



AFINet Update

Welcome to the latest issue of the AFINet Newsletter.

You will see that again we have had a range of contributions from around the globe summarising AFINet related work that is underway or which has been completed. Just editing the content for this newsletter highlights the growing importance which is being given to the needs of family members in their own right, and of the value of an organisation like AFINet in supporting us all to share our work and to collaborate to move things forward on an international level.

While you have all been working hard, the AFINet Trustees have too!! We now have a Strategic Plan to help structure and organise our work for the next few years – see Jim’s piece on this page for more on this and how you can access and read the Plan. Part of our ambition, as you know, is to ensure that AFINet expands and evolves as much as possible, through the work of its members. To that end we have a short survey which we would very much like you to complete for us – see elsewhere on this page for details. Thank you very much in advance for taking a few minutes to complete the survey.

Until next time, have a good summer everyone!

Lorna

Newsletter Editor

AFINet Looks Ahead

We have been in existence now for two years and have been successful in recruiting over 100 members from more than 20 countries. Your Trustees – eight of us from the UK, Brazil and the Republic of Ireland – are now looking ahead and have a draft Strategic Plan for 2016-19 ([click here](#) to access and read a copy of this, login required). The plan includes extending membership to yet more countries, starting one or two AFINet projects, and holding a conference, probably in 2018. But we identified a number of questions that need decisions to be made. One is how far we should extend membership: should we, for example, open membership up to family members who are affected by their relatives’ addictions, or should membership be restricted to professionals, researchers and academics? How we should use the website is another such question. Attached to the e-mail, which was sent with this Newsletter, you will find a members’ questionnaire which invites your opinions on these and other questions. Please do complete the questionnaire if you possibly can – we want our decisions about the way forward to be based on what our members want.

Jim Orford, Chair AFINet Trustees

AFINet Survey

The survey mentioned by both Jim and Lorna was attached to the e-mail which you received with this newsletter. Please complete the survey in the Word document and return via e-mail to **Jim** at j.f.orford@bham.ac.uk. The deadline for responses is **29th July 2016**. Thank you very much.

Updates from AFINet Members

This section of the newsletter provides updates from around the AFINet world; this time we have updates from Germany, Scotland, Brazil, Finland, India, Hong Kong, England and the USA.



Germany

The **Burden, Expectancies, Perspectives of Addicted individuals' Significant others** (BEPAS) study is a mixed-methods study funded by the National Ministry of Health. One aim of the study is to conduct 100 qualitative interviews with relatives of individuals suffering from different addictions. The interview manual is based on the manuals used in previous studies of AFINet members and contains an extended set of questions on barriers to treatment and expectancies towards the treatment system. In addition, family members will work through a set of standardised questionnaires including the 33-item SQFM-AA developed by Orford and colleagues.

In contrast to previous studies with family members, a sample of family members identified via proactive screening will be interviewed. Furthermore, the study follows a theoretical sampling approach and aims to over-recruit sub-groups like, for example, male family members. We assume that these differences in sampling methods will lead to more pronounced differences between various types of addictions and relationships than found in previous research.



To find out more contact AFINet member Gallus Bischof (gallus.bischof@uksh.de).

Questions on family members with an addiction problem were included in the German Health Update study (GEDA) conducted between September 2014 and July 2015 (N=24,824). Having a family member with an addiction problem during the last 12 months was endorsed by 9.2% of all participants, further 4.5% reported having a family member with a resolved addiction problem. As expected, initial analysis showed significant health-related impairment in these two groups compared to individuals without family members suffering from addiction. **To find out more about this work contact Gallus Bischof (see above).**

Elsewhere, evaluation of the SQFM-AA (gambling version) is now finished and the results have been published in a well-known German journal (*Psychotherapie, Psychosomatik und Medizinische Psychologie*). The abstract (in German and English) is available [here](#). Furthermore, the German version of the SQFM-AA (gambling version) is now part of the electronic archive for psychological tests of the ZPID (Leibniz Institute for Psychology Information), a platform for accessing recognised psychological tests within German-speaking [countries](#). **To find out more about this work contact AFINet member Ursula Buchner** (Ursula.Buchner@bas-muenchen.de).

