

Family Members Affected by Relatives' Alcohol, Drug or Gambling Problems: A Case of International Neglect

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A Colossal but Hidden Group

Some illustrations

- **India** – Martha Nussbaum , *Women and Human Development*. The ‘capabilities’ approach.
- **Britain** – George Brown, Stressful life events and chronic life difficulties and depression. ‘Humiliation’ and ‘entrapment’.
- **Mexico** – Kaja Finkler, Domestic violence and ill-health.

A Group with No Voice

- Difficult to identify
- Not associated with any one priority health problem
- Do not create a problem of public disorder
- Have no collective voice or identity
- Have no name
- Neglected
- Often blamed
- Feel ashamed

Seven Types of Harm to Others (Nutt et al, *The Lancet*, 2010)

- Injury to others
- Crime
- Environmental damage
- Family adversities
- International damage
- Economic cost
- Community

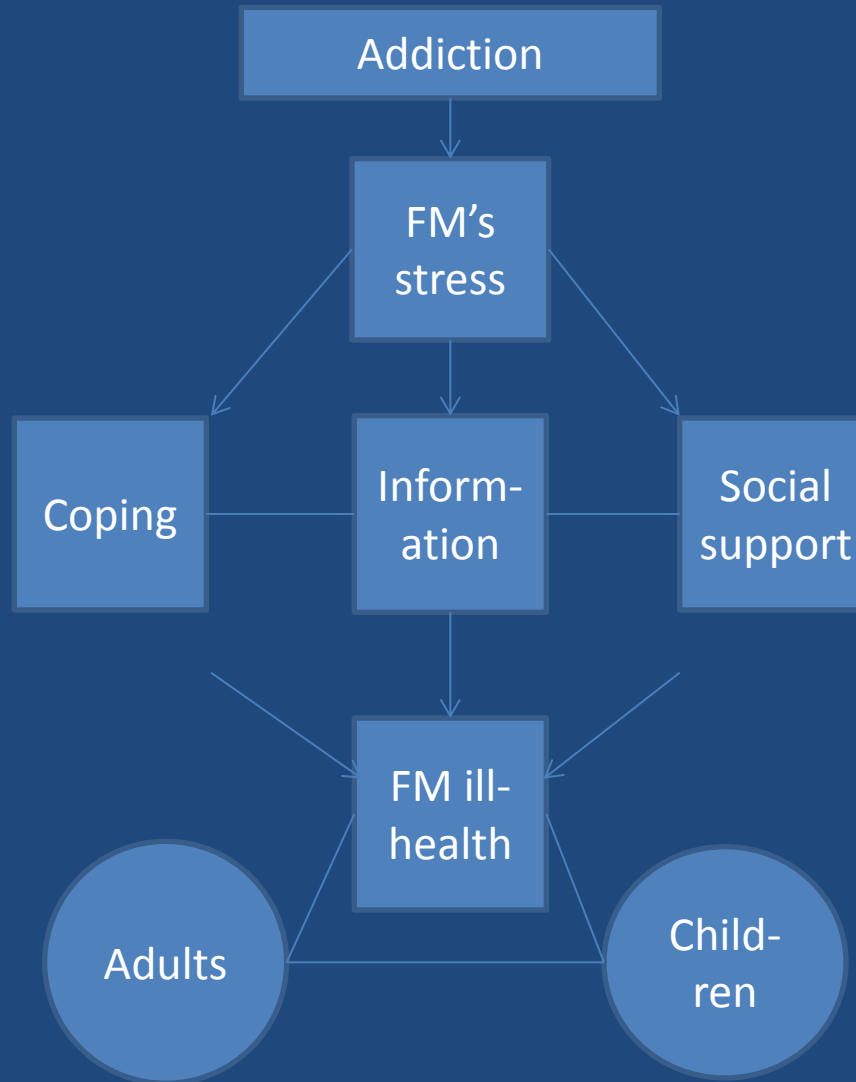
The Likely Cost is Huge

- Copello et al, 2009 UK D £2,500 m
- Weisner et al, 2010 USA A & D US\$ 358 per cap
- Laslett et al, 2010 Australia A A\$ 1.9-4.5 000 m
- Navarro et al, 2011 Sweden A US\$ 9,000 m
- Navarro et al, 2011 Europe A euros 70,000 m

The Intangible Costs of Having a Heavy Drinker in Australian Households (Laslett et al, 2010)

- Negatively affected a social occasion 58 %
- Failed to do something counted on to do 54 %
- Emotionally hurt or neglected 66 %
- Serious argument not including phys violence 70%
- Had to stop seeing them 23 %
- Did not do share of work around the house 38 %
- Less money for household expenses 35 %
- Felt threatened 30 %

The Stress-Strain-Coping-Support Model



Addiction Dilemmas

Coping dilemmas for affected family members

(with thanks to Hirschman, 1970)

- **Exit** – Withdrawing from it, being independent of it
- **Voice** – Engaged in trying to change it, standing up to it
- **Loyalty** – Accepting it, putting up with it

The 5-STEP Method for helping affected family members

1. Listen non-judgementally
2. Provide information
3. Discuss ways of coping
4. Explore sources of support
5. Arrange further help as needed (including the involvement of the addicted relative)

Features of the method

- ❑ Applicable whatever the relationship of family member to addicted relative
- ❑ Applicable in a wide variety of settings, including primary and specialist healthcare
- ❑ Flexible in its application e.g. number of meetings; number of family members; self-help handbook and web formats
- ❑ Can be extended to include joint work with family member(s) and addicted relative

Most up-to-date reference

The Alcohol, Drugs and the Family Research Group (2010)

The 5-Step Method: A Research Based Programme of Work to Help Family Members Affected by a Relative's Alcohol or Drug Misuse

Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy, Volume 17,
Supplement No. 1, December

EXAMPLES OF COLLECTIVE ACTION BY AFFECTED FAMILY MEMBERS

- *Mothers against drunk driving*: a national campaign in the USA
- *Voice of Southmead*: a local community project in Bristol, England
- *Silent Voices Speak*: Women and prohibition in the Truk islands in the Pacific
- *Grog War*: Campaign for grog-free days in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, Australia
- *Family Support Network*: Network of Family Support Groups, Ireland