
Continuity, change and resilience in imprisoned fathers' problematic substance use

FAIR study conference

25th June 2019

INTRODUCTION

- ✘ Substance misuse problems common among imprisoned men (e.g., Fazel, Bains, & Doll, 2006).
- ✘ Associated with resettlement problems and strong predictor of reoffending (e.g. Dowden & Brown, 2002).
- ✘ Lack of knowledge on longer-term experiences of substance use in imprisoned men, especially what contributes to recovery from addiction.

DIFFICULTIES WITH SUBSTANCE USE AT TIME 2

Cluster 1 Re-grouped families	Mean (Scale 1 - 5)	Cluster 2 Less settled families	Mean (Scale 1 - 5)
Accommodation	1.1	Accommodation **	3.5
Employment	2.9	Employment	3.4
Finance	2.6	Finance**	3.6
Alcohol	1.2	Alcohol*	2.3
Drugs	1.1	Drugs*	2.3
Avoiding criminal activity	1.3	Avoiding criminal activity*	2.2

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✘ What do the fathers' problems with substances look like over the longitudinal time course?
- ✘ Was there continuity in their problems over the waves?
- ✘ Was there change in their problems over the waves?
- ✘ If there was positive change what made the difference for them?
- ✘ If problems continued, why was that?

METHOD

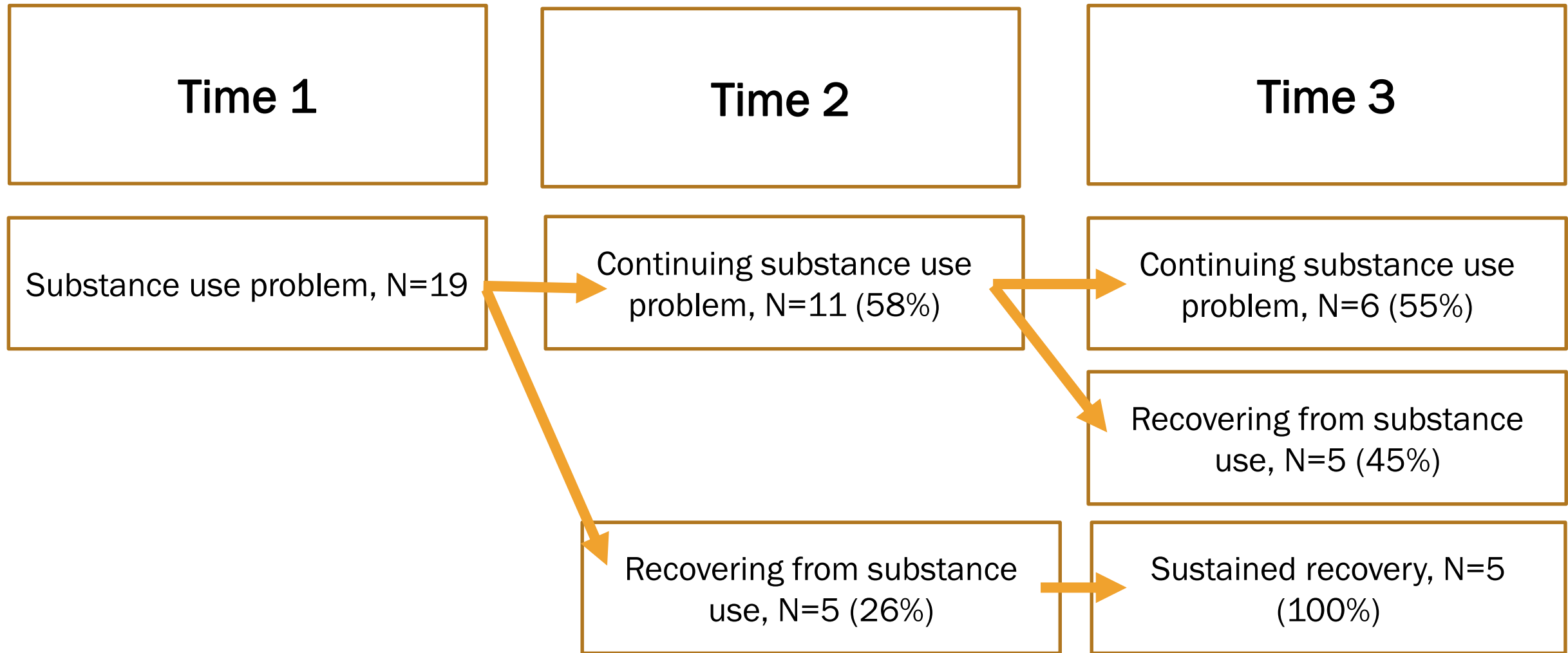
- ✘ Three waves of data from the FAIR Study
- ✘ Sample of fathers who were interviewed at least at T1 and T3 (N = 30).
- ✘ Subsample who had substance use problems at T1 = 19

FINDINGS

1) Was there continuity and change in father's problems with substances at T1, T2, T3?

