The level of well-being in families attending Al-Anon groups and its effect on the attention of their alcohol dependent relatives

Abstract
The aim of this study was to investigate the effects on alcohol-dependent families attending Al-Anon groups to help them manage and overcome this situation, raising their quality of life, and that of their alcoholic relatives. The design of the study was with a qualitative approach; the interpretative framework used was of the symbolic interactionism and the method of the Grounded Theory. The study sample included 10 relatives of people dependent on alcohol, which came to the Al-Anon Groups of 4 municipalities from the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. From the qualitative analysis of the ten interviews, three main themes emerged:

a. The meaning of alcoholism in the family
b. The process followed by the family
c. Family support and the recovery process in the Al-Anon mutual aid group.

Results show that it would be more difficult to deal with the situation if they were without the support of the Al-Anon Group. Well-being in the alcoholic relatives was associated with positive interpersonal relationships with others in terms of feeling integrated, accepted, having people who contribute to their problem. Participants reported that the experiences shared in the group gave them tools, to better understand and support their family member’s dependent on alcohol, which increased the quality of life both in them and their family members.

Keywords: well-being, alcohol dependence, families, Al-anon groups

Introduction
The suffering of a chronic disease such as alcohol dependence does not only affect the person who carries it, but also the overall family. The suffering experienced by the principal relative (wife, mother, sister, and daughter) of the alcohol’s dependent can be identified and perceived by him. It is possible that initially he denies or hides the existence of the problem for not knowing how to front facing the feelings of fear, guilt, shame, resentment and contempt that the behavior of the dependent family member generates in them because of their form of consumption. In the relationship of the dependent person with his family, there is a continuum of affective feelings that can go from positive to negative, which translates into stress, moral and emotional suffering, and even the destruction of relationships and communication within the family nucleus. In these families, the alcohol dependence of their family member symbolizes the unknown, the ambiguous, the dangerous, the suffering, the guilt, the chaos, the anxiety and the stress. This led us to conduct a study with the purpose of knowing the level of well-being in relatives of alcohol-dependent attending Al-Anon groups and the effects on the attention of their alcohol dependents relatives. The design of the study was with a qualitative approach, the interpretative framework used was the symbolic interactionism and the method used was of the Grounded Theory.

Methods
The study sample was form with 10 relatives of people dependent on alcohol, which come to the Al-Anon Groups of the municipalities of Matamoros, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo and Victoria in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, in which ten women participated. The data collection was through a semi-structured individual interview. The ages of the interviewed women ranged between 22 and 54 years old, in relation to the education level, one had primary level, four had secondary level, three had high school, one had technical career, and one had a bachelor’s degree. As to the type of activity they developed, five of them reported working outside the home and five mentioned dedicating themselves to housework. In relation to the parental relationship with the person dependent on alcohol, six were wives, three mothers and one the dependent’s aunt.

Results
From the qualitative analysis of the ten interviews, three main themes emerged with their respective categories: Meaning of alcoholism in the family, which identifies three categories:

i. Living in an alcoholic family
ii. Recognizing the disease, and
iii. Children with alcohol dependence

The process followed by the family that leads to Al-Anon, which identifies five categories:

a. Feelings or emotions
b. Attitudes
c. Losses or consequences
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**Discussion**

In general, it can be argued that the women in the study currently find themselves at a relevant level of psychological well-being, in contrast to some time ago. If they were without the support of the Al-Anon Group it would be more difficult to deal with the situation. Well-being is associated with positive interpersonal relationships with others in terms of feeling integrated, accepted, having people who contribute to their problem. In revising their situation, they were able to give social coherence to their lives through the understanding that they are not the only ones in this situation, that they do not have to be ashamed, and that in addition, one can leave or overcome it, if they do the things in a suitable form. They also pointed out that all the experiences shared in the group gave them tools to better understand and support their family member’s dependent on alcohol, which increased the quality of life both in them and in their family members.

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**Conflict of interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

**References**


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