

## Approaches to the issue of drugs in schools in Brazil: an integrative review

Abordagens sobre a temática das drogas nas escolas do Brasil: uma revisão integrativa

Enfoques al tema de las drogas en las escuelas en Brasil: una revisión integradora

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**How to cite this article:** Approaches to the issue of drugs in schools in Brazil: an integrative review. Rev Enferm Atenção Saúde [Internet]. 2025 [access: \_\_\_\_]; 15(1):e20257616. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18554/reas.v15i1.7616>

### Abstract

**Objective:** This article was prepared from an Integrative Review about the health education about drugs in brazilians schools debate, with the aim of systematize contributions to future projects and programs. **Method:** The review was carried out in three major scientific dissemination portals, in the period between 2007 and 2021. It was possible to survey a sample of twelve productions on the subject. **Results:** As a result, it was found that the school is considered a privileged space for carrying out the debate on drugs. However, cross-sector partnerships are necessary. The paradigms that guide these actions and the most effective methodologies to carry out this debate with the students were also analyzed. **Conclusion:** It was found that interventions already exist, however, there is a need for better structuring, with long-term interventions that involve the entire school community.

**Descriptors:** Health education; Drug education; Health promotion; Intersectorality.

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## Resumo

**Objetivos:** Este artigo foi elaborado a partir de Revisão Integrativa acerca do debate da educação em saúde sobre drogas nas escolas brasileiras, com o objetivo de sistematizar contribuições para futuros projetos e programas. **Método:** A revisão foi realizada em três grandes portais de divulgação científica, no período entre 2007 e 2021. Foi possível levantar uma amostra de doze produções sobre o tema. **Resultados:** Constatou-se que a escola é considerada um espaço privilegiado para a realização do debate sobre drogas. No entanto, parcerias intersetoriais são necessárias. Também foram analisados os paradigmas que orientam essas ações e as metodologias mais eficazes para realizar esse debate com os estudantes. **Conclusão:** Verificou-se que já existem intervenções pontuais, porém, percebe-se a necessidade de melhor estruturação, com intervenções a longo prazo e que envolvam toda a comunidade escolar.

**Descritores:** Educação em saúde; Educação sobre drogas; Promoção da Saúde; Intersetorialidade.

## Resumen

**Objetivo:** Este artículo fue elaborado a partir de una Revisión Integrativa sobre el debate sobre educación en salud sobre drogas en las escuelas brasileñas, con la intención de sistematizar aportes para futuros proyectos y programas. **Método:** La revisión se realizó en tres importantes portales de divulgación científica, en el período comprendido entre 2007 y 2021. Fue posible relevar una muestra de doce producciones sobre el tema. **Resultados:** Como resultado, se constató que la escuela es considerada un espacio privilegiado para la realización del debate sobre las drogas. Sin embargo, las alianzas intersectoriales son necesarias. También se analizaron los paradigmas que guían estas acciones y las metodologías más efectivas para llevar a cabo este debate con los estudiantes. **Conclusión:** Se constató que las intervenciones ya existen, a pesar de que existe la necesidad de una mejor estructuración, con intervenciones a largo plazo que involucren a toda la comunidad escolar.

**Descriptorios:** Educación para la salud; Educación sobre drogas; Promoción de la salud; Intersectorialidad.

## Introduction

The connection between education and health has been a feature of Brazilian society since the early 20th century. During this period, there have been several initiatives to promote health in the school environment. However, these interventions were limited, with disciplinary, vertical characteristics, and based on a biomedical paradigm.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, two intersectoral public policies are important in this articulation: the

National Health Promotion Policy (PNPS) and the School Health Program (PSE), both from 2007. The PNPS has contributed to expanding the perspective on the population's health by considering social issues and demands of the territories.<sup>2</sup> The PSE, on the other hand, seeks a permanent rapprochement between health and education based on a more solid intersectoral articulation.<sup>3</sup>

