation of severely affected mental sufferers. In other words, and by means of the Psicocine technique, patients become other Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents.

4. Once the showing of the movie is over, participants are divided into five operating groups with a coordinator, and an observer-secretary each (these are members from the research group), to elaborate what they have seen and listened to, drawing conclusions, and freely accepting to be self-appointed and trained as future Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents.

5. Conclusions are read to all and sundry, as well as the list of the future trainees –i.e. psychic sufferers that have been treated and rehabilitated through the "Psicocine" technique. On the basis of the results of the opinion survey, and the operating groups' conclusions, a small plot is written –a synthesis of what things occur within the community sector at stake, so that a short, theatrical experience takes place, based on Grotowski's Laboratory Theater and the Free Expression Theater. Of course, there are two, or at least one member of our team who are knowledgeable in theater techniques, and, first of all, they instruct audience to participate in this theatrical proposal which is to deal with aspects that have been detected in this community sector. Once the theatrical experience is over, a debate is instated –we could call it a "rendering" debate inasmuch as it is "offered" for the audience to think things over –that is, a feedback, so to speak.

6. Thereafter, the same opinion survey as before is administered again so that our team is in a position to check up whether some modification has taken place in this community sector or not.

¹ The full name of this technique is Psicocine Terapia Grupal Programada (Psychocinema: A Programmed Group Therapy). Psicocine is aimed at working as a psychotherapeutic technique uniting theater, psychology, psychopathology, philosophy, sociology and movie-making. From a technical point of view, this is an action-interaction process the fundamentals of which lies in creativity through dramatization thus allowing intervening patients' inner relational sense of drama, so that they can take their first step towards freedom –that is, towards change. In this type of technique, when it comes to dramatization both the bodily expression as well as the verbal expression are important – hence, communication channels with other people are widened. This is only the beginning since, now, the effort is aimed at movie-making, a fact allowing us to amplify more and more the realm of communication not only with sufferers but also with the community, since the movie works as an intermediate object among the community, the therapeutic team, and sufferer involved inasmuch as a real dialectic process has been created through movie making.

On the following week, the self-appointed trainees begin the Non-specific Prevention Multiplier Agents Permanent Course of Study which includes the following modules:

- Maltreatment inflicted to: women, children, men, and senior citizens.
- Early stimulation.
- Sexual orientation, and AIDS.
- Education and prevention.
- Drug abuse
- Alcoholism
- Family and prevention
- Mass media and prevention
- Bulimia, anorexia nervosa
- Accidentology.

Coordinator in charge is important inasmuch he/she works on a double basis: he/she causes the theoretical contents of the course to be re-elaborated by trainees on the one hand. On the other hand, he/she instructs trainees how to work in their own sectors insofar as they are "born leaders" therein: for example, setting up a survey of such sectors, suggesting means for graphic prevention, writing articles in local newspapers, acting as communicating vessels, so to speak, with their own sector.

Thereafter, a workshop will be held separately in each community sector –a good way to recruit other participants likely to become trainees in turn.

This is why, once the permanent course has been started it should not be interrupted. Thus, it is likely that, at the end of the year some 100 Agents –maybe 120, have been trained.

AN OPINION SURVEY: A RESEARCH INSTRUMENT ON PREJUDICE, PARTICIPATION, AND IGNORANCE (dealing in particular with drug abuse. There are, however other types of opinion surveys related to psychosis, family, and so on)

1) What is prejudice? An attitude of general population where, in a great majority of cases, each person keeps his/her opinion regarding the social interrelationship to himself/herself. This social interrelationship is based on a) either the knowledge or the non-knowledge of the topic at stake, b) either the participation or the non-participation at a community level with reference to the topic at stake.

Prejudice hinders any attempt at a solution to be found, at a community level.

2) The instrument used to detect prejudice are Expressive-Creative Non-specific Prevention Workshops.

3) Indicators aimed at detecting prejudice are to be found in multiple choice questions below.

4) Each letter put in the multiple choice boxes (i.e. A, B, C, and so on) represents a numeral / conceptual value aimed at obtaining a percentage. It should be noted that, in this example, letters have been included in each multiple choice box for a better understanding of the survey. When survey is administered to meeting-participating people, of course multiple choices boxes are left blank.

5) Numeral values.

- Answers by either yes prejudice or no prejudice: 3,70
- Answers related to relative prejudice: 3.25

These are axiomatic values.

Conceptual values.

- Prejudice / No prejudice / Relative prejudice

6) Concepts needed for a Yes-prejudice to exist:

- a: a negative population attitude
- b: an opinion people keep for themselves
- c: a negative social interrelation
- d: ignorance about the topic to be dealt with
- e: population fails to participate in the problem solving process.

Concepts needed for a No-prejudice to exist: the foregoing items needed for the Yes-prejudice answer are not needed here.

Concepts needed for a Relative-prejudice to exist: two or three items appearing in the Yes-prejudice box must appear therein.

