

# Fab Abs

## Recent Research Abstracts

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### ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS THERAPY

Fals-Stewart, W., O'Farrell, T.J. & Birchler, G.R. (2001) Behavioural couples therapy for male methadone maintenance patients: effects on drug using behaviour and relationship adjustment. *Behaviour Therapy*, 32 (2), 391-411

Married or co-habiting substance-abusing men (N=36) who were entering methadone maintenance (MM) treatment were randomly assigned to receive either individual based methadone maintenance (IBMM) services (ie twice-weekly individual counselling plus methadone) or an equally intensive behavioural couples therapy (BCT) treatment condition (ie once weekly couples therapy involving their female partner, once weekly individual counselling and methadone). Drug use and relationship satisfaction measures were collected at baseline, at one-week intervals during treatment, and after completion of treatment. Male partners in the BCT condition had fewer opiate and cocaine-positive urine samples during treatment than male partners in the IBMM condition. Couples who participated in BCT also reported higher levels of relationship happiness during treatment and higher dyadic adjustment at post-treatment than couples in which male partners participated in IBMM. Patients in the BCT condition reported greater reduction in drug use severity and family and social problems from baseline to post-treatment than patients in the IBMM condition. These findings suggest BCT may improve treatment response for married or cohabiting MM patients.

Halford, W.K., Price, J., Kelly, A.B., Bouma, R. & Young, R.M. (2001) Helping the female partners of men abusing alcohol: a comparison of three treatments. *Addiction, England*. 96 (10), 1497-1508.

Aim – To evaluate the effectiveness of three approaches to assisting the female partners of male problem drinkers with the stress imposed by the male's drinking. Participants were assigned randomly to one of 3 treatment conditions – supportive counselling, stress management or alcohol-focused couples therapy. The intervention took place at the Behaviour Research and Therapy Centre at the University of Queensland. This research and training centre offers outpatient psychology services to the community. 61 married women whose husbands drank heavily were involved, & reported protracted alcohol problems, severe impact of alcohol on social functioning and severe marital distress. The women's stress, alcohol consumption by the male and relationship functioning were assessed pre, post treatment and at 6 month follow-up. All treatments involved 15 one hour sessions with the woman. Contrary to our predictions, there were few differences between the treatments. All 3 treatments were associated with reductions in the women's stress in the stress management and alcohol-focused couples therapy conditions than for supportive counselling. None of the treatments produced clinically significant reductions in men's drinking or relationship distress.

Webber, R. (2003) The impact of illicit drug use on non-using siblings in the Vietnamese community. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 38 (2), 229-245

This study explored the issues facing young Vietnamese who have a sibling with an illicit drug addiction and the coping strategies that they and their families employ. This paper concentrated on the results from interviews/focus groups of Vietnamese parents and young people. There were some areas of commonality between the responses of the parent and youth cohorts. Issues of shame, guilt, grief and lack of support were raised by both groups. The reactions of parents and siblings change over time, as the negative impact of the user's behaviour intensified and family systems become strained. There were significant differences in the responses of the two cohorts in relation to parental behaviour. The youth cohort generally was critical of parental behaviour towards both children who are using illicit drugs and their non-using siblings.