Schools are a key space for critical



reflection on important issues for society. Thus, the topic of drugs permeates the daily life of schools and is commonly raised as an issue for debate. It is a cross-cutting—and intersectoral—issue of extreme social relevance that needs to be addressed in these spaces with the aim of collectively developing alternatives to address this situation. However, the school community itself often lacks the knowledge to address the issue, requiring training initiatives and institutional partnerships.<sup>4</sup>

The issue of drugs has been a contentious one between the prohibitionist and anti-prohibitionist paradigms, which has intensified since the 1960s. It is necessary to understand these concepts from the perspective of the economic, ideological, and moral interests that underlie them.<sup>5</sup> The prohibitionist paradigm uses a medical, legal, and moral framework to support the defense of drug prohibition. Harm Reduction (HR)—the anti-prohibitionist model—is an ethical, clinical, and political care strategy that considers the autonomy and choices of individuals, which may or may not incorporate abstinence as a clinical approach. Thus, HR understands the issue of Psychoactive Substance (PS) use in its complexity and historical context, respecting the time and decisions of individuals.<sup>6</sup>

Given the above, the objective of this article is to provide a state-of-the-art

overview of how drug-related approaches have been implemented in Brazilian schools, given their social relevance and the potential of these institutions for this debate. To this end, a systematic literature review was conducted through an integrative review. The aim is to gather insights for structuring projects and programs on this topic.

## Methodology

According to authors<sup>7</sup>, the Integrative Review enables a broad analysis of the literature on a given topic, contributing to reflections on the phenomenon based on already consolidated knowledge and experiences. The Integrative Review considers methodological rigor in the bibliographic search, making the research process clear and accessible to the reader, which will be presented below in stages as defined by some authors.<sup>8,9</sup>

In the first stage, the following research question was developed: "How is the issue of drugs addressed in schools in Brazil?" This question guided the searches and guided the analysis of the results. The research interest is to understand how schools have addressed this issue and how interventions, whether through studies or specific programs, guide reflections on the topic within the school community. Therefore, the descriptors were defined using the search key.



**Table 1:** Search key

(Educação OR Escola OR "Educação em saúde" OR "Promoção da saúde" OR "Promoção da Saúde Escolar" OR "Promoção da Saúde na Escola" OR "Ensino Fundamental e Médio") AND ("Transtornos Relacionados ao Uso de Substâncias/prevenção & controle" OR "Transtornos Relacionados ao Uso de Álcool/prevenção & controle" OR "Redução de Danos" OR Drogas OR "Uso de Drogas") AND ("Ação Intersetorial" OR Intersetorialidade OR PROERD OR "Programa Educacional de Resistência às Drogas da Polícia Militar" OR "Programa Saúde na Escola" OR "Programa de Saúde do Escolar" OR "movimento social").

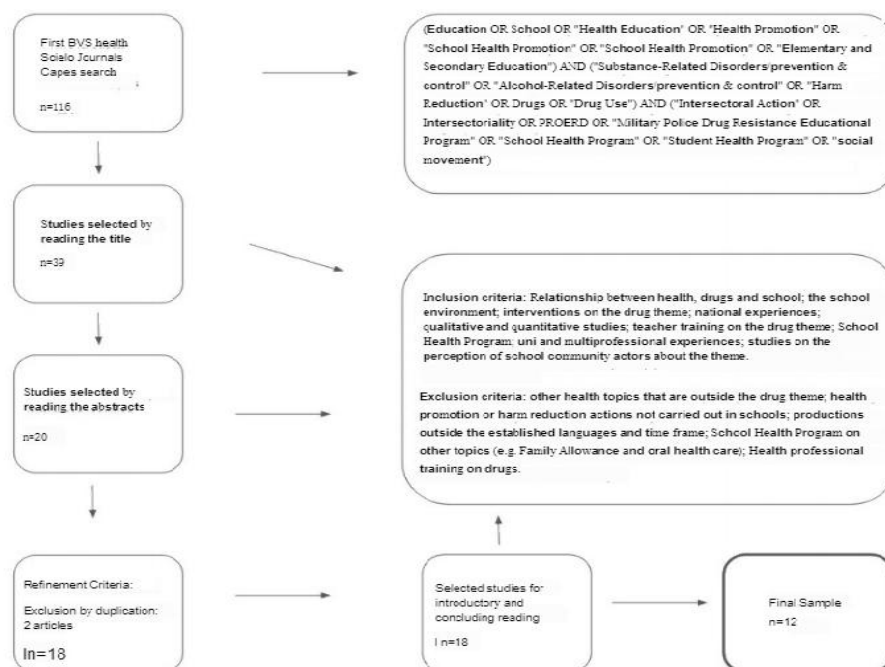
This search keyword was applied on October 19, 2021, to three portals that bring together scientific productions from various fields: BVS health, Scielo, and Portal Periódico Capes. Due to the limited scientific production on the topic, it was decided not to restrict the databases to reach more publications. The time frame used was January 2007 to September 2021. This choice was made due to Decree No. 6,286<sup>2</sup>, which established the PSE at the national level. For this reason, it was also decided to use only national articles. Texts in Portuguese, English, and Spanish were accepted, and productions of the type articles, books, theses, dissertations and reviews.

