

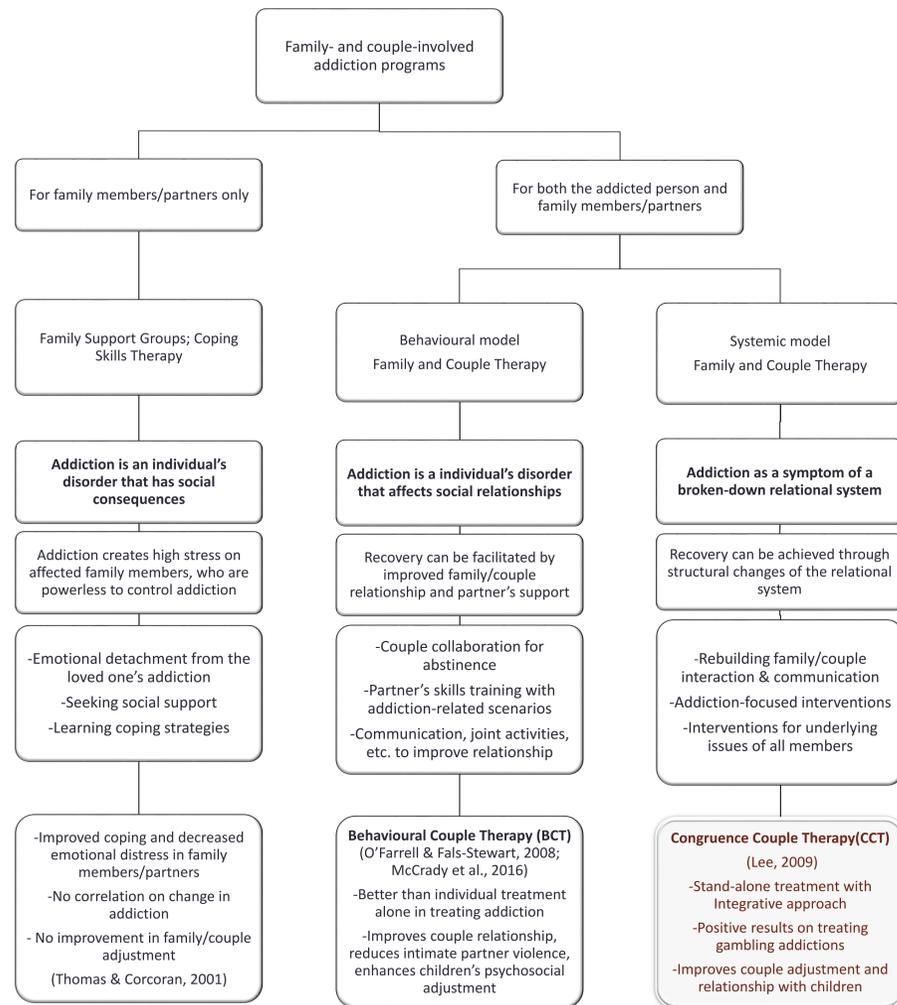
EXPLORING PATIENTS' NEED FOR COUPLE THERAPY IN ADDICTION TREATMENT: A PATIENT-ENGAGED STUDY

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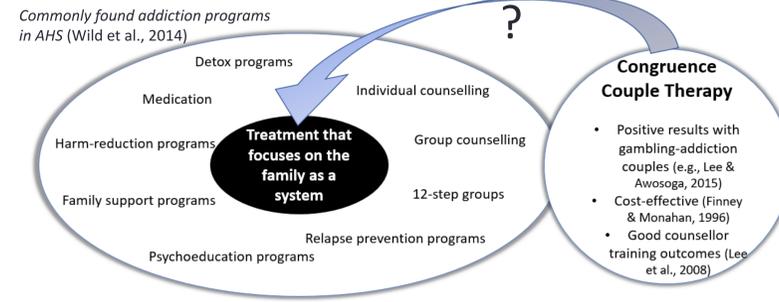
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BACKGROUND

- Family- and couple-involved addiction programs are found to (1) aid recovery, (2) improve family functions, and (3) enhance the individual well-being of family members and partners (Copello et al., 2005; O'Farrell & Clements, 2012).
- A closer look at the family- and couple-involved addiction programs:



- Can CCT be disseminated into the system to fill the service gap?



- However, before CCT can be widely implemented into the system, more needs to be learnt about:
 - how well CCT work with (1) wider addiction populations (than just gamblers), (2) various couple contexts (e.g., dually addicted couples & couples with unmotivated partners, Klostermann et al., 2005)
 - how CCT can be used with the existing addiction programs to best serve the diverse patients' needs.

Significance in learning patient perspective and engaging patients in health research

