



# **Storytelling in addiction prevention: a basis for developing effective programs from a systematic review**

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# BACKGROUND

The dynamic character of drug problems represents a major challenge that needs to be addressed (EMCDDA, 2018).

Programs that have worked well in one social context have not generated the same results when attempted to be extended to other contexts (Biglan & Hinds 2009; Tobler et al., 2000).

Community psychology approach: Ecological diversity should be taken into account when dealing with the problems of use and misuse of substance (Olson, Bradley, Emshoff, & Rivera, 2017, p. 402).

# BACKGROUND FOCUSING THE REVIEW

## Narrative Communication



Context



Person

### Storytelling

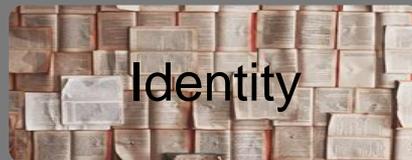


Telling



Stories

### Process change



Identity



Meanings

# OBJETIVES

**To identify the different adopted approaches in research studies that specifically use the storytelling technique (empirical studies covering factors associated with drug use and recovery and interventions that tackle preventive addictions).**



**To determine the bases and strategies that underlie a storytelling-based intervention of a fundamentally preventive nature.**

# **METHODS: SEARCH STRATEGY**

## **Search key terms:**

**Storytelling**

**AND**

**addict\*, drug\*,  
substance abuse,  
tobacco, smoking,  
alcohol\*, drinking,  
cocaine, heroine,  
cannabi\*, MDMA, and  
amphetamine\***

## **Database: ProQuest platform**

- **Nursing & Allied Health Database.**
- **PsycINFO**
- **MEDLINE®**
- **Health & Medical Collection**
- **PsycARTICLES, and Psychology Database**

Peer-review journals

English

Before 1 January 2018

# METHODS: SEARCH STRATEGY

## Inclusion criteria:

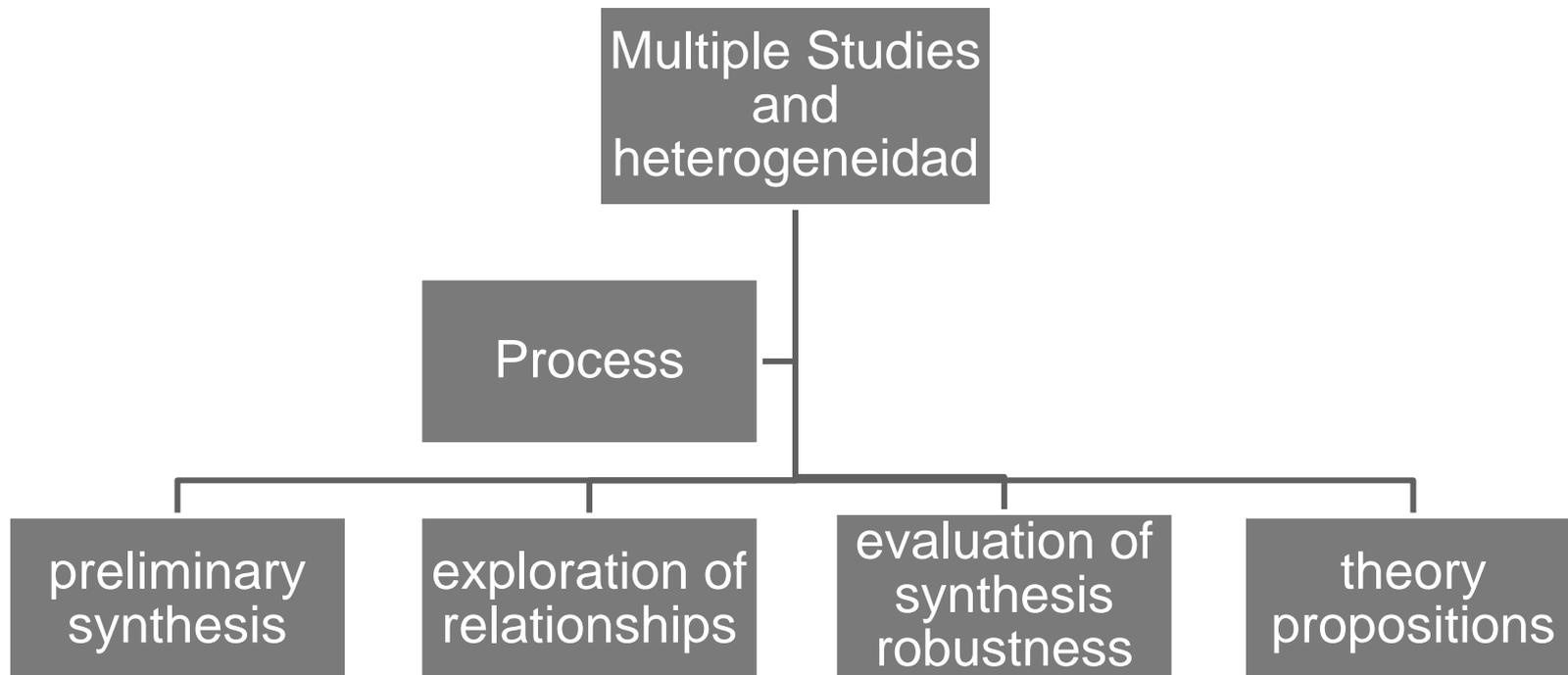
- Risk factor studies;
- Studies that analyze the processes surrounding addiction and addiction recovery;
- Studies on the implementation and effects of intervention.