Updates from AFINet Members

Scotland

Scottish Families (SFAD) is developing its **ALEC (Adult Learning & Empowering Communities)** programme to continue learning and partnership working to develop local strategies to help communities make positive changes. As part of this, we hosted our first ALEC Learning Lunch webinar in April. Called 'Your ABCD, You're ABCD' the programme allows participants to explore asset based community development approaches to address the impact of substance misuse on families and communities. Asset based approaches build on a combination of the personal, societal and environmental capital that exists within local communities. This draws on what people value most and works to ensure that services are fit for purpose and truly able to meet the needs of those who live there.

Due to the success of the webinar we will now host regular learning lunches allowing participants the opportunity to build a community of practice to share knowledge and support family and community recovery using ABCD approaches. **You can find out more from SFAD CEO Christine Duncan** (Christine@sfad.org.uk).

Brazil

There are three updates from Brazil. First, the Brazilian National Survey of Affected Family Members collected data from over 3,000 family members from the major cities and capitals of the five regions of the country.

Data collection instruments were based on questionnaires developed by AFINet-UK. Analysis and writing up is ongoing so watch this space for further updates from this important study!

Second, in response to the problems experienced by the children of drug using parents, a book has been produced, called "**TONINHO and the potion of false happiness**" the



book contains a number of therapeutic stories to help small children deal with these challenges by bringing comfort and relief through listening to the stories.

Third, AFINet member **Cassandra Borges Bortolon** and others have had a paper published from their study of family functioning and health issues associated with 'codependency' in families of drug users (Ciência e saúde coletiva 2016, 21[1]: 101-107). This cross-sectional study with 505 family members found that a high level of 'codependency' imposed a significant burden on the physical and emotional well-being of those affected, resulting in poor health, reactivity, self-neglect and additional responsibilities.

Overall, Bortolon et al. concluded that 'codependency' has a negative impact on the family system and on the health of the family members of drug users (see also the update from the USA which also refers to 'codependency').

Updates from AFINet Members

Finland

There is a lot going on in the field of addictions in Finland, largely as a result of major structural changes currently being made to the provision of addiction treatment. The importance of families is reported by both NGOs and governmental organisations, but in many districts no actual help is available. Constant work to increase the awareness of the needs of family members is needed. Here, two updates from Finland give examples of work which aims to address such gaps.

1. Together with the **Fragile Childhood programme** at the A-Clinic Foundation, we have started to identify workers across Finland who are interested in the 5-Step Method. We hope to translate the 5-Step materials and bring 5-Step training to Finland in 2017. **To find out more contact AFINet member Tuuli Pitkänen (tuuli.pitkanen@a-klinikka.fi) or Minna Ilva (minna.ilva@a-klinikka.fi).**

2. Over the past few years our research group at the National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland has had an interest in family members. We have focused on increasing awareness through published papers and conference presentations, and exploring possible interventions for use with family members (including the 5-Step Method). We have updated support materials for both concerned and significant others, and for professionals. This programme of work in Finland has included a focus on those affected by a relative's gambling problems, monitored with surveys conducted by phone every four years since 2003. The results have revealed that one out of five Finns has at least one significant other who had a gambling problem.

Since 2012, Anne Salonen has worked as a Principal Investigator of the population-based Finnish Gambling study, which in 2015 collected data from just over 4,500 Finnish concerned and significant others. **To find out more, including how to access publications from this programme of work, contact AFINet member Anne Salonen (anne.salonen@thi.fi).**

India

The **Supporting Addiction Affected Families Effectively (SAFE)** project is underway in India, with the two main phases summarised here.