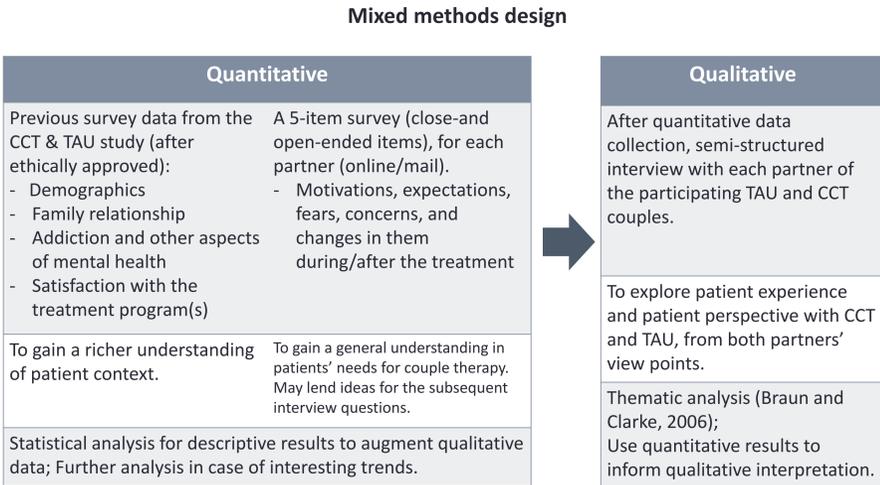
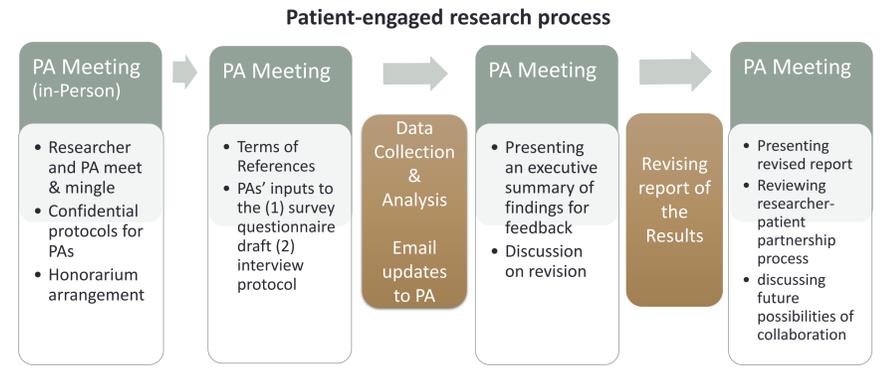
- Patients hold experiential expertise in addiction and treatment (Orford, 2007)
- Patient perspective informs research priorities and service innovations that may be better translated to improved patient health (CIHR, 2014)
- Patients can provide valuable information on the treatment process.
- Patients can add to treatment program evaluation with a quality-of-life perspective (Sullivan, 2003)

Learning patient perspectives and patient experiences with CCT and the existing AHS programs for both gambling and substance use disorders may inform the questions above.

Patient engagement in the research process:

- to ask the 'right' questions – relevant and meaningful to patients' wellbeing
- to better understand and honour patient voices in data analysis and reporting the results.

- Patient advisors (PAs)
 - Criteria:** Individuals and couples who have experienced living with addiction in a couple relationship, and have gone through AHS addiction programs (for addict, partner, or both).
 - Recruitment:** couples from past CCT studies; from Strategic Clinical Network in Addictions and Mental Health; from AHS patient advisors.
 - Patient Advisory team (4-6 individual): give input on designing the data collection instrument and feedback to the report of the results.



CURRENT STUDY

Collaborating with patient advisors (i.e., addiction patients and partners with past treatment experiences), I aim to explore couples' perspective and couples' experience with CCT and Treatment as Usual (TAU) for gambling and alcohol addiction at the AHS, to gain understanding on whether and for what reasons the couples find they need conjoint couple therapy in addiction recovery, and how CCT and TAU serve the couples with various life contexts and addiction issues.

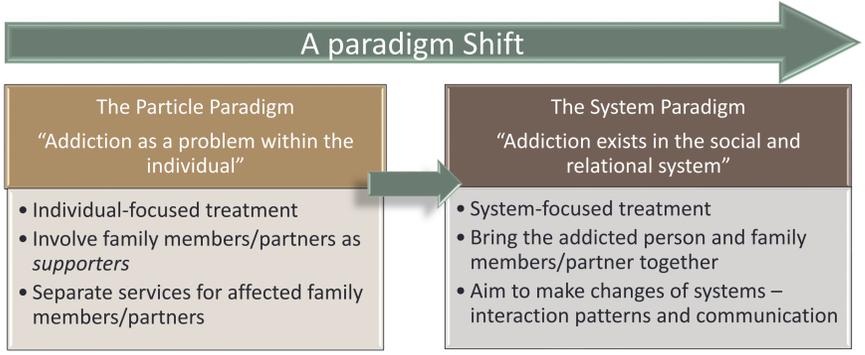
- Research questions**
 - What aspects of CCT and TAU do the couples find helpful and unhelpful?
 - What other support and services did the couples hope to have during CCT and TAU?
 - What types of couples respond particularly well and poorly to CCT?

METHODS

- Participants**
 - Recruitment:** recruit from an ongoing study where couples with one/both partners having drinking and/or gambling addiction are randomly assigned to two treatment groups – CCT and TAU, in the AHS.
 - Criteria:** CCT or TAU completion; no recent/recurring psychotic symptoms or suicidal attempts/ideations that warrant immediate interventions.
 - 5 CCT and 5 TAU couples (N=20).

SIGNIFICANCE

- Shed light on patients' (both addicts' and partners') needs for CCT and existing addiction programs in the system
 - whether, for what purpose, and under what context the patients (i.e., addicts and partners) might need a certain type of service.
- Gain understanding on the addiction recovery process in a couple system
 - interaction between addiction recovery and couple dynamics
 - the process of dual recovery (i.e., recovery of both partners)
- Couples' experiences and narratives may lend clues on how well CCT and TAU programs work for specific patient context, which
 - Helps to identify what types of couples (and addiction) CCT works well with
 - Informs treatment-patient matching in clinical practice
- Patient experience with various addiction programs may provide new insights on cross-modality elements and processes conducive for change
- Gained knowledge on CCT in comparison with TAU will facilitate CCT's knowledge translation, and informs therapist training in the field.
- The lessons learnt from the patient-researcher collaboration in this study provides references for future patient-engaged projects in the field of addiction



- A gap in Alberta's mental healthcare: Therapy with a family system perspective, rather than focusing on individuals as separate from the family (Wild et al., 2014).