

# Chapter 1

## Also, Victims of Expectations: The Double Bias Complexity of Drugs and Sexuality

**Sílvia Ribeiro**

*Universidade Lusíada do Norte, Portugal*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This literature review explores the intricate relationship between substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, and victimization, emphasizing a multifaceted victimological perspective. It delves into research on how expectations regarding sexuality impact and are impacted by sexual dysfunction and drug consumption, affecting mental and emotional well-being. The cycle of initial relief from drugs turning into dependency worsens sexual difficulties and emotional distress. This interplay strains interpersonal relationships, causing communication breakdowns and emotional distance. The comprehensive perspective advocates for empathetic interventions, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach that considers physical and psychological aspects. It stresses open communication and support systems, with trauma-informed approaches crucial for breaking the cycle of victimization and fostering meaningful recovery. Recognizing and addressing these intersections promotes healthier relationships, both with oneself and others.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

A recognition of the existence of societies without drugs is inevitable. Consumption patterns vary according to cultural, social, heritage, and economic contexts. Since the 1990s, there has been a notable increase in research focusing on substance

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dependence (Ferros, 2011). The abuse of alcohol and drugs has emerged as a central issue in Western society, impacting diverse populations (Konvalina-Simas, 2012).

The repercussions of drug consumption manifest directly or indirectly in organic pathologies, such as hepatitis, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), or multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. They also extend to psychosocial pathologies of considerable magnitude, including crime, prostitution, or delinquency. In today's society, the prevailing pursuit of success at all costs, coupled with the shortcomings in civic and health education, exposes citizens increasingly to stimuli for engaging in addictive risk behaviours (Patrício, 2014).

The intricate interplay between substance abuse and societal challenges significantly impacts various aspects of individuals' lives. One pivotal facet affected is sexuality—a central dimension of the human condition. It encompasses issues of sexual relations, gender identity, sexual role and orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction (WHO, 2019). The experience of sexuality is intricately woven into the broader fabric of an individual's well-being.

Furthermore, the experience of sexuality is shaped by a combination of psychological and organic conditions. These include factors such as the nature of the relationship, aspects related to the partner, medical considerations, and individual vulnerability factors. Additionally, family and peer groups wield substantial influence over the sexual behaviour of their members (Matos, 2010). Recognized as a sphere of human behaviour with profound significance, sexuality varies in importance from person to person, emerging as both a challenging and fascinating individual concern.

The impact of drug use on human sexuality is diverse, often manifesting through observable and objective negative effects. This influence on sexual response involves various components and is influenced by multiple factors, including biological, psychological, and sociocultural elements (Gómez & Cartón, 2006).

While the consequences of drug use on sexuality are undeniably significant, researchers like La Pera and his team emphasize the importance of examining the reciprocal influence. In their work, they argue that it is equally, if not more crucial, to assess how sexual dysfunctions influence behaviour, health decisions, and drug consumption (La Pera et al., 2008a).

The potential role of expectations as a cognitive mediator and predictor of behaviour has been studied extensively across various stages of human experience. In the context of psychoactive substance use, expectations refer to individual beliefs that develop before the actual experience. These beliefs are held by an individual regarding the positive and negative effects of consuming the substance in a specific manner (Labbe & Maisto, 2011). What do people anticipate gaining from the consumption of illicit substances? What expectations exist regarding the impact that drug consumption can have on the expression and experience of human sexuality, as well as on individuals and their overall well-being?

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