1. **SAFE** (Phase I) is a Grand Challenges Canada-funded research project in Goa, with the aim of examining the contextual applicability and adaptation of the 5-Step Method for Indian settings. The team have held treatment development workshops with community stakeholders with the goal of gathering community perceptions toward the intervention, completed skills building of lay counsellors to deliver the 5-Step Method (delivered by **Gill** and **Richard Velleman**), and translated the main AFINet-UK tools used to measure the impact of the intervention. This groundwork formed the basis of

Updates from AFINet Members

the case series study, where the trained lay counsellors delivered the 5-Step Method to a group of close to 20 participants. Simultaneously, the focus was on building their treatment-specific counselling skills, by a combination of methods including expert and peer supervision, and the assessment of their competencies in a systematic manner (through the use of the 5-Step Method competency assessment tool).

There has been much learning from this work about the relevance of the intervention in an Indian setting and its feasibility and acceptability to the local populace. Now, the team is planning qualitative interviews with the beneficiaries of the 5-Step Method, and the gatekeepers who have supported the work. Analysis from all stages of the SAFE study will be completed, written up and disseminated, including at two conferences later this year (International Conference on Current Trends in Clinical Psychology in November in India and Global Addictions Conference in October in Italy).

2. **SAFE** (Phase II) is a Wellcome Trust DBT India Alliance-funded Research Fellowship to Urvita Bhatia. The project is an RCT in Goa to take forward the ground work described in SAFE Phase I. 100 participants are being recruited and randomised to receive either the 5-Step Method or Enhanced Usual Care (an information leaflet). The preliminary effectiveness of the 5-Step Method will be assessed at 3 months, by primary outcome measures (Coping Questionnaire, Symptom Rating

Test, and Alcohol, Drugs and the Family Social Support Scale), and a secondary measure (Family

Member Impact Questionnaire); and feasibility and acceptability of the 5-Step Method will be assessed with a range of process indicators and qualitative interviews. The unique components of the project include its delivery strategies, i.e. lay counsellor and community-based approach, use of mobile technology, i.e. in the collection of data, and application of a competency system followed by 5-Step Method practitioners worldwide. It is hoped that funding for a full RCT will follow. **You can find out more about the SAFE project from AFINet members:**

- Urvita Bhatia** (urvita.bhatia@sangath.in)
- Richard Velleman** (r.d.b.velleman@bath.ac.uk)
- Abhijit Nadkarni** (abhijit.nadkarni@lshtm.ac.uk)
- Gill Velleman** (gillvelleman@gmail.com)

Hong Kong

We are very pleased to announce an exciting development regarding the 5-Step Method in Hong Kong, China. Recently, the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong has received a grant from the Beat Drugs Fund to investigate the adaptation and application of the 5-Step Method in the local Chinese community. The 24 month project is called “**Project Bridge**” and incorporates the 5-Step Method with Collective Motivational Interviewing (CMI). The 5-Step Method will be used with family members as an entry point to identify young people who are using illicit drugs. Subsequently CMI motivates these hidden young people to engage conjointly with their family members, focusing on evoking collective motivation in the family counselling process.

Updates from AFINet Members

Professor **Richard Velleman's** team will train 60 frontline workers to deliver the 5-Step Method with family members. Qualified trainers of motivational interviewing and the developers of CMI will enhance frontline workers' motivational skills so they can motivate families towards making adaptive changes collectively. This pilot project is expected to provide a sound evidence-based intervention to tackle the problems of hidden substance abuse by supporting the affected families. In the future, we expect the 5-Step Method and CMI will be incorporated into regular clinical services in different drug counselling centres. **For more information you can contact Samson Tse (samsont@hku.hk).**

England

1. Two years ago, in Plymouth in South West England, a weekly support group was formed so that family members could get together, break the isolation and support each other over the challenges that having a loved one with drink or drug problems brings to families. Initial recruitment was slow however 6 months later a cohesive and well-attended group has developed that is clearly valued as a resource that has expanded to social gatherings and running a stall at local events to raise public awareness of the support group. This has led to the current qualitative research study that seeks to better understand the experience of talking to others about your loved one's substance misuse problems and also the experience of family members of asking for help for themselves in their own right and not for their loved one. Two group interviews were held in May and June 2015 to establish the direction of questions for the study

and since then 12 individual interviews have been completed and analysis is underway using NVivo to explore the actors involved, the reasons behind telling or asking, the response, barriers and facilitators, benefits or otherwise of telling and asking for help and finally advice to others and suggestions as to how services might be set up to assist families. **To find out more contact lead researcher and AFINet member **Charlie Lowe** at charlie.lowe@nhs.net**

