

**Valencian pioneers of the Psychology of addictions:
academic and professional legacy**
***Las pioneras valencianas de la Psicología de las adicciones:
legado académico y profesional***

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Received: 08/02/2023 · Accepted: 24/03/2023

Cómo citar este artículo/citation: Arteta Molina, D. & Agulló Calatayud, V. (2023). Valencian pioneers of the Psychology of addictions: academic and professional legacy. *Revista Española de Drogodependencias*, 48(1), 60-73. <https://doi.org/10.54108/10038>

Abstract

The following article aims to showcase the trajectory of five leading Valencian women in the field of Psychology of addictions thus conferring visibility to them while paying special attention to their life stories and careers, documenting their main contributions to the area with the aim of claiming their legacy. Qualitative methodology was used based on a semi-structured biographical narrative. The protagonists emphasize that the development of the regional autonomies in Spain paved the way for a better approach to the treatment and prevention of addictions with the organization and creation of specialized care and preventive resources, and greatly enhanced research on the neurobiological bases of addiction. Self-taught, they have never stopped studying the subject and learning about it, and are continually recycling themselves. They believe that health education content must be strengthened and they demand more human and financial resources for research, treatment, prevention and social integration. They consider that at present it would be necessary to influence the prevention of the abusive use of new technologies, the Internet and cannabis among young people, as well as to detect female alcohol consumers who are late in coming to treatment.

Keywords

Gender studies; Historiography; Life story; Qualitative methodology; Psychology History; Psychology Addiction.

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Resumen

El siguiente artículo aspira a poner en valor y visibilizar la trayectoria de cinco mujeres valencianas referentes en el campo de la Psicología de las adicciones, prestando una atención especial a sus itinerarios vitales y trayectorias profesionales, así como documentando sus principales contribuciones al área con el objetivo de dar a conocer y reivindicar su legado. La metodología utilizada ha sido cualitativa a partir de entrevista semiestructurada de relato biográfico. Las protagonistas destacan que el desarrollo de las Autonomías permitió un mejor abordaje del tratamiento y la prevención de las adicciones con la organización y creación de recursos asistenciales y preventivos especializados; y potenció sobremanera la investigación sobre las bases neurobiológicas de la adicción. Autodidactas, nunca han dejado de formarse en la materia y reciclarse continuamente. Creen que hay que reforzar los contenidos en educación para la salud y reclaman más recursos humanos y económicos para la investigación, el tratamiento, la prevención y la inserción social. Consideran que en la actualidad habría que incidir en la prevención del uso abusivo de las nuevas tecnologías e Internet y el cannabis entre los más jóvenes, así como en la detección de las mujeres consumidoras solitarias de alcohol que tardan en acudir a los tratamientos.

Palabras clave

Estudios de género; historiografía; relato de vida; metodología cualitativa; historia de la Psicología; Psicología de las adicciones.

INTRODUCTION

For many centuries, women have been excluded from different areas of society, such as the job market, politics, the world of literature and university academia, among other fields. This exclusion has also been the case in science, where androcentrism and gender biases can be seen, such as when women are not included in studies, the resulting findings are not itemised according to gender or the fact that diseases with a higher prevalence in women are not the subject of research (Magallón, 1998; Valla-Llobet, 2020). Studies on gender and feminism question sexism and androcentrism which exclude women as the subject matter and object of knowledge (Castañeda, 2008; Harding, 1987). In the field of addictions gender has largely been

ignored as a specific factor of influence (Gómez, 2006; Meneses, 2001; Romo, 2010), and, for example therapy treatment, in terms of design, development, orientation and implementation tends to focus more on men's needs than on women's (Arostegui & Urbano, 2004; Arteta, 2020; Ortiz & Clavero, 2014; Quintero et al., 2018).

According to the Catalanian researcher, Carme Valls-Llobet (2016), women were invisible for health sciences until the end of the 20th century. There is a certain degree of agreement in different studies when pointing out that women have been invisible in the field of Psychology (Barberá & Cala, 2008; Bohan, 1995; Sos Peña, 2018), with the history of Psychology fundamentally being a so-



cial construct by men and for men (García Colmenares, 2011; García Dauder, 2010; Giménez, 2007). Unlike their male counterparts, women have been systematically excluded from the historiography of this discipline. Their contributions have not been sufficiently acknowledged, nor have they been given the same visibility as men. This is despite Psychology being a field of knowledge and profession with a large presence of women ever since its origins until the present day (Aguado & García, 2020; Winler et al., 2021).