7) Social sectors that have been selected:

- Higher / University Studies
- Interdisciplinary Professionals
- Junior / High Schools
- Protective Associations
- Religions Creeds (Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Roman Catholics)
- Security Personnel / Firefighters
- Social and/or Sports Clubs
- Workers Unions

8) With reference to interdisciplinary professionals the following disciplines have been selected: architects, engineers, general practitioners, lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, registered nurses, social workers, university assistant / associate / and full professors.

9) Population sample included 10,000 people distributed as follows:

- Argentina, the capital city of Buenos Aires, and the Province of Buenos Aires: 5,000 people (Higher / University Studies: 1000; Interdisciplinary professionals: 1000; Junior / Senior High School 900, Social and/or Sports clubs: 500; Religious Creeds: 500; Protective Associations: 400; Workers Unions: 400; Security Personnel / Firefighters: 300.

- Argentine Provinces (see below) 4000: Religious Creeds: 800; Junior / Senior High Schools: 700, Protective Associations: 600; Higher / University Studies: 500; Social and/or Sports Clubs: 400; Interdisciplinary Professionals: 400; Security Personnel / Firefighters 300; Workers Unions: 300.

- Foreign countries (see below) 1000: Interdisciplinary Professionals: 450; Higher / University Studies: 180; Junior / Senior High School: 130; Religious Creeds: 100; Workers Unions: 50; Social and/or Sports Clubs: 40; Protective Associations: 30; Security Personnel / Firefighters: 20.

10) Eight relative-prejudice related questions, multiplied per 3.25 = 26%.

Twenty "yes" or "no" questions multiplied by 3.70 = 74%

That is, 100% in questionnaires.

11) Correlation: the above mentioned letters (i.e. A, B, C and so on) mean:

- As regards the following question, namely: 1. Do you think that an alcoholic or a drug user is a mentally ill person? Yes () why?: A = prejudice; B = relative prejudice; C = relative prejudice; D = no prejudice. E = no prejudice.

In question 1, NO: F = relative prejudice; G = prejudice; H = prejudice; I = no prejudice; J = relative prejudice.

In question 2 namely: What are the main motives for somebody to become a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person?: A = prejudice . B = relative prejudice; C = prejudice; D = prejudice; E = relative prejudice.

In question 3 namely: What do you feel when in touch with a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person? A = prejudice; B = relative prejudice; C = prejudice; D = prejudice, E = no prejudice, F = no prejudice, G = relative prejudice.

In question 4 namely: Do you think that either a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person has a chance at rehab?

- NO = A = prejudice
- YES = B, C, D, E and F: no prejudice

12) Participants´ average age range; 37-year-old. Females: 60%; Males: 40%

- Education:
- Unfinished elementary school (9%)
- Full elementary school (12%)
- Junior high school only (17%)
- Junior and senior high school (25%)
- Unfinished university studies (21%)
- Full university studies (16%)

The following is a model of the administered survey

Dear participant:

This is a survey aimed at knowing whether our task is useful for the community or not. Kindly check it all by ticking in each answer box what are the aspects closer to your own thinking. Thanks for your help.

1. Do you think that an alcoholic or a drug user is a mentally ill person?

YES () why?

A	Because he/she is disrespectful of society's patterns
B	Because he/she resorts to either substances or alcohol instead of seeking a relative's or a friend's help
C	Because he/she is unable to live without substances or alcohol
D	Because if he/she keeps consuming substances or alcohol, he/she will get mad
E	Because, whenever substances or alcohol are involved, communication is uneasy

NO () why?

F	Because he/she consumes substances or drinks alcohol just for having fun
G	Because he/she does that just to do the same as a friend does
H	Because, since this is circumstantial, whenever he/she chooses, he/she drops it
I	Because, more than a mentally deranged person, he/she just indulges in bad habits

J	Because he/she consumes substances or drinks when he/she is in trouble
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2. What are the main motives for somebody to become a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person?

A	Because he/she has inherited the habit from his/her parents
B	Because his/her family is in trouble
C	Because he/she is an unsteady person, he/she is afraid of facing difficulties
D	Because he/she lives in a society full of problems
E	Because there is something wrong with his/her system

3. What do you feel when in touch with a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person?

A	Reject
B	Indifference
C	Disgust
D	Anger
E	Pity
F	I would like to help him/her
G	I don't know

4. Do you think that either a substance dependent or an alcohol dependent person has a chance at rehab?

NO (A) because.....

YES (B) So, in your opinion, which could be the most effective way for this person to be cured:

C	Through a clinical treatment
D	Going to a non-medical institution apt at giving rehabilitation
E	Through a medical-psychological treatment, with the participation of his/her family
F	Getting admitted as an inpatient at a hospital
G	Through a physical-psychic treatment including this patient's creative and expressive capacity

Your age:

Your gender: Male () Female ()

Your education:

Unfinished elementary school ()

Full elementary school ()

Junior high school only ()

Junior and senior high school ()

Unfinished university studies ()

Full university studies ()

Self-evaluation :

As a background information with respect to this project, it should be noted that a personal effort has already been made with the cooperation of the FINTECO Foundation, a WPA Member Society, since the 70s. From the 80s on our Section on Mass Media and Mental Health as well as the APAL Section on Art, Health and Community have cooperated in such commitment.