2. Members will already be aware of the 'bereavement through substance use' study which AFINet members Lorna Templeton and Richard Velleman were involved with. A number of papers have been published from this study – see the AFINet website or contact Lorna/Richard to find out more). Another study in a related area has now started, led by AFINet member **Sarah Galvani** (Manchester Metropolitan University). This [two year study](#), funded by the Big Lottery, is focusing on end of life care for those with alcohol or drug problems and their families. The families and carers strand (Lorna is involved with this) will explore their experiences of their loved ones end of life care, and of their own needs, through a secondary analysis of the bereavement through substance use interviews supplemented with new interviews with families who will be recruited from a range of settings. **You can find out more by e-mailing Lorna.**

3. DHI (a treatment service in the South West of England) has worked with the Bristol Recovery Media Group (a peer-led group of people in recovery from drug or alcohol issues) to produce a short film which highlights how substance misuse issues can affect families and concerned others. The film is just over 10 minutes long and is well worth a view. [You can watch the film here.](#)

Updates & News from AFINet Members

USA

Many service providers in the US continue to use established (and negative) terms and approaches with families affected by substance abuse that are not evidence-based. Following an initial pre-test, one-hour workshops addressed commonly used terms and approaches that lack empirical support, followed by providing resources that have been found to be effective, including **the 5-Step Method and Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT)**. A post-test found that participants' ratings of importance for the four terms reduced as follows: codependency (-14.5%), family disease (-17%), enabling (-9.2%), and family roles (-18.4%).

The reductions indicate that a brief educational event may be helpful in challenging provider beliefs and approaches when working with families affected by substance misuse, while also providing more effective alternatives.

AFINet member **Jan Ligon** (Georgia State University, jligon@gsu.edu) presented the findings from this work at the *May 2016 12th European Conference of the European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association in Leiden*.

New 5-Step Training Course

A 2-Day Training course in the 5-Step Method, open to AFINet members and others, on 1st, 2nd and 3rd November 2016.

A number of people have asked about both getting trained in the 5-Step Method, and becoming Accredited Practitioners. Richard and Gill Velleman will be running a 2-day 5-Step Method course, training people both about the 5-Step Method and how to implement it, and about how to become Accredited Practitioners.

The course will involve practice and role-play sessions, as well as taught input. The training will be in England, probably to the West or North-West of London (near High Wycombe) although the exact location is still to be finalised. **For more information about costs and content, contact Richard or Gill:**

- * (r.d.b.velleman@bath.ac.uk)
- * (GillVelleman@gmail.com)

Future AFINet Newsletters – would you like to get involved?

The last two newsletters have been edited and produced by Lorna Templeton and Laura Nice. We have very much enjoyed it but feel that we would like to include others in this task, so we'd like to offer the opportunity to other AFINet members to edit or co-edit future issues of the newsletter.

If you would like to find out more and/or get involved then please e-mail Lorna: ltempleton72@googlemail.com

The Collaborative Powers of AFINet!

One of the aims of AFINet is to bring together people from different countries working in the same areas to collaborate in some way on family related work. One example of just this brought together AFINet members from the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Finland. **Tuuli Pitkanen** and **Scott Clements** attended a 5-Step Method training course in Ireland in February. Another collaboration is bringing together AFINet members in India and Northern Ireland (supported by AFINet-UK) to discuss the possibility of writing a 5-Step Method pocket guide for family members to sit alongside a similar pocket guide which has been produced in the UK for those who are trained in the 5-Step intervention. If you have an example of a collaboration prompted by AFINet, or a call for collaboration that you would like to put out to members, then **please get in touch!**



Our contacts around the world bring to our attention a range of success in our area of work. So, this new **Congratulations!** feature of our newsletter allows some of these successes to be shared with you all. This time we offer our congratulations to two AFINet members (Nomcebo Dlamini in South Africa and Guillermina Natera and colleagues in Mexico), who have recently had important reports published. For future newsletters, please let us know about your AFINet related work successes – remember that sharing of ideas and information is one of our main aims.