- > Problem defined according to whether it negatively impacted functioning- e.g. work, health, relationships, lifestyle.
- > Alcohol or drugs
- > Current problem at each wave
- > Father or mother reported
- > Quantitative or qualitative report

FINDINGS - SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS OVER TIME



NB. Three of the subsample of 19 not interviewed at T2

FINDINGS

- ✘ For the majority of the men (55%), substance use problems endured over all the waves
- ✘ A minority of the men were recovering by T2 (26%) and all of them were managing to sustain their recovery at T3.
- ✘ A larger proportion were recovering by T3 (45%)

FINDINGS – WHAT PROMOTED CONTINUITY AND CHANGE?

2) What promoted continuity and change?

- > Why did substance use problems continue for some?
- > What supported resilience to substance use problems for others?
- > What can we learn about how to enhance resilience to substance use problems?

RESULTS – WHAT PROMOTED CONTINUITY AND CHANGE?

The recovering group (N=12)

EXTENDED FAMILY SUPPORT

“I think all the things that...all the hardest things that I have been through in my life...er...I’ve done it with...my mum’s been there for me through...without a doubt she would have been there...she’d be on the end of the phone when I was just like...just...the depths of despair you know? And then erm...she can’t always talk me out of it but she’s always there on the end of the phone you know...every time I’ve come close to succeeding in the past it’s been because I’ve had family backing me.” (Douglas, T3)

“So they didn’t want to take me in rehab, really... at least when my dad was asking them, ‘cause I was past the point of being able to make any decisions, really. And they was like – listen, your son’s violent, he’s aggressive, he’s abusive when he comes into the drug help agencies... that’s how he behaves. He uses drugs in our toilets, he’s just antisocial, and we’re not getting through to him, he won’t accept any help. And, you know, because things are a bit tough at the moment, he suddenly wants help again. And dad was like “No, but he’s dying!” This sort of thing. And one of them a bit higher up the chain said “Alright, look, we’ll give him a chance”. And that was it, really.” (Darryl, T3).

APPROPRIATE EXPERIENCES OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE/PRISON

- ✘ *“When you get locked up, you’re losing everything you should have as an adult to, basically, being a child again” (Blake T3).*
- ✘ *“They treated me very well in regard of... I mean, really, prison saved my life. I know that now. I mean, the way I was living I don’t think I’d have done too well if it wasn’t for them. They got me back to health...there are some people who really try hard, and thank God for them. It must be really hard work being on the front line like that because most of the people you’re trying to help are incapable of being honest because they don’t even realise how the way they live is insane.” (Darryl, T3).*

TURNING POINTS/INSIGHT/REFLECTION

“I had a few penny-drop-moments, you know, where I was like “Oh my God, life don’t have to be like this”. And then it was possible to become aware of an alternative” (Darryl, T3).

“I just woke up in prison one day and decided I'd had enough” (Perry, T3).

“What the judge said to me before he sentenced me was...if I was to get caught committing the same crime er, again...I would serve no less than ten years. And so that just...enough for me. Twenty-eight years old at the time and just....going to prison for ten years and coming out at thirty-eight wasn’t appealing to me you know?! I really wanted to go and live my life like.’ (Douglas, T3),

VALUING A CONVENTIONAL LIFESTYLE

“I wanted to live a normal life...it was a bit of a nightmare when you come back and you’ve not got money, you’ve not got stuff. But I just wanted to get back into normal sort of life. Didn’t wanna go back”
(Blake, T3)

“I was working hard...I was travelling around the country to gain new qualifications...I’d bought the house outright...I bought that outright from hard work and savings, from building work, private work, project managing, jobs in other countries, and various things, all legal, all legit and above board” (0041, Time 3)

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

“We have a really strong bond. If it weren’t for her and the kids I don't think I'd ever get out of prison. Just wouldn't bother. If you've got a strong background of family then you don't want to come back” (Gerry, T3).