According to María del Carmen Giménez Segura (2007) in her study on women in Psychology, several factors need to be considered, among which the following are of particular note: they start University late, there are obstacles for access to academic and professional circles, there are difficulties in balancing family and work life due to the gender roles or “professional trespassing” in a traditionally male-dominated branch of science. There is a paradox concerning women in the field of Psychology, since, although they make up the majority of people working and studying this branch of science, this is not reflected in terms of academic or professional persons of reference (Gruber et al., 2021; Magaña et al., 1998), and this has led to them being published less, cited less, securing less funding for subsidised projects, having less probabilities of being represented in the more eminent roles in the field, their salaries are not comparable to those of their male counterparts, and there is a lack of appreciation for the number, quality and diversity of the contributions made by women (González-Sala et al., 2022; Gruber et al., 2021; Russo & Denmark, 1987; Winkler et al., 2001).

We therefore agree with Rosa Sos Peña (2018) and Silvia García Dauder (2003, 2019) in that it is important for the history of Psychology, and more specifically in the field of Health Psychology and addictions (Becoña & Oblitas, 2003) to highlight the contributions of these women pioneers without ignoring the social context that influenced their academic and professional careers (Ferrer & Bosch, 2012). In the case we are dealing with in this paper, the geographical scope of reference is the city of Valencia in Spain, and its metropolitan area. Valencia is the regional capital city of the Region of Valencia, a territory (historical nationality) whose regional government (*Generalitat Valenciana*) has been strongly committed to treating addictions ever since the return to democracy in 1978, through specific care and prevention policies and resources (Cano & Mayor, 1998; Cano, 2006; Hernández, 2001) within the framework of the National Drugs Plan. Some of the most noteworthy pioneer laws are Law 3/1997 of 16th June, of the Generalitat, on Drug Addiction and other Addiction Disorders, and Legislative Decree 1/2003 (Official Journal of the Region of Valencia 4473) of the Regional Council.

In short, the following text pursues two goals. Firstly, to showcase and give visibility to the careers of five Valencian women who have been references in the field of Psychology of addictions, with special emphasis on their life stories and professional careers. The second goal is to vindicate their legacy and to document their main contributions to people with drug addiction problems, the design and implementation of specialist services, and training and research in this field.



MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study is based on a sociocultural research model in Social Sciences, which takes the social and historical context as the reference to consider the perceptions of the subjects, their worlds of meaning, cultural practices and their methods of social interaction (Apud & Romani, 2016). Therefore, a qualitative methodology was employed, based on the words by the subjects themselves, whether this was in writing or spoken, and the meaning that they give to them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987). Furthermore, this type of methodology means we are able to discover and reveal the experiences of these women in the field of addictions or in any other scope of society. Hence, it is therefore widely used in different disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology, and also in studies on gender and feminism (Castañeda, 2008). Accordingly, the life story interview as a qualitative technique has been in use in studies on feminism for a considerable length of time (Beorlegui, 2019; Bordeñas, 1997, Pujadas, 2000), and it allows us to give a voice to the women who have been working with and contributing to drug abuse and addictions in the city of Valencia.

The participants in this study were mostly born between 1943 and 1957 in the city of Valencia; and those who were born in other cities in Spain, moved to the regional capital when they were still young, when their parents came here to work, and have subsequently spent most of their lives in the Region of Valencia. There were two main selection criteria for the participants in the study. Firstly, to have been born in the city of Valencia, or having spent most of their professional or academic careers at institutions in the city (a minimum of 20 years). Secondly, they were to be aged around 60

or over. Academics, researchers and professionals of reference were all considered. The biographical narratives were obtained through in-depth interviews and a semi-structured guide covering topics such as: demographic and family aspects, education and working career, obstacles and difficulties encountered during their working lives, and challenges and perspectives regarding the future of the field of addictions.

