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## Conceptions and treatment of substance-use disorders, according to traditional Amazonian medicine

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Traditional medicines take an increasingly important role in western health care systems, specifically for chronic problems that resist common treatment methods, such as substance use disorders. In this context, traditional Amazonian medicine has been applied by the Peruvian Takiwasi Center for Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation since the 1990s, combining such traditional treatments from the Amazon with conventional western psychotherapeutic modules. We employed a multimodal research approach to assess therapeutic potentials of this treatment, namely by asking practitioners of traditional Amazonian medicine about their conceptions of substance use, disorders and about its treatment, as well as by quantitatively assessing therapeutic effects and mechanisms on a sample of substance use patients getting treated at the Takiwasi Center. First results of the qualitative study concerning Amazonian conceptions and treatment of substance use disorders will be presented. We collected data from a sample of 13 practitioners of traditional Amazonian medicine that have extensive experience with substance use patients. Interviews yielded a range of different views with regards to the conceptual understanding of substance use disorders but tended to converge on the Amazonian methods that can alleviate such ailments. A majority of practitioners consider particularly the so called *Dietas*, -dietary retreats in the rainforest using plant remedies and specific nutritional/behavioral restrictions - an efficacious traditional Amazonian method for treating substance use problems.

### Biography

Ilana Berlowitz is investigating traditional Amazonian medicine and its therapeutic applications in the context of substance use disorders in the pursuit of a PhD in Psychology at the unit of Clinical and Health Psychology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. She is conducting this research in collaboration with the Takiwasi Center for addiction treatment and rehabilitation in Tarapoto (Peru), the University of Neuchatel (Switzerland) and the University of Zurich/ETH (Switzerland). Her Doctoral project is funded by a Doc.CH Bursary of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

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