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A social support measure for family members of problem substance users: Initial reliability and validity findings

Toner, P., & Velleman, R. (2011). *A social support measure for family members of problem substance users: Initial reliability and validity findings*. Poster session presented at Society for the Study of Addiction Annual Conference, .

Document Version:
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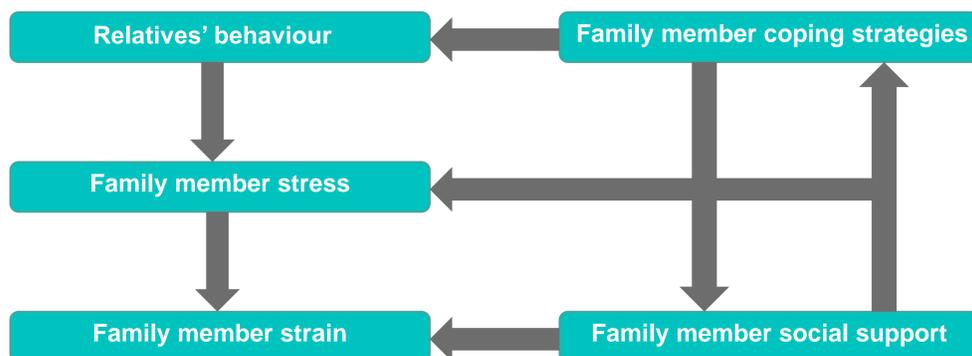
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Background

- The Stress-Strain-Coping-Support (SSCS) model of understanding the impact of addiction problems on families is being increasingly used as a basis for theoretical developments, research and interventions.



The SSCS model (Orford *et al.*, 2010).

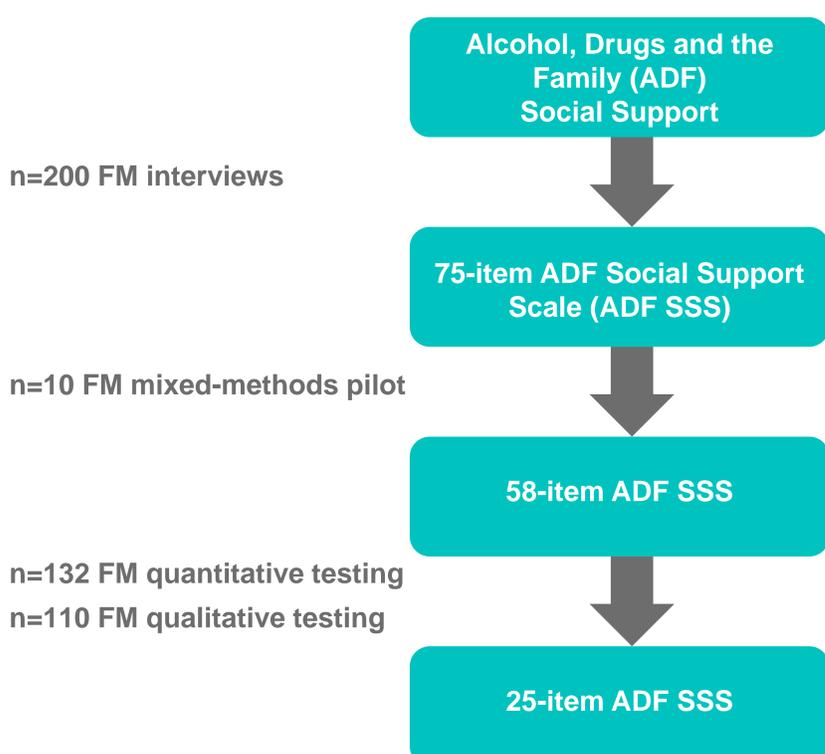
- Each of the areas of 'Stress', 'Strain' and 'Coping' are assessed via both qualitative and psychometrically validated quantitative measures.

Objective

- Prior to the current study 'Support' within this SSCS model had only been examined qualitatively. This study aimed to design and develop a quantitative measure of the 'Support' domain.

Methods

- A mixed-methods approach was adopted to operationalise the concept of social support specific to concerned and affected family members (FM).
- Interview, cross-sectional and repeated-measurement data were utilised.



Findings

- Earlier versions of the ADF SSS examined four aspects of perceived functional support for each item - actual frequency, ideal frequency, importance, satisfaction and also the resulting discrepancy score between ideal and actual frequency.
- Only actual frequency was retained in the 25-item version as this scale performed best psychometrically and family members reported much more ease both understanding and completing it.
- Preliminary findings on the refined 25-item ADF SSS indicate satisfactory levels of reliability (internal and test-retest) and validity (content and construct) for the overall measure and each of the three constituent subscales:

Subscale Label	Examples of ADF SSS Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Positive Functional Support	Friends/relations have listened to me when I have talked about my feelings. Friends/relations have been there for me.	0.913
Negative ADF Support	Friends/relations have said things about my relative that I do NOT agree with. Friends/relations have said that my relative does NOT deserve help.	0.851
Positive ADF Support	<u>Health/social care workers</u> have given me helpful information about problem drinking or drug taking. <u>Health/social care workers</u> have made themselves available for me.	0.727

- Qualitative information from family members suggested that the questionnaire was experientially applicable to their situation in dealing with the excessive alcohol or drug use of a close relative.

Conclusions

- The ADF SSS differs from existing social support questionnaires in that its content deals with the particular support dynamics involved when a family member lives with the problem drinking or drug taking of a close relative.
- The refined 25-item version of the ADF SSS is a concise, self-completion measure which complements the other standardised questionnaires used to assess the main theoretical components of the SSCS model.
- This study marked an important contribution, however, further reliability and validity testing is required to strengthen the initial findings.

Orford, J., Copello, A., Velleman, R. & Templeton, L. (2010). Family members affected by a close relative's addiction: The stress-strain-coping-support model. *Drugs: education, prevention and policy*, 17(S1): 36-43.