1. **Congratulations** to **Nomcebo Dlamini** on her success with her Masters thesis at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. To our knowledge this is amongst the very first studies of its kind to be carried out in southern Africa. The work included 12 detailed interviews with family members in Durban – mostly mothers but including brothers, sisters and one father – of substance users,

most frequently misusing a heroin derivative commonly known as ‘sugars’. The dissertation contains many insightful quotes from the family members. Much of it adds important detail to the picture of the experiences of affected family members which is familiar from research in other countries. In particular Nomcebo’s research highlights the harmful effects on the health of the affected family members, and the variety of ways in which they have tried to cope. The report’s abstract will be put on the AFINet website.

2. **Congratulations** also to **Guillermina Natera** and colleagues for their recent publication in the Pan American Journal of Public Health (2016, 39 (2): 69-75). It is based on the results of a 12-month follow-up study of the 5-Step Method received by indigenous women in the State of Hidalgo in Mexico. This is particularly important because it is the first time to our knowledge that any attempt has been made to assess the cost-effectiveness of the 5-Step Method for family members affected by their relatives’ substance misuse problems. It suggests that one of the valued outcomes of 5-Step is a reduction in family members’ depression, and that it is a relatively affordable way of achieving this compared to prescribing medication which was three times as costly. Abstracts in both English and Spanish will be put on the AFINet website: www.afinetwork.info



Journal Corner – thoughts from the Editor

As part of the various projects I'm involved with I keep an eye on journal alerts etc., and it's been refreshing and reassuring to see the number of publications in AFINet related areas increase in recent years. Many of these publications have come from AFINet members and some have been referred to in the updates in these newsletters or which go on the website. So, I wondered if a new feature of these newsletters could be to **summarise recently published papers** in these newsletters, perhaps offering food for thought and the potential for debate. To that end, here are summaries of two papers, co-authored by AFINet members in Scotland and Germany.

- * **O'May F, Whittaker A, Black H & Gill J (2016). The families and friends of heavy drinkers: caught in the cross fire of policy change? *Drug and Alcohol Review*, DOI: [10.1111/dar.12403](https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.12403)** – As part of a larger study 20 heavy drinkers were interviewed to establish their views on alcohol policy initiatives (particularly minimum unit pricing) and the impact of such changes on both themselves and their families and communities. While the study did not explore the impact of drinking on families and friends, the findings highlight their role in helping or hindering drinking, and the impact that the price of alcohol had on these processes. The authors, include AFINet member **Anne Whittaker**, conclude that “*alcohol policy changes and evaluations need to consider consequences for drinkers, families and communities*”.
- * **Bischof G, Iwen J, Freyer-Adam J & Rumpf H (2016). Efficacy of the Community Reinforcement and Family Training for concerned significant others of treatment-refusing individuals with alcohol dependence: A randomized controlled trial. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2016.04.015>.** Following RCTs in the USA this study analysed the efficacy of CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) in a sample of concerned and significant others (CSOs) outside of the USA. The study in Germany was funded by the Federal Ministry of Research and Education and AFINet member **Gallus Bischof** was the study's PI. The study recruited 94 CSOs who were randomly allocated to an immediate intervention condition or a wait list condition that received the CRAFT intervention after 3 months. Follow-up data were collected at 3, 6 and 12 months. The main conclusion is that CRAFT is effective for treating CSOs of alcohol dependent individuals in terms of treatment engagement and improvement of their mental health and family cohesion.

Lorna