## Exclusion criteria

- Theoretical reviews
- Commentaries
- Reports, descriptions of techniques and case studies

**All had to clearly identify the storytelling technique and meet the methodological quality requirements of the research.**

# NARRATIVE SYNTHESIS (POPAY ET AL., 2006)



# RESULTS: STUDY SELECTION

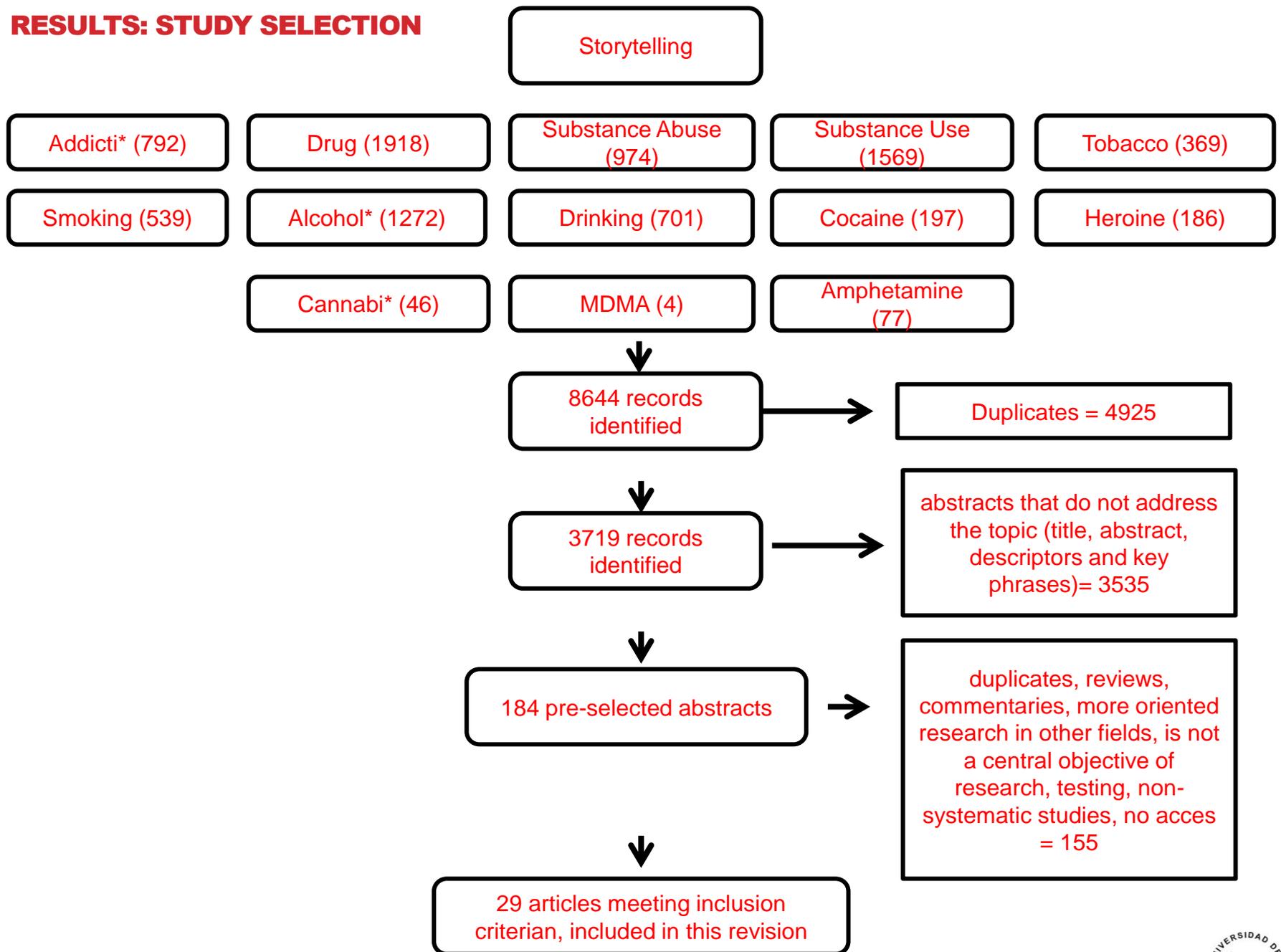


Fig. 1. Flow diagram.

# THEMATIC CATEGORIES



# THEMATIC CATEGORIES II

| Approaches underlying the studies   | Storytelling technique   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction of meanings surrounding consumer practices</li><li>• Narrative persuasion</li><li>• Narratives and processes of change in addiction recovery</li><li>• Narratives and processes of change:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• integrated with other evidence-based programs</li><li>• as core intervention component</li></ul></li><li>• Prevention or intervention culturally adapted</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fictional stories</li><li>• True story construction</li><li>• Stories of experience</li><li>• Stories of support</li><li>• Shared experiences</li><li>• Stories shared in social circles</li><li>• Accounts of experiences in digital storytelling</li></ul> |

# THEMATIC CATEGORIES III

| Methodology  | Context  | Participants /Substance   |
|--|--|---|
| Experimental design<br>Pilot project and evaluation<br>Quasi-experimental design<br>Randomized controlled trial<br>Thematic analysis with focus groups<br>Narrative study<br>Grounded Theory<br>Ethnographic method<br>Community-based participatory research<br>Mixed methods | Schools / High school / College campus<br>Tourist destination<br>Indian reservation / Native communities<br>Urban and rural areas / Rural counties<br>Public housing neighborhoods<br>Homes, service housing or nursing homes<br>Youth-centered community health care<br>Foster care<br>Addiction Treatment Centre<br>Hospital<br>AA