Abstract
This cross-sectional multi-centre study explored how family members and friends of illicit drug users perceived protective and risk factors, treatment facilities and policies and laws regarding illicit drug use. Family members and friends of illicit drug users were recruited in 10 urban health care outpatient units in 7 Latin American countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico) to complete a questionnaire. The majority of the respondents chose psycho-social factors over genetic or biological explanations as causes of drug problems. Respondents felt that families and governments were responsible for preventing drug problems. Church/religious institutions were most often mentioned in the context of accessible treatment. When asked about access to treatment facilities, the majority said that there were not enough. Shame about drug use, cost, and limited treatment options were most often cited as barriers to treatment.

Keywords
Street drugs, substance-related disorders, risk factors, protection, family, friends, health services accessibility, Latin America, multicenter study.