

**Title:** Idiographic Family Assessment Method for Substance Users

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**Abstract:**

The Idiographic Family Assessment Method for Substance Users was designed with the aim of generating theory related with the identification of family systemic factors associated with substance use in Mexico. The generation and systematization of knowledge on this topic is relevant for prevention, clinical practice and research.

The Method was applied in an outpatient counseling center for drug users in a city in central Mexico. Fifteen families were included in the study, totaling 34 participants. From a poststructuralist stance, a bridge was created between clinical practice and science, through an idiographic inquiry. The Method can be utilized with other populations. The research methodology was predominantly qualitative, phenomenological, and interpretative, with grounded theory for content analysis of in-depth interviews, and complementary quantitative techniques, including a self-report instrument. Findings subsumed: Structure, Dynamic, and transgenerational Family History aspects for each case. All dimensions were interrelated, and differences in perception between the user and his family member(s) were identified in most cases.

The elaboration of categories allowed for the analysis of each particular case in the studied dimensions and, on the other hand, the identification of categories that are repeated in the group of studied families. Thus, it is an idiographic study, which in turn generated initial theory in a group of substance users and their families.

Some of the risk factors found were: absent fathers and insensitive mothers, denial of problems, family and/or marital dissatisfaction and intergenerational transmission of lack of affection. As for the protective factors found, the following stand out: present and sensitive parental figures, emotional wellbeing, fidelity in both parents, and intergenerational tradition of strong bonding. Protective factors were rooted in Mexican traditional family values. Some hypotheses were formulated: 1) The existence and interrelation of the factors identified in the three dimensions



of the Method suggest the appearance of symptomatic behavior, such as substance use; 2) The greater the number of factors identified within the three dimensions of the Method, the greater the possibility of the emergence of substance use behavior; and 3) Without identifying the underlying factors related to substance use, such behavior is likely to remain and evolve into chronicity, suicide attempts, violence, and/or legal problems.

**Biography:**

María de Lourdes De la O Chávez, Ph.D. B.S. in Clinical Psychology. Specialty, M.S., Supervisor and Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Psychotherapy. Clinical and systemic research. She has been a clinical practitioner for over 40 years and worked in the Marriage and Family Therapy field for 35 years. Her practice has taken place in public and private institutions; mainly at *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social* (IMSS, by its Spanish acronym), the main health and social security system in Mexico and Latin America.

Further, her work has been related to challenging clinical populations, such as psychiatric, terminal illnesses, homeless, and addictions patients -both at individual and systemic levels. She has also been involved in policy-making as a Coordinator and as Advisor at a national level in public institutions in Mexico. She has been a speaker at national and international fora. She has been a professor, as well as Supervisor in Marriage and Family Psychotherapy programs for graduate students in several states in Mexico.