When the participants had been selected, they were contacted individually by e-mail and by telephone in order to explain the nature of the study to them and to arrange the day, time and place for the interview to be held. The field work was carried out between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. Some of the interviews were carried out at their workplaces in the city of Valencia, and others at the University of Valencia facilities (*Palau de Cerveró and the Laboratori de Ciències Socials-Social Lab*). 18 women were identified for interviews, but 2 of them declined to take part due to health issues. Consequently, 16 interviews were carried out. Women who have spent their lives working in the field of different types of addiction were interviewed for this paper within the framework of the project "Valencian women pioneers in the field of addictions": Psychology (5) Medicine (4), Social Work (2), Biochemistry (1), Politics (1), Nursing (1), Sociology (1) and Occupational Therapy (1). Therefore, a diverse range of scopes has been covered, including treatment, basic research, prevention, public management and social inclusion, among others. Five women related to the field of Psychology were specifically considered for this paper, either because they sat a Psychology degree or because they specialised in this branch of science, whose objective is the study of human conduct in different environments and societies.



The interviews lasted for approximately an hour and a half to two hours. Permission to record the information on a voice recorder during the interviews was requested. On the day of the interview, the participants furnished documents from their day, such as press articles and news, academic certificates and university degree certificates, their curriculum vitae and representative photographs, all of which helped with the analysis and drafting of their life stories in the most comprehensive, objective way possible.

RESULTS

The life stories, careers, education and researching of five Valencian women who are references in the field of psychology of addictions are described as follows.

Leonor Cano Pérez

She was born in a small village in the La Mancha region of Spain in a family that worked in trade, catering and culture. She graduated in Teacher Training from the University of Valencia in 1975 and in Psychology in 1981, and ever since then she has worked in teaching until the present day. In 2006 she completed her Ph.D at the University of Valencia, with her thesis: "Addictions and Health. The Current Situation of Research in Spain".

Her working career has been with three public administration departments of the Valencian Regional Government: Valencia City Hall, Valencian Council and Valencian Regional Government. She started her career in the field of addictions in the eighties, as a Psychiatry Assistant in the Department of Alcoholism and other Drug Addictions at the Psychiatric Hospital in Bétera. Be-

tween 1981 and 1983 she worked at the "Urban Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Centre" (CURT), which at the time was run by the Provincial Valencian Association of Support for Drug Addiction (APROVAT). This centre accounted for a new approach to work in this field in Spain. It was proposed by Dr. Rafael Herrero Lorenzo, and was based on a social and family rehabilitation model closer to the drug addict and in the same context where consumption leading to their addictions had begun. While there, she was responsible for assessing, diagnosing and designing the psychological treatment to be followed with patients. This was all carried out in coordination with the multidisciplinary team already working there, and was the birth of what would eventually become the Psychological Treatment for Addictions Protocol.

Likewise, she also collaborated in pioneer actions on prevention at schools and in communities at state level with the psychologist Enrique Berjano Peirats, considering biological, clinical, psychological, social, cultural and environmental aspects. In 1986 she set up the "Drug Addiction Guidance Service for Minors" (SOD), which once again was a pioneer at both national and regional levels on the prevention and rehabilitation in the care of addicts, families and professionals. In 1993 she held the position of head of the Drug Addiction Coordination Service of the General Directorate of Drug Addiction (1995/1996). Following that, between 1997 and 2005 she ran the first Section and Service respectively, of Mental Health of the Social Welfare Council. She returned to the General Directorate of Drug Addictions between 2005 and 2014, where she worked in the Information Systems and restarted coordination and monitoring of UCAS (Addictive Conduct Unit) and UAS (Alcoholism



Unit) resources in the Region of Valencia, and also the Community Prevention Units (UPC) in the Region of Valencia.