meetings / Narcotics Anonymous meetings<br><b>Countries</b> (Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iran, UK, USA) | Teenagers<br>Young people<br>High school students / College students<br>Young tourists<br>Elderly people<br>At-risk groups<br>Youth with risk factors<br>Children from methamphetamine-involved families<br>African American<br>African American women<br>American Indians<br>Alaskan Native youth<br>Marginalized groups<br>AA members / Narcotics Anonymous members |

Result/Effects: Authors' main findings

# INTERCONNECTEDNESS: EXAMPLE I

| Approaches underlying the studies            | Storytelling   | Methodology  | Context / Participants / Substance  | Results / Effects  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Drug interventions culturally adapted</i> | <i>Stories of support</i><br>Andrews et al. (2007)   | <i>Community-based participatory research</i><br>Andrews et al. (2007) | <i>Public housing neighborhoods/ African American women / Tobacco</i><br>Andrews et al. (2007). USA             | Surface structure changes enhanced interest, acceptance and viability, whereas the deep structure facilitated context adaptation and strengthened the study's impact and general efficacy (Andrews et al. 2007). |
|  | <i>Stories of experience</i><br>Haight et al. (2010) | <i>Mixed methods</i><br>Haight et al. (2010)                           | <i>Foster care / Children from methamphetamine-involved families.</i><br>Haight et al. (2010). USA              | Slight improvement in behavior problems among children participating in the intervention (Haight et al., 2010).  |
|  | <i>Fictional stories</i><br>Montgomery et al. (2012) | <i>Pilot project and evaluation</i><br>Montgomery et al. (2012)        | <i>Native communities / American Indian and Alaskan Native youth / Tobacco</i><br>Montgomery et al. (2012). USA | Involving native youth in the intervention (Montgomery et al., 2012).  |

