Qualitative exploration of social network constructs and domains measured in alcohol dependence: a systematic review

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Why are social networks important?

Mohr (2001)

- Baseline:10% no friends

- 12m: 35% still listed no friends

Neale (2016)

- Participants routinely reported isolation, loneliness, negative relationships, losing positive family relationships through bereavement and only socialising with other heavy drinkers

Why are social networks important?

In treatment

- Recommended by NICE (CRA/ SBNT)

Miller 2002
- CRA is one of the treatments that have the strongest evidence for efficacy

UKATT 2005
- SBNT= MET
- 45% reduction in drinking at 12m

Outside of treatment

- Peer support groups (AA)

Groh 2008
- Positive friendship resources
- People in recovery -> support for abstinence

Kelly 2012
- Reductions in pro-drinking networks
- Self-efficacy in high-risk situations
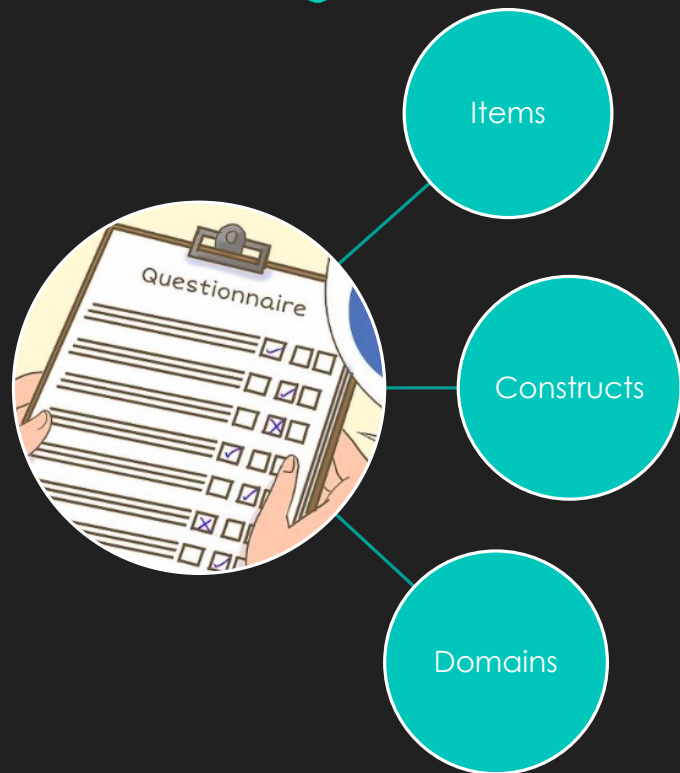
Social networks

- Conceptualised in many ways

- 'Dynamic state'- vary over time

- Influence depends on interaction with other factors (e.g. culture, gender, age, self-esteem, self-efficacy)

➢ **Transparency and clarity**

Background

Items

Constructs

Domains

'How do researchers choose their measure? Are these measures relevant to the population under study? Do instruments capture what they purport to measure?'

Valtorta NK, Kanaan M, Gilbody S, Hanratty B. Loneliness, social isolation and social relationships: what are we measuring? A novel framework for classifying and comparing tools. BMJ open. 2016 ;6(4)

Objectives

Objectives

1) Identify all items included in social network questionnaires used in alcohol dependence research, and then group these items inductively into constructs and domains to provide a new consolidated conceptual framework

2) Map the new constructs and domains back to the original social network questionnaires in order to better understand their scope

Methods

Articles identified through database searching (n =753)

Title and abstracts screened after duplicates removed (n =640)

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 130)

Articles included, to identify social network questionnaires (n = 40)

Social network questionnaires identified (n= 12)

Social network questionnaires included in the analysis (n=8; 36 studies)

Social network questionnaires used in alcohol dependence research

Questionnaire	Abbreviation	Year developed	Population questionnaire developed in	Number of articles (studies) questionnaire used in
Important People and Activities Questionnaire	IPA	1991	Alcohol dependence	22 (8)
Important People Inventory	IPI	2002	Alcohol dependence	7 (4)
Important People Drug and Alcohol Interview	IPDA	2009	Addictions	1 (1)
Social Provisions Scale	SPS	1987	People coping with chronic stress (new mothers, public school teachers, military nurses) and in the elderly (to explore stage in life cycle and social support)	2 (2)
Social Network Index	SNI	1997	Healthy volunteers who were administered nasal drops containing 1 of 2 rhinoviruses to assess social ties and susceptibility to developing a common cold	1 (1)
Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	SSQ	1983	Undergraduate students	3 (2)
Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	MOSSSS	1991	Chronic illness (including hypertension, diabetes, coronary heart disease and depression)	1 (1)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support	MSPSS	1988	Undergraduate students	1 (1)