Parallel to this, she has been (and still is) linked to the University of Valencia. She was an associate professor in the Basic Psychology Department of the Psychology Faculty between 1996 and 2001, teaching Psychology students the subject of “Basic Psychological Processes and Addictions (theory and practical) for the first time. She is currently a professor on the Permanent Training Master’s Degree on the Prevention and Treatment of Addictive Conducts. Likewise, she has collaborated in many research projects on Psychology and addictions in the Region of Valencia, which have been published in conjunction with other renowned researchers. Some of them are as follows: The book “Education and Drugs in the Region of Valencia” was published in 1986 in conjunction with Enrique Berjano Peirats. “Treatment on the Prevention of Drug Addiction” (1993); “Professional Profiles of Psychologists” (1998); “Consumption of Cannabis, Drugs, Education and the Law” (2019). Likewise, she has written on the subject of addiction and women: “Women and Drugs” (1994) and “Drugs in Women” (1995). She noticed that along with the consumption of alcohol among women, the use of psychotropic drugs (to relax, sleep, treat anxiety, etc.) also needed to be considered, since it is women who most consume these drugs, and in most cases without a medical prescription. She has also been in charge of designing specific materials (guides and leaflets, etc.) on the prevention of drug abuse. She has been an expert member of several technical committees and work groups. Furthermore, she prepared the “First Psychological Profile in Drug Addiction” of the Official State Society of Psychologists in 1996,

dealing with the criteria to be followed when Psychologists are treating addictions. She has also taken part in many national and international congresses, symposiums, conferences and meetings on the subject of addictions and mental health.

Ultimately, she has held some very relevant posts over her intense, long-lasting professional career, many of them in the form of newly created positions related to addictions and mental health. In relation to her clinical speciality, she has always been concerned that professionals working in this field should be given the necessary training for treating addicts and their families, leading her to run ongoing training programmes in different professional areas. She was in charge of planning and managing the centres and services for addictions and mental health. She established criteria for setting up work teams, defining the admission protocols and monitoring work and information systems. In addition to all the above, she has been the driving force behind the “Revista Española de Drogodependencias” [Spanish Drug Addiction Magazine] for over three decades, a scientific journal of reference where she is a member of the editorial committee and editor in chief. Likewise, she has been the President of the Asociación Española de Estudio en Drogodependencias (AESED) since 2004.

Teresa Fernández March

Born in Valencia in 1950. She took a degree in Psychology at the University of Valencia and graduated in 1978. She trained on psychoanalysis at the Psychiatric Hospital of Bétera. At that time the Alcohol and Other Drug Addictions Services played a relevant role in the field of addictions in the Region of Valencia. In addition to providing drug ad-



diction treatment, it was also used for training purposes since Valencian universities did not provide training on addictions or mental health. From then on, she permanently trained at the Campo Freudiano Seminary and the Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis.

Her career in the field of addictions began at the Psychiatric Hospital in Bétera in 1974, initially in the Rehabilitation Service. In 1978 she moved to the Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Service, and it was there where she started to work with drug addiction. She worked there for ten years, between 1978 and 1988.

She also set up the pioneer centre for long-term internment known as “Casa Lanza”. Teresa Fernández was appointed coordinator and care manager of this rural treatment community sponsored by the Valencia Council, located in a country home in the hamlet of Los Cojos in Requena, 90 km from Valencia city. This centre left its mark on its protagonists for life, and accounted for a huge step forward in treatment in that period. It was closed in 1988 when other urban treatment and rehabilitation and mental health centres were opened, owing to which the team split up with most of the professionals who worked there joining the mental health area of the public healthcare system, as was the case of Teresa.

As for her published literature, her recent contribution to the “La nau dels bojos: Una odissea de la desraó” (2022) catalogue is particularly noteworthy. It was written in conjunction with the occupational therapist and professor Ana Hernández Merino. This catalogue reflects on the sociocultural fundamentals that can be found in the “fertile association of psychoanalysis and the artistic vanguard” and more specifically on the “Casa Lanza” treatment community, under

the title of “Casa Lanza: una experiència pionera en el tractament de les toxicomanies” [Casa Lanza: A pioneer experience in the treatment of drug addiction].

Elena Ibáñez Guerra

Born in the Principality of Asturias to a large family, she was the oldest of 10 siblings. She became interested in Medicine during her youth after reading some pseudo-psychoanalysis books such as “The Story of San Michele” and “The Magic Mountain”. She started studying her degree in medicine at the University of Valladolid, but later moved to the University of Valencia to specialise in Psychiatry. She was a pioneer in academic institutionalisation of Psychology at the University of Valencia.