# INTERCONNECTEDNESS: EXAMPLE II

| Approaches underlying the studies   | Storytelling   | Methodology   | Context / Participants / Substance   | Results / Effects   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Narratives and processes of change integrated with other evidence-based programs</i> | <i>Stories of experience</i><br>Leukefeld et al. (2003)  | <i>Experimental design</i><br>Leukefeld et al. (2003)   | <i>Rural counties/ At-risk groups/ Drug use</i><br>Leukefeld et al. (2003). USA                                  | Gaining access to a group of rural people at a high risk for contracting HIV/AIDS (Leukefeld et al., 2003).   |
|   | <i>Accounts of experiences in digital storytelling</i><br>Houston et al. (2011)<br>Cherrington et al. (2015) | <i>Pilot project and evaluation</i><br>Houston et al. (2011)<br><br><i>Randomized controlled trial</i><br>Cherrington et al. (2015) | <i>Hospital / African American / Tobacco</i><br>Houston et al. (2011). USA<br><br>Cherrington et al. (2015). USA | Success relative to gathering narratives to be mapped to behavioral constructions (Houston, 2011).<br><br>Insufficient as an independent intervention (Cherrington et al., 2015). |
| <i>Narratives and processes of change as core intervention component</i>                | <i>True story construction</i><br>Moghadam et al. (2016)   | <i>Quasi-experimental</i><br>Moghadam et al. (2016)   | <i>High school / Students / Drug use</i><br>Moghadam et al. (2016). Iran   | Significant fall in willingness toward addiction among adolescents who participated in the intervention (Moghadam et al., 2016).  |

# APPROACHES UNDERLYING THE STUDIES YIELDED

Constructing meanings that revolve around consumer practices.

Detecting the culturally shared meanings surrounding consumer practices from a generational perspective.

Analyzing their implications for consumption itself.

Considering socially isolated and disadvantaged groups.

Exploring how telling personal and community-based stories are an important part of change processes in mutual help groups

Reconstructing group identity and in reinterpreting shared problems (interpersonal)

Transformative storytelling at community narrative levels

Developing culturally adapted interventions.

Encouraging positive cultural identity.

Developing a culturally sensitive intervention involving disadvantaged groups.

Adding evidence-based interventions with local narrative traditions.

Participants are seen as active producers of the educational content

# PREMISES

**Stories are a gateway to health intervention efforts and particularly when working with marginalized communities**

**Narratives should be based on strengths and capabilities to encourage active and positive development.**

- They follow a clearly cause and effect trajectory.
- It is necessary to consider the role in self-reflection on personal and social identity .
- These stories enable a critical assessment of negative consequences.
- The stories remain tied to the context in which they occur.
- It is necessary to consider the potential injustices that this process entails in marginalized groups.

**Narratives act as motivators that go beyond the intrapersonal impact that the storytelling process itself generates.**

- The process of sharing positive accounts of personal lives in mutual help contexts turns into persuasive stories at an intrapersonal level, an interpersonal level, and at the level of the community's own social structure.

# CONCLUSION

## Limitations:

Using the term storytelling as the only search descriptor, excluding other possible related terms such as narrative communication

Diversity of the selected studies: not exclusively implementation or effectiveness studies

## Future line of research:

Determining the effectiveness of the storytelling-based strategy as a mechanism for change by eliciting the identification with history. This is especially relevant with specific groups (low resources, at risk groups, ethnic groups...) because they enhance their own personal stories of improvement.

Everyone has a history to tell

Thank you!!!