We’re just there for each other, strong. I couldn’t live without her I don’t think“ (Ben, T3)

“It [being a father] means everything. It’s just everything. It’s the reason I’m..er..doing as well as I am just now” (Douglas, T3).

RESULTS – WHAT PROMOTED CONTINUITY AND CHANGE?

The continuing problem group (N=7)

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY

*“Parents split when I was three or four, they got on very badly. Was physically and sexual abused by mum’s boyfriend”
(Jonathon, T1).*

“Experienced a lot of racism so I rebelled. I didn’t fit in. I was made to hold up a placard saying ‘black bad’ next to a boy holding a placard saying ‘white good’ when aged 11.” (Lloyd, T1)

*“Dad was verbally abusive. Would take it out on me when drunk”
(Danny, T1)*

INSTITUTIONALISATION

“I was sitting there, and I said to her, “Listen, I need to go back to jail.” And she just went mental. She said, “Are you a fuckin’ lunatic?” you know what I mean? I said “Why?” She said, “Why would you wanna go back to jail?” And I couldn’t explain it. I said “D’you know what? I just feel I need to go back to jail. I’ve got this feeling that I need to go... I wanna go back to jail. I miss it.” How mad’s that? I miss jail” (Philip, T3).

UNHELPFUL EXPERIENCES OF PRISON

“Been banged up 22 hours a day- on basic. My own fault. [Current sentence has been] pretty bad, nearly died twice, from spice. Collapsed in cell, sink broke, split fingers open twice, split eye open...On basic regime. No exercise. In a cell with bed, on own, taking drugs most days’ Lack of communication with agencies and prison staff-locked away. Keep having to ask - doesn’t get done. Do feel isolated- 290 miles from home” (Max, T3).

UNSTABLE ACCOMMODATION

- ✘ Around half of the recovering fathers reported having stable accommodation over the waves. None of the problem group fathers did.
- ✘ 83% of the problem group fathers were re-imprisoned at T3. None of the recovering group fathers were.

POOR CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

“I saw my younger son when he was probably about 10 months old. So he doesn’t know me, and basically, when my younger son hears the word ‘daddy’, he thinks of this monster. When I got with my ex-girlfriend, my ex-partner would not let me go anywhere near the kids, she said “Oh no, you chose her, you’re not seeing the children. However, just before I came in I was driving home once, and I saw my eldest son, my younger son and my ex-partner. I literally stopped the van in the middle of the road, jumped out and went “[name of eldest son]!” And he’d go “I miss you, daddy” . And obviously because I’m not there, he’s been told “Your daddy don’t care, your daddy don’t love you” (Jonathan, T3).

“The last time she [daughter] saw me I had a needle hanging out of my arm” (Max, T3).

POOR COPING

“I used to get off on drugs. I’m switched off emotionally. Quite a few times I’ve looked at my life and thought I’m gonna put a noose round my neck...That’s why I have all my photos, because I know that without them, I probably would have hanged myself in my cell. I would have, because I’m very low” (Jonathan, T3).

“Don't care about living- nothing to lose attitude. Used drugs daily- every hour- crack and heroin. Taking drugs is a necessity- do it because I want to escape, get away. Stare adversity in the face. What can you do to me that hasn't already been done?” (Max, T3)

VALUING AN UNCONVENTIONAL LIFESTYLE

“She’s five years older than me. But she’s the type, she keeps saying it to me “You need to come home and settle down.” I said “Yeah, but you’re making me older than I already am”, d’you know what I mean? “I’m only 47, and I don’t feel it. I still feel like I’m 25. And you’re trying to make me slippers in front of the fire, you know, and a pipe and all that.” I said “It’s not me. Don’t get me wrong. I understand the settle down bit...But I’m not settling down, settling down to the point where, you know, I’m not moving” (Philip, T3).

“Spend the day hedonistically. Every minute. If I don't enjoy it, I don't want to do it” (Danny, T3).

ENHANCING RESILIENCE TO SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS

- ✘ Identify those from highest risk backgrounds?
- ✘ Support process of change (readiness, turning points, meaningful activities)
- ✘ Practical resources to facilitate coping (accommodation, employment)
- ✘ Role of prison?
- ✘ Family relationships matter