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Research initiatives at Takiwasi Center on drug addiction, mental health and traditional Amazonian medicine

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Introduction

Takiwasi Center is a not for profit private institution located in Tarapoto, Peru, working for more than 25 years for the treatment of people confronting problems of drug addiction and mental health integrating the Traditional Amazonian Medicine (TAM) with modern approaches including psychotherapy [1]. Takiwasi acts as a therapeutic community authorized by the regional health authority and as a research center recognized by the National Council for Science, Technology and Technological Innovation. In the present work we present the main research project results with particular emphasis on those related with ethnomedicine and phytotherapy.

Method

Internal data system management [2] and other informatics tools available at Takiwasi were consulted in order to acquire qualitative and quantitative information on the main research activities performed overtime on drug addiction, mental health, and herbal medicines by internal personnel and visiting scholars. Major publications including peer reviewed articles published by the center's affiliated were also recorded and discussed.

Results / Discussion / Conclusion

Despite the relatively recent creation of this center and its limitations in terms of personnel and resources dedicated to research programs, the overall number of activities, projects, and outputs clearly highlight the international dimension and the multidisciplinary approach of the research performed at Takiwasi. Typical initiatives well fit into the field of ethnomedicine and phytotherapy, where the use of the psychoactive brew known as Ayahuasca, a complex formula composed by *Banisteriopsis caapi* (Spruce ex Griseb.) Morton ([Malpighiaceae](#)) most often complemented by *Psychotria viridis* Ruiz & Pav. (Rubiaceae), represent only one of the many herbal TAMs used within the health service programs of the center. Such therapeutic practices have been analysed and discussed by many researchers having different backgrounds including psychology, biochemistry, pharmacy, anthropology, music therapy between others. This data indicates the necessity for a



multiple perspectives approach to describe this complex therapeutic protocol that is based on the integration of modern medical tools with the ancient knowledge of traditional Amazonian healers. However, many scientific questions still wait for answers and additional efforts are needed for further advances especially in the area of drug addiction, mental health and herbal TAMs.

Bibliographic References

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