In the second stage, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. In

addition to the aforementioned local-temporal framework, inclusion criteria included publications related to the topic of drugs and their relationship to the school environment, as detailed in Table 2. Exclusion criteria included publications outside the established languages and local-temporal framework that were not related to the topic.

After applying the criteria described, 116 studies were obtained. After reading the titles, abstracts, introductions, and conclusions, and removing any duplications, 12 studies were identified—10 articles and two full-text master's dissertations—that met the established criteria, as shown in the flowchart below.



**Table 2.** Integrative Review Flowchart with search key and inclusion/exclusion criteria

To analyze the selected articles, a synthesis matrix was developed, the subject of the third stage of the integrative review. According to authors<sup>8</sup>, the synthesis matrix assists researchers in organizing data and categorizing information extracted from the selected studies. Furthermore, the matrix protects researchers from potential errors and is an important tool for writing the Integrative Review. Therefore, the matrix was constructed with the following items:

Study Objective, Research Subjects, Methodology, and Results.

In addition to the synthesis matrix, we worked with five previously stipulated categories of analysis, as can be seen in Table 3. In this way, we intended to organize the topics addressed by the studies, as well as produce inferences and comparisons about them within the same theme.

**Table 3:** Categories of Analysis

1. *Intersetorialidade*; 2. *Prevenção da Saúde/Promoção da Saúde*; 3. *Proibicionismo/Antiproibicionismo*; 4. *Abordagem Emancipatória/Abordagem Tutelar*; 5. *Potências e Desafios do debate sobre drogas nas escolas*.

## Results

In the fourth stage of the integrative review, a critical analysis of the obtained and categorized results was performed. This resulted in Table 4, which presents the studies arranged chronologically by title,

portal, database and journal of publication, synthesis matrix, and categories of analysis. This allowed visualizing the main aspects of the studies, analyzing them, and drawing inferences about the topic under study.

**Table 4:** Analysis of integrative review studies by title, year, bibliographic base, synthesis matrix and analysis categories

Title/year	Portal/base Magazine	Synthesis Matrix: 1. Objective of the study 2. Research subjects 3. Methodology 4. Results	Analysis Category
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<p>1. Adaptations to the Unplugged#Tamoju into pilot program for health promotion and drug prevention in Brazilian schools. 2019<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>VHL/Scielo LILACS - <i>Public Health Science</i></p>	<p>1: Recommendations and adaptations of the Unplugged program to the Brazilian context in schools in São Paulo and Santa Catarina. 2: teachers, managers, health professionals and students. 3: Document analysis 4: chronic intersectoral disarticulation, power relations, and hierarchy within the school. Improved student-teacher interaction, and the restoration of the social function of the health and education professions. Highlights the importance of health promotion and critiques prohibitionism.</p>	<p>Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Prohibitionism/Anti-prohibitionism; Strengths and challenges of the debate on drugs in schools</p>
<p>2.Perceptions of the school community about the implementation of the unplugged program in schools. 2018 <sup>11</sup></p>	<p>Scielo -<i>School and Educational Psychology</i> April 2018, Volume 22</p>	<p>1: Perceptions of the school community about the Unplugged program based on its strengths, difficulties and potential. 2: students, teachers and education technicians from public schools. 3: focus groups by category. 4: Improved school coexistence. Training and support for professionals to implement the project. Support from school administration. Difficulty managing time and organizing activities within the school curriculum. Lack of support materials. Understanding how to prevent use.</p>	<p>Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Strengths and Challenges of the Drug Debate in Schools</p>