She was awarded a chair in Personality Psychology at the University of Seville, and later moved to the University of Valencia where she set up the Personality, Evaluation and Psychological Treatment Departments, which she directed for a long time. She has directed around twenty theses and has been awarded five six-year research terms by ANECA [Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation]. Among her main lines of research, Personality Psychology and Psycho-oncology are perhaps the most noteworthy. Her interest in addictions is reflected in her work on personality disorders. More specifically, she was interested in the relationship between personality and addiction, and how addictions work differently depending on the type of personality. Likewise, she was also interested in how certain personality disorders can trigger the consumption of drugs and she proved that the borderline personality disorder is nearly always associated with addictions and nightlife.



She continues working on the treatment of cannabis and designer drugs abuse, meaning that she mostly works with young people. People with borderline personality disorder have high comorbidity with other behavioural disorders such as eating, gambling, or more recently addictions to new information and communication technology (ICT). She believes that the problem of addictions among young people is directly related to nightlife (discotheques, binge drinking outdoors) where in addition to imitation behaviour inherent to teenage years, what tends to encourage the consumption of drugs is the feeling of emptiness, impulsiveness, loss of future expectations “a society that considers youth to be a kind of universal panacea that cannot be frustrated”. She also points out that new technologies have undermined the authority of parents, and that certain studies in the education system are outdated and lacking in practicality. In her opinion, the solution to the problem of drug abuse not only lies in kicking the habit of drug consumption, but rather the fundamental matter is for addicts to “find themselves”, so that they can become capable of developing professionally and learning to love themselves during this process.

On the other hand, she does not agree with the typology currently used to name or classify hard or soft drugs, and in her opinion, Psychiatry should not only provide pharmacological or psychiatric treatment to people who have severe mental disorders or other illnesses, but it should also see it as an opportunity to educate the population on subjects related to the prevention of using certain substances, through alternative leisure and free time activities, and healthy lifestyles. Along these lines, she believes that Spain could engage more in Health Education.

Finally, she points out that she share a considerable period of her career with her husband, also a professor of Social Psychology, namely Prof. Julio Seoane, who was recently appointed “Corresponding Academician” by the “Reial Acadèmia de Medicina de la Comunitat Valenciana” [Royal Academy of Medicine of the Region of Valencia].

Carmina Palau Muñoz

Born in Valencia in 1957, she has always been linked to the associations and cultural life of L'Eliana (Camp de Turia). She studied Psychology at the University of Valencia, and graduated in 1980. She soon specialised in the field of addictions. Her thesis discussed the analysis of brain function in people with cocaine addictions, compared to people without any substance addictions. It was performed using the neuro-imaging research technique when she was working at the Behavioural Addiction Unit (UCA) in Paterna, where she has spent most of her working life.

Her career in the field of addictions started off at the Red Cross Drug Addiction Care Centre in the Patraix district of Valencia. She took part in the creation, finding the venue and setting up this centre during a difficult period of time when a large part of public opinion and neighbours were against it. She was in charge of the psychological treatment of the patients who went there to treat their addictions. She spent around a decade at the centre, meaning she was able to train on the most serious addictions in a period when the use of heroin was predominant. This period also coincided with the first cases of HIV. At the same time the first maintenance programmes with methadone and LAAM began.



She was later hired by the Valencian Regional Government to set up the Addictions Unit in La Coma-Paterna, where she worked until her retirement in 2022. This coincided with the first Valencian law regulating all matters related to these problems. Furthermore, for the first time, this law recognised addictions as an illness that was to be treated under the Spanish Public Healthcare System. It was a pioneer law that would later become a benchmark for the rest of the autonomous regions of Spain.

Carmina Palau was in charge of assessing, diagnosing and providing psychological treatment for persons with drug abuse problems, mainly from different vulnerable groups in society. She worked at the Paterna health centre and also in the preferential action district of La Coma. One of her contributions to the field of addictions was the adaptation of the Matrix Model to public healthcare. This outpatient treatment consists of kicking the habit of addiction to substances such as alcohol, cocaine and marijuana. It stands out as being a comprehensive treatment method, which not only focuses on the psychological side of addictions, but also includes intervention by doctors of medicine, whilst taking sociocultural adaptation into account.