Coding items to constructs & domains

Item	Questionnaire	Social network construct	Social network domain
About how many close friends and close relatives do you have (people you feel at ease with and can talk to about what is on your mind)?	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Social connections	Structure
Are you married, dating, or involved in a romantic relationship?	Social Network Index	Social connections	Structure
How frequently do you see this person?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Social contact	Structure
How many close friends do you see or talk to on the phone or Internet at least once every 2 weeks?	Social Network Index	Social contact	Structure
What is the drinking status of this person?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Substance use status of network	Structure
How often does this person drink alcohol?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Substance use status of network	Structure
I can count on my friends when things go wrong	Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support	General support	Function
To what extent is this person generally supportive of you, by being sensitive to your personal needs, helping you to think about things, solve problems, and by giving you the moral support you need?	Important People Inventory	General support	Function
Someone to prepare your meals if you were unable to do it yourself	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Practical support	Function
Someone to help with daily chores if you were sick	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Practical support	Function
There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress	Social Provisions Scale	Problem solving	Function
My family are good at helping me solve problems	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Problem solving	Function
I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being	Social Provisions Scale	Emotional support	Function
My friends give me the moral support I need	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Emotional support	Function
Someone to share your most private worries and fears with	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Confiding relationship	Function
There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with	Social Provisions Scale	Confiding relationship	Function
Someone to do things with to help you get your mind off things	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Social support	Function
Someone to do something enjoyable with	Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	Social support	Function
How would this person react to your drinking?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Alcohol specific support	Function
How did this person feel about your coming for alcohol treatment?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Alcohol specific support	Function
There are people who depend on me for help	Social Provisions Scale	Being supportive	Function
Certain friends come to me when they have problems or need advice	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Being supportive	Function
I wish my family were much different	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Network quality	Satisfaction
How much have you liked this person?	Important People and Activities Questionnaire	Network quality	Satisfaction
I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person	Social Provisions Scale	Feeling connected	Satisfaction
I feel that I'm on the fringe in my circle of friends	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Feeling connected	Satisfaction
Other people do not view me as competent	Social Provisions Scale	Feeling valued	Satisfaction
My family enjoys hearing about what I think	Perceived Social Support Questionnaire	Feeling valued	Satisfaction

STRUCTURE: The structure of the network in which interactions and connection with people occurs

Social network construct	Definition
Social connections	The number, nature and diversity of connections between network members
Social contact	The nature of contact between network members including the frequency of contact and the platform for contact (e.g. on-line/ face to face/ internet)
Substance use status of network	The nature and extent of substance use among network members

FUNCTION: The specific functions that members in a social network provide for and to each other

Social network construct	Definition
General support	A general sense of being supported by other people
Practical support	The extent to which an individual has people to whom they can turn for tangible help, often with daily tasks
Problem solving	The extent to which an individual has people to whom they can turn for support in finding solutions to problems or decision-making
Social support	The extent to which an individual has others with whom they can spend time and engage in shared interests and activities
Emotional support	The extent to which individual's feel supported with their emotions and feelings, as well as reassured, accepted and encouraged, especially in times of stress
Confiding relationship	The extent to which an individual has trusted people with whom they feel safe sharing personal feelings and concerns honestly and openly
Alcohol specific support	Support to reduce drinking and for treatment for drinking
Being supportive	Providing support or benefit to people. In my review this included general support, help with problem solving and emotional support

SATISFACTION: The satisfaction contact with network members provides with reference to one's needs, expectations and wishes; and the extent to which people are liked and valued in the netwo**rk**

Social network construct	Definition
Network quality	Assessment of how important, liked or wanted network members are
Feeling connected	The extent to which an individual feels close to other people, that they belong to a group, or are understood by other people
Feeling valued	The extent to which an individual feels that they contribute, have worth or are important to others

Confiding relationship: The extent to which an individual has trusted people with whom they feel safe sharing personal feelings and concerns honestly and openly

02MA

"I don't want to be dependent on anybody, and… I don't want to put myself in a position where I am indebted to anybody"

04MC

"You always have to have someone that you can talk to… that is non-judgemental, that understands what you are actually saying, or what you are trying to achieve… It is when you're doing it behind their back- and you're… treating them as idiots- they know what is going on, they have always known what is going on"

Conclusions

➢ I developed a new conceptual framework of social network constructs and domains in alcohol dependence research

    ➢ Relate to all items of all questionnaires and coded inductively

    ➢ Will participants report these constructs and domains to be important in qualitative interviews?

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