3. Challenges of Intersectorality in the Implementation of a Drug Abuse Prevention Program. 2017 <sup>12</sup>	BVS - Scielo LILACS - Psychology Index - Periodicals - Psychol. sci. prof.	1: Perceptions of health and education professionals and managers about the challenges of intersectoral coordination for the implementation of the Unplugged program. 2: education and health professionals and managers from three schools and three UBS in Florianópolis. 3: semi-structured interviews and focus groups. 4: Approximation of health and schools, intersection of political issues, personalization of intersectoral relationships, difficulties in incorporating intersectorality into daily service practices, and excessive work demands that prevent professionals from engaging in new projects. Criticism of prohibitionism.	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Prohibitionism/Anti-prohibitionism
4. Alcohol and drugs in adolescence: work process in the school health program. 2017 <sup>13</sup>	BVS/ LILACS - Rev. bras. growth develop. hum	1: Perception of UBS/PSE nurses on the use of SPA by adolescents. 2: UBS nurses working in the PSE in Juazeiro do Norte/CE. 3: Semi-structured interviews 4: The importance of the interaction between health and education to prevent PAS use among adolescents, the involvement of guardians in this process, and the limited training of professionals to address this issue. A more participatory approach is needed, encouraging adolescent autonomy.	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Emancipatory Approach/Guardianship Approach; Strengths and Challenges of the Debate on Drugs in Schools
5. Association between drug use and social and health aspects in adolescent students. 2017 <sup>14</sup>	BVS/ LILACS - BDENF - Nursing - Salvador	1: Association between drug use and social and health aspects in adolescent students. 2: school students on the outskirts of Salvador/BA. 3: quantitative cross-sectional cohort study, application of questionnaire 4: Association between PAS use and increased sexual activity, early employment, lower education, lack of religious	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion

		<p>practice, and problems with school and friends. These students were 4% more likely to develop these problems than non-users. Highlights the importance of PSE to reduce use and the problems considered associated with it. Reports no causal association with cross-referenced data. No association was observed between family breakdown and PAS use. Non-user students also rarely use condoms, leading to the conclusion that age is a more important variable than substance use.</p>	
<p>6. The school in the face of students who use alcohol and drugs: what do teachers say? 2016 <sup>15</sup></p>	<p>VHL/LILACS -<i>Psychosocial research and practices</i></p>	<p>1: Perception of teachers from Minas Gerais schools about drugs.  2: public school teachers.  3: sociodemographic questionnaire and focus groups.  4: Lack of intersectoral cooperation, lack of teacher training on the topic, and when there is, it is isolated or not targeted at teachers. A feeling of being disenfranchised when it comes to imposing limits on adolescents. The family as a protective factor against the use of PAS. Attempts to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the topic at school. Difficulty dealing with students who use PAS and stigmatizing users as violent.</p>	<p>Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Prohibitionism/Anti-prohibitionism; Strengths and Challenges of the Debate on Drugs in Schools</p>
<p>7. Factors associated with the implementation of drug use prevention programs in schools. 2016 <sup>16</sup></p>	<p>Scielo - Journal of Public Health 2016, Volume 50</p>	<p>1: Analyze the implementation of drug use prevention programs in schools.  2: Directors and coordinators of schools in São Paulo.  3: online self-administered questionnaire  4: It was found that 42.5% of the schools evaluated had a drug use prevention program. The chances of implementing these programs increased with the administrator's tenure at the school and</p>	<p>Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Strengths and Challenges of the Drug Debate in Schools</p>