She also took part in the creation of the “UCA Jove Cita Exprés” and “UCA Dona” programmes. The latter specifically focused on working with women who were unable to kick their consumption habits. Likewise, she combined her work at UCA with her associate professorship in the Department of Personality, Evaluation and Psychological Treatment at the Psychology Faculty of the University of Valencia. She lectured on the Matrix Model in the University Master’s Degree in Research, Treatment and Drug Addition Related Illnesses, also at the Uni-

versity of Valencia. Ultimately, highlighting her contributions to the study of addictions at UCA-Paterna is worthy of mention. She carried out different research projects there with Dr. Amparo Sánchez, her friend and specialist in public health and treatment of addictions, where they worked together on several projects related to the consumption of drugs such as heroin, cocaine, alcohol and others.

Among her most noteworthy publications is her contribution to the paper “Cannabis and cannabis derivatives consumption: myths, post-truths and challenges” in the chapter on “Outpatient treatment for minors and adolescent consumers of cannabis and their families” (2019). She also co-authored the book “Manual of Addictions for Psychologists Specialising in Clinical Psychology Training” (2011), published by Socidrogalcohol.

Carmina Palau included the gender perspective in her daily work, and also researched this subject, observing that women initially came for treatment on their own, whereas men would come for treatment accompanied by their partners or other relatives. She also observed that some women put off going for treatment, because among other factors, they were worried about their children being taken away from them, and they were therefore at a later stage of addiction when they eventually did seek treatment. The results of these studies were presented at different conferences on drugs and addictions, both nationally and internationally.

For Carmina, addiction is defined as a mental illness and manifestation of the addiction is related to a compulsive search for the substance even when knowing that it is harmful for one’s health. In short, Carmina



Palau feels she has been fortunate to work in this field because it has allowed her to apply her knowledge of clinical psychology in such a wide field. She points out that psychologists working with addictions see all the mental disorders related to mental health and addictions.

Marta Rodríguez Arias

Born in Oviedo, she moved to Valencia as a young girl. She studied medicine at the University of Valencia, and was the first member of her family to graduate from university. In the final years of her degree, she realised that she did not really want to practice Medicine, which is why she chose to specialise in laboratory work in her Resident Internship. She had always been passionate about research. At that time she combined her Resident Internship with her Ph.D. thesis in the Psychobiology Department. Therefore, this was her first contact with what would become her place of work a few years later.

Her Ph.D. thesis addressed the Psychology of addictions. She worked with animal models to analyse aggressive behaviour during withdrawal from opiates. She proved that animals showed aggressive behaviour when withdrawal symptoms were induced by withdrawing morphine. In humans it is related to the irritability or extreme anxiety which is evident in the withdrawal symptoms of heroin addicts. This thesis was one of the first to deal with this subject, and it also paved the way for future generations of researchers to study the effects that drugs have on the bodies of people who use them.

Marta Rodríguez joined the Psychobiology Department of the University of Valencia in 1994 as an associate professor, and

became a full professor in Psychobiology at the Faculty of Psychology before becoming the chair. She teaches Psychopharmacology on the Master's Degree in Research, Treatment and Associated Illnesses in Drug Addiction. She is currently a member of the team responsible for Psychology at the State Research Agency, the Addiction Disorder Network at the Carlos III Health Institute (now called RIAPAD), and has been awarded 4 Prometheus Projects for groups of excellence in the Region of Valencia, whilst also carrying out R&D&I projects non-stop since the 90's.

Insofar as her research activity is concerned, her main line of research is the neurobiology of drug addiction, particularly focusing on cocaine and alcohol. She has analysed the vulnerability of the brain to developing drug addictions in adolescents. Similarly, she has researched the effects of social stress, in this case bullying at school and mobbing in adult life, which are the main causes of drug consumption relapses. These areas on which she has spent most of her research are perhaps her most relevant contributions to the field of addictions.

She is currently working on another line of research, through which she has published several papers on the study of diet as a factor that modulates the development of addictions, focusing on the study of high fat diets and ketogenic diets. In her latest studies, she has started to research the development of resilience to situations of stress, where she has observed the traits of resilient subjects compared to those who are susceptible to the effects of stress and who develop an increase in their consumption of alcohol or cocaine. The objective of these projects is to design environmental or pharmacological treatment programmes that are capable of



enhancing a resilient response to social stress in animals. The ultimate goal is to transfer the results obtained in animals to the prevention of drug consumption in human beings.