So, we have been in a position to evaluate 2,800,000 opinion surveys dealing with prejudice, and this effort has been carried on in Argentina, other Latin American countries, and some European countries.

Human and material resources included in the research work

- Research directors
- Coordinating professionals
- Group technicians
- A coordinator in charge of international contacts
- A trilingual secretary:
- Computer projectors for Power Point presentation and video projector
- Computers
- Printer-Scanner-Photocopiers
- Semi-pro digital camcorders
- Videocassette players
- Broad band connections with the Internet

ASSESSMENT ON PREJUDICE (in %)

A) ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

I. The Self-Governed City of Buenos Aires. Out of its 40 districts, the most populated 20 districts have been selected)

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Junior/Senior High School	65	15	20
Higher / University Studies	60	25	15
Interdisciplinary Professionals	55	40	5
Social and/or Sports Clubs	35	60	5
Protective Associations	36	60	4
Workers Unions	38	59	3
Religious Creeds	64	35	1
Security Personnel / Firefighters	21	76	3

2. Cities from the Province of Buenos Aires. Inasmuch as the Province of Buenos Aires is the most populated Province of the Argentine Republic, four towns have been selected.

2.1. City of Azul

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD.%
Junior/ Senior High Schools	38	20	42

Interdisciplinary Professionals	60	25	15
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2.3. City of La Colina

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	70	10	20
Religious Creeds	62	20	18

2.4. City of Carmen de Patagones

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Religious Creeds	82	8	10
Interdisciplinary Professionals	75	20	5

2.5. City of Coronel Suarez

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Protective Associations	67	15	18
Interdisciplinary Professionals	72	20	8
Junior/Senior High Schools	81	10	9

3. Other Argentine Provinces, five other provinces have been selected.

3.1. Province of Mendoza, city of Mendoza

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	55	40	5
Junior/Senior High Schools	50	40	10
Higher / University Studies	46	34	20

.2. Province of Chubut, city of Rawson

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Protective Associations	70	20	10
Higher / University Studies	73	23	4

Interdisciplinary Professionals	73	9	18
Workers Unions	44	47	9

3.3. Province of San Juan, city of San Juan

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	44	40	16
Religious Creeds	72	21	7
Junior / Senior High Schools	78	19	3

3.4. Province of Salta, city of Salta

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Junior / Senior High Schools	48	27	25
Workers Unions	46	33	21
Security Personnel / Firefighters	29	48	23

3.4. Province of Cordoba, city of Cordoba

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	75	21	4
Junior / Senior High Schools	72	11	17
Workers Unions	61	13	26
Social and/or Sport Clubs	62	17	21

4. Seven foreign countries have been selected.

4.1. Brazil

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Social and/or Sport Clubs	80	15	5
Workers Unions	90	7	3
Security Personnel / Firefighters	30	53	17
Interdisciplinary Professionals	76	13	11

4.2. Cuba

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	70	23	7
Junior / Senior High Schools	95	2	3

4.3. Mexico

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Social and/or Sports Clubs	47	26	27
Junior / Senior High Schools	80	13	7
Interdisciplinary Professionals	52	31	17

4.4. Paraguay

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	30	49	21
Junior / Senior High Schools	55	30	15
Protective Association	31	34	35

4.5. Spain

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Social and/or Sports Clubs	85	9	6
Interdisciplinary Professionals	79	14	7
Religious Creeds	50	30	20

4.6. Uruguay

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	74	17	9
Junior / Senior High Schools	78	19	3
Workers Unions	82	11	7

4.7. Venezuela

GROUPS	NO PREJUDICE %	PREJUDICE %	RELAT. PREJUD. %
Interdisciplinary Professionals	70	14	16
Higher / University Studies	90	3	7

CONCLUSIONS

This research, including 10,000 randomized people from different social sectors is aimed at evidencing prejudice at a social level that hinders a sound approach to both the prevention and treatment of some social problems that are on the increase nowadays.

The basic hypothesis is related to the following points, namely:

A) Society's lack of adequate education and information with regard to the problems mental sufferers are facing.

B) The scarce or null participation of social sectors related to the above mentioned problem solving process.

C) The verification –within the Late Modernism historic lapse of time, of a deepening of individualism, a craving for results as opposite to development, a hollow flood of overinformation, and the subordinate genuflexion before the new Golden Calf –i.e. technique, thus resulting in a Late Modernist, mass media-aholic, human being who is no longer a subject because he/she has become an object. All these factors either sterilize or nullify any attempt at a Multitude Society.

The verification of this hypothesis can be observed in the results of this research work when checking up both the prejudice, and relative prejudice levels.

Let us adopt a concept Albert Einstein proposed in the 40s: in the future, all empires will become Knowledge Empires, the successful ones will only be societies who understand the way to generate, as well as protecting knowledge, who look for young people apt at achieving such an aim, and making sure that those young people stay in their countries.

The other countries will keep maintaining their beautiful littorals, churches, mines, and attractive history. Most probably, however, those countries will not keep their own flags, nor their old borders, and not even their development-aimed economic success.