		innovative educational initiatives. Challenges: lack of time for teacher training, lack of materials, and balancing other subjects. Association between the approach to drug and sexuality issues. Concept of drug use prevention.	
8. Everyday representations of young people about the periphery. 2016 <sup>17</sup>	Scielo - Brazilian Journal of Nursing Dec 2016, Volume 69	<p><b>1:</b> Understanding young people's representations of the periphery, for the construction of media education programs about drugs.</p> <p><b>2:</b> young people from public schools on the outskirts of São Paulo</p> <p><b>3:</b> Emancipatory action research and thematic workshops on "media drug education for young people".</p> <p><b>4:</b> Contradictory representations of the role of the state (absent to guarantee social rights and present through the police for social control in the periphery) regarding drug traffickers, who abuse their power by exploiting poverty but offering jobs to the most vulnerable youth. The participants' proposal for specific spaces for drug use, which would protect distributors, consumers, and residents from violence, is interpreted by the study's authors as a reflection of ideological influences, in this case those stemming from prohibitionism, which mask the causes of this violence.</p>	Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Prohibitionism/Anti-Prohibitionism; Emancipatory Approach/Telitory Approach
9. Promoting the health of adolescent students according to the guidelines of the school health program: an experience in a municipality in southern Brazil. 2015 <sup>18</sup>	VHL - LILACS, BDENF - Nursing Curitiba	<p><b>1:</b> Identify school health promotion through PSE guidelines in a municipality in southern Brazil.</p> <p><b>2:</b> Schoolchildren, staff and teachers from the state school participating in health education workshops.</p> <p><b>3:</b> Convergent Care Research (PCA) semi-structured interviews.</p> <p><b>4:</b> Drugs and violence emerge as categories during group</p>	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Prohibitionism/Anti-prohibitionism; Emancipatory Approach/Telitory Approach

		discussions with adolescents. The relationship between violence, drug use, and family is discussed. The group expressed concern about the consequences of drug use for their own bodies and society, citing domestic violence and robberies in the community. They provided information on legal and illegal drugs. They demonstrated detailed knowledge of drug trafficking and consumption. They cited drug addiction and drug trafficking violence in communities as aspects of vulnerability for adolescent health.	
10.Vulnerabilities and access to health care in adolescence from the perspective of parents. 2014 <sup>19</sup>	VHL - LILACS, BDENF - Nursing -Rev. Resea. (Univ. Fed. State Rio J., Online)	<p><b>1:</b>Parents' perception of vulnerabilities and needs for access to healthcare during adolescence in Contagem/MG.</p> <p><b>2:</b> Parents of teenagers from municipal schools.</p> <p><b>3:</b>Semi-structured and self-administered questionnaire.</p> <p><b>4:</b>76.6% of the research subjects pointed out the risk of alcohol and tobacco use as the main factors of vulnerability to adolescent health and it was understood as important to address the issue in schools.</p>	Health Prevention/Health Promotion
11.Survey on the use of alcohol and other drugs and related vulnerabilities of students in public schools participating in the school health/health and prevention in schools program in the city of Florianópolis. 2012 <sup>21</sup>	Scielo - Health and Society Sep 2012, Volume 21	<p><b>1:</b>Quantitative survey on drug use by students associated with social and behavioral variables.</p> <p><b>2:</b>students from public schools in Florianópolis/SC who participate in the PSE/SPE.</p> <p><b>3:</b>Self-administered structured questionnaire.</p> <p><b>4:</b>Alcohol was used by 30.1% of participants, tobacco by 20.1%, marijuana by 7%, cocaine by 1.3%, and crack by 0.6%. Students who use drugs are also those who skipped more classes, got into more fights, were more sexually active, and reported taking greater risks when it came to HIV/AIDS. Family is</p>	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Strengths and Challenges of the Debate on Drugs in Schools