Most of her scientific papers have been published in English in prestigious international journals indexed by the Journal Citation Reports, although she has also published papers in Spanish and Valencian. She has published a total of around 200 articles, and has directed 12 Ph.D. theses. The following articles are among her most noteworthy publications: *Effects of repeated social defeat on adolescent mice on cocaine-induced CPP and self-administration in adulthood: integrity of the blood-brain barrier*, published in *Addiction Biology* in 2017, in which she proved how exposure to school bullying weakened the blood-brain barrier and increased the reinforcing effects of cocaine in adolescent mice; *Oxytocin prevents the increase of cocaine-related responses produced by social defeat*, published in the journal *Neuropharmacology* in 2019, in which she proved how administering oxytocin can reverse the effects of social stress on cocaine consumption, and *Vicarious Social Defeat Increases Conditioned Rewarding Effects of Cocaine and Ethanol Intake in Female Mice*, published in the journal *Biomedicine* of the same year, in which for the first time she proved that vicarious social stress in females is capable of causing an increase in cocaine and ethanol intake, similar to that observed in male animals.

She regularly collaborates with universities and national and international research centres, such as the Príncipe Felipe Research Centre, the Pompeu Fabra University, *Università degli Studi di Salerno* (Italy), Monash University (Melbourne, Australia) and the University of Buenos Aires.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has given us first-hand knowledge about some exceptional psychologists who paved the way in a difficult context, where a lot, if not everything, still remained to be done in the field of drugs in Valencia. At that time, in the seventies and eighties last century, addictions were treated in psychiatric hospitals. Addicts were considered outcasts engaging in vices and there was no legal framework that regulated or recognised the problem of addictions as an illness. Therefore, one of the first conclusions drawn from the interviews, which all the interviewees agree on, is that through re-establishing democracy, the development of Autonomous Regions in Spain and Valencian self-governance brought about an improvement to how this issue was tackled along with promoting the prevention of drug abuse through organising and setting up specific drug prevention care centres.

Although all of these women studied either Psychology or Medicine at the University of Valencia, to a large extent they were mostly self-taught in the field of addictions, and have continued to train and recycle themselves throughout. Insofar as their families influencing their career choices, the decisive contributions by them are well worthy of mention, since they put across the values and importance of education, reading and culture in their lives in a socio-historical context where ethical, political and moral discourse assigned women to a secondary role in the home and bringing up children, subordinate at all times to men.

In regard to their contributions to the field of addictions, they were pioneers in joining and exercising their professions in



places that were male-dominated. Despite having somewhat limited social and professional visibility, their contributions to building and developing the Psychology of addictions cannot be refuted. With a view to the future, all of them agree about the need to commit to and reinforce the content of health education, particularly among the younger groups of society. They maintain that people with drug abuse and addiction problems are still stigmatised, and therefore more human and economic resources are required for treatment, research, prevention and social reinsertion. They also believe that one of today's challenges is to reach out to women, particularly middle-aged women, who are solitary consumers of alcohol or cocaine, and who are ashamed of admitting to their problem owing to gender stereotypes. Another aspect they draw attention to is the abusive use of social media and the internet, cannabis and newly emerging substances among young people.

In short, we believe that articles such as this one can help to give visibility to many women researchers and professionals who are unfairly overshadowed, and who have not had the recognition they deserve simply because they are women. We would like their contributions to be more widely known in the academic, research and professional world. We would also encourage other women in different geographical and cultural areas to highlight their human and professional careers in the Psychology of addictions, and we hope to further our study to cover the entire scope of the Region of Valencia. One way or another, we have described the legacy of some exceptional women for the future historiography of this discipline.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The interviews on which this paper is based are a part of the project "Valencian women pioneers in the field of addictions", subsidised by the "Servei d'Adiccions (PMD/UPCCA-València) de la Regidoria de Salut i Consum de l'Ajuntament de València".

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors hereby state that there have been no situations of conflicting interests.

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