		important as a factor influencing PAS use and protecting against it.	
12. Perceptions and attitudes of public and private school teachers towards the topic of drugs. 2010 <sup>22</sup>	CAPES Journals - Scielo - <i>Interface</i> - <i>Communication, Health, Education</i> [online], vol. 14, n. 34	<b>1:</b> Teachers' perceptions/attitudes about drugs. <b>2:</b> elementary and high school teachers in São Paulo. <b>3:</b> Semi-structured interviews. <b>4:</b> Teachers do not consider themselves prepared to address the topic with their students due to a lack of information, skills, or interest, requiring the help of other professionals. The importance of training focused on didactics to address the topic. They obtained information about drugs through reading and personal experiences. They perceive a lower risk associated with legal than illegal drugs. They consider environment and socioeconomic class as risk factors. They see themselves as role models for their students. They consider students uninformed and curious about the topic. The importance of imparting scientific information on the effects and consequences of drugs. They recognize the role of schools in prevention and its difficulties, requiring good materials, investment, and ongoing collaborative work open to people who delve deeper into the subject. Prevention of drug use.	Intersectorality; Health Prevention/Health Promotion; Strengths and Challenges of the Debate on Drugs in Schools

**Source:** Own elaboration

Following the integrative review methodology, the fifth stage aimed to analyze the main aspects systematized by the synthesis matrix and categories of analysis in order to understand how the topic has been addressed by scientific productions.

It is noteworthy that, of the total studies selected, 83% were scientific articles and 16% were master's dissertations.<sup>14 18</sup>

It should be noted that, in 100% of the selected studies, schools were considered a privileged space for discussing drugs with



students. This finding is of paramount importance because, although drug use remains a taboo subject in our society, especially among adolescents, the need to address it in schools is understood.

In Brazil, reactionary proposals are being debated, such as the School Without Parties Project, whose objective is to restrict the topics covered in schools. This is Bill No.º867/19<sup>22</sup>, which restricts teachers from discussing political, ideological, or religious issues in the classroom, even allowing students to film and report them. The drug issue permeates social and political life and, if misunderstood, can easily be classified as "drug advocacy," embarrassing teachers and the school itself. Therefore, this first point demonstrates the proposal's lack of technical and scientific basis and the setback it could represent for this agenda.

Another important finding was that 33% of the studies mentioned the PSE<sup>2</sup> or a similar project at the municipal level<sup>13, 14, 18, 20</sup> and 25% mentioned the Unplugged Program.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> The latter, a European program for drug use prevention in schools, has been adapted for several countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In Brazil, it was named #Tamojunto and implemented in three municipalities in southern and southeastern Brazil (Sao Paulo/SP, Sao Bernardo do Campo/SP and

Florianopolis/SC), with the support of the universities UNIFESP and UFSC.<sup>10</sup>

It's worth noting that both are intersectoral strategies and have been fundamental in addressing the issue of drugs in schools. Therefore, it's important to strengthen them so that their actions become increasingly broad, continuous, and widespread throughout the region.

Regarding the research subjects, it was observed that 50% of the studies were directed at students<sup>10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 20</sup>, 42% at teachers<sup>10, 11, 15, 18, 21</sup>, 33% at other education technicians<sup>11, 12, 16, 18</sup>, 25% at school managers<sup>10, 12, 16</sup> and health professionals<sup>10, 12, 13</sup> and, finally, 8% at health managers<sup>12</sup> and those responsible for students.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that there were studies in which more than one group of research subjects was addressed.

Regarding the methodology, 58% of studies had a qualitative approach<sup>11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21</sup>, while 42% were quantitative<sup>14, 15, 16, 19, 20</sup> and there was also one study of documentary analysis.<sup>10</sup> Among the quantitative studies, 100% used self-administered questionnaires and, in the qualitative studies, more diverse approaches were observed, such as semi-structured interviews (30%), focus groups (23%), action research (7%) and Convergent Case Research (PCA) (7%).

It is worth noting that, among the quantitative studies that used self-administered questionnaires, 16% analyzed the prevalence of PAS use among adolescents in association with behavioral and social aspects.<sup>14,20</sup> A caveat regarding this type of study is in order. While it is important to understand which drugs are most commonly used by adolescents, especially for developing health promotion and harm reduction strategies, this type of study may end up reinforcing certain stigmas associated with adolescents who use PAS, such as violent behavior, poor academic performance, and other negative aspects. These associations disregard the complexity of drugs as a social phenomenon and do not allow for an in-depth analysis of other social aspects present in the lives of these individuals, such as psychosocial vulnerability, family disruption, territorial dynamics, and even issues in the school environment. It is worth noting Santos's caveat<sup>14</sup> that these associations do not constitute a cause-and-effect relationship.

Regarding the categories of analysis, it was observed that 66% of the studies addressed the issue of intersectorality.<sup>10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21</sup> These studies highlighted the importance of addressing the issue of drugs in adolescence intersectorally, especially through the articulation between health and education.

25% of the studies recorded the main challenges for intersectorality, namely: chronic intersectoral disarticulation, distance between health and school spaces, overlapping political issues, the personalization of intersectoral relationships, and the difficulty of involving professionals in other projects due to excessive demands in their daily work.<sup>10, 12, 15</sup>

The Prevention and Health Promotion category was covered in 100% of the studies, each with distinct approaches. Sixty-six percent of these studies discussed the importance of preventive and health promotion actions that address the issue of drugs in schools as a complex issue requiring coordinated strategies and actions, including biopsychosocial aspects.<sup>10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20</sup> However, 33% of the studies identified a tendency to address the issue from the perspective of preventing the use of drugs<sup>11, 13, 16, 21</sup>, which differs from the proposal for preventing harmful use and is closer to a prohibitionist conception.

Specifically regarding the prohibitionism/anti-prohibitionism category, 42% of the studies<sup>10, 12, 15, 17, 18</sup> discussed the "war on drugs" paradigm as it relates to the issue of drugs in schools.<sup>10, 12, 17, 18</sup> Only one study<sup>15</sup> did not discuss it directly; however, it presented the consequences of prohibitionism as a hindrance to discussing drugs in schools. In a study conducted with

teachers, an author<sup>15</sup> cites illegal drug trafficking in schools as an impediment to addressing these issues with students, especially those who are users due to fear of reprisal. Considering the universe of studies produced on the topic, only 42% addressing prohibitionism indicates little involvement in a broader reflection that considers the social aspects of the drug issue, to the detriment of a more individualized approach to the issue. In a study<sup>23</sup>, the author proposes that drug use is determined by the relationship between three dimensions: the drug used, who uses it, and in what context (drug, set, and setting). By including context in the analysis and, consequently, broadening the perspective on the discussion, it is possible to understand the greater or lesser social risks for drug users.

In the Emancipatory Approach/Tellectory Approach category, it was observed that only 25% of the studies addressed this topic.<sup>13, 17, 18</sup> A study<sup>13</sup> carried out with nurses highlighted the importance of constructing interventions that stimulate adolescent participation and autonomy, while other authors<sup>17, 18</sup> presented the protagonism of adolescents in the production of media material on the topic of drugs.

Drug studies must consider young people's knowledge and reflections so they can share their experiences, address their

issues, and create a safe space for peer exchange within the school environment. Often, the researcher or professional promoting the study can simply act as a facilitator, encouraging and guiding them through discussions, fostering their ideas. Authors<sup>24</sup> emphasize that peer education is a strategy that enhances youth empowerment, valuing the exchange of experiences and ensuring greater horizontality in relationships within the school community.

Finally, 50% of the studies<sup>10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21</sup> presented significant reflections and contributions on the topic, which covered the category "Strengths and Challenges" of the debate on drugs in schools. Some authors<sup>15, 21</sup> point to the difficulty teachers have in dealing with students who use drugs, while others<sup>10, 11</sup> indicate improved coexistence in the school environment through programs guided by Health Promotion that address this issue, revealing the positive effects of this type of initiative. Furthermore, it was pointed out that these programs restore the social function of education and health professionals<sup>10</sup>, which makes maintaining these actions in schools essential.<sup>15, 16, 21</sup> For those involved in such research, these actions, when isolated and disjointed, produce less impact and transformation in the daily school routine.

Another topic present in some of these studies was the need for training and support

for education professionals/teachers<sup>11, 15, 16, 21</sup> and health professionals<sup>13</sup> to address the issue of drugs in schools with adolescents. Only one study addressed the training of health professionals, which does not mean that they require less training or support to carry out these activities, but that it may be important to conduct further studies with these professionals in order to understand their main challenges in addressing the issue of drugs in schools.

In addition to training, the importance of support from the school's own management for carrying out these activities was mentioned, especially regarding the adequacy of time in the school curriculum for carrying out such activities and providing adequate support material.<sup>11, 16, 21</sup> Finally, the family was identified in 42% of the studies as a protective factor for young people on the subject of SPA use<sup>13, 14, 15, 20, 21</sup>, leading to the understanding of the need to bring those responsible for this debate closer to the school community.

## Discussion

In the sixth and final stage of the integrative review, a synthesis of the knowledge obtained and recommendations for future research were carried out.

All studies considered schools to be a key space for debate on drugs, highlighting the importance of intersectoral projects, such

as the School Health Program (PSE) and the Unplugged #Tamojunto Program, which encourage and support debate on drugs in schools.

Regarding methodology, it is important to highlight studies that link substance use to negative behaviors and reinforce stigmas associated with users. First, they create a false analogy that drug use necessarily leads to violent behavior or neglect of school, without considering the type of substance, its effects, dosages, and circumstances of use. Furthermore, they individualize the issue, disregarding social aspects of that reality, such as family structure, support network, territorial dynamics, subjectivities, and the structure of the school itself and its curriculum, which often make it unattractive or unattainable for the student to remain there.

The review demonstrated that students were emphasized in the research, which is a positive finding considering that in our society, they don't always have a voice to speak about their own reality. The approach to other stakeholders in the school community (teachers, education technicians, and administrators) highlights the importance of promoting this debate in the school environment and the need to consider different perspectives in this construction. Overall, it would be most beneficial for future research to seek to involve the entire



school community, including administrators, teachers, and technical staff.

Given the limited emphasis on health managers, health professionals, and students' guardians in studies, there is a need to allow them greater participation in drug research to consider their beliefs, concepts, and implications for discussing the topic in schools. Health managers often lead the planning and implementation of health promotion activities in schools, and the fact that they carry out these activities does not guarantee that they are engaged and prepared for them. The same is true for health professionals, compounded by excessive workloads and other adverse conditions imposed on them by their daily work routines. Guardians are those closest to adolescents' realities, exerting significant influence on their lives and, constantly, on the school community. Therefore, it is essential to understand how these individuals perceive the approach to the topic of drugs with adolescents.

### Final considerations

The studies analyzed demonstrated the power of intersectoral actions in the debate on drugs in schools, as well as the need to improve these interventions, expanding them territorially and promoting their continuity. Health Promotion was identified as a primary strategy for leading the debate

on drugs in schools, facilitating closer ties between the health and education sectors. However, attention should be paid to studies that limit prevention to general drug use rather than harmful drug use, thus aligning the discourse with a prohibitionist approach.

Studies must address the drug phenomenon not only as a biological and individual issue, but also as a reflection of the relationship between the individual, the drug, and the context of life. The social consequences of drug prohibition must be considered, as must discussions about illegal drug trafficking, armed violence in the territories generated by the "war on drugs," and the lack of qualified information on the subject.

The study also highlighted the need for further studies on student protagonism and autonomy in the topic of drugs in schools. It is no longer viable for the debate on drugs to be conducted in a top-down manner, without ensuring students have a voice and a leading role. They need to participate in this process so that the debate relates to their reality and has a greater chance of making sense in their lives. Students often have prior knowledge on this topic, but there are also questions that can be addressed in schools by providing protected spaces and open dialogue.

Studies on the topic of drugs in schools have provided excellent



contributions, drawing on practical experience, to shed light on this still highly controversial debate in our society. This integrative review allowed these findings to be systematized in an organized manner, facilitated the production of a state-of-the-art study on the topic of drugs in schools, and sought to contribute to academic production and the proposal of intersectoral strategies at the interface between health and education on this topic.

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RECEIVED: 05/25/24

APPROVED: 06/19/25

PUBLISHED: 07/2025

