

What promotes drug recovery success in rural Alberta? Insights from lived experiences

Category: Poster Presentation (In-Person)

Abstract Body

Illicit drug addiction continues to be a growing problem in Canada and other industrialized nations. Ways to address this problem in rural Canada have been neglected in favour of urban environments. This analysis examined what it means to achieve drug addiction recovery in rural southern Alberta. Our analysis sought to understand the key factors that shape drug addiction recovery within this unique rural landscape. Data were collected in 2022 from 50 adults living in rural areas of southern Alberta who had attempted to recover from illicit drug addiction in the past 3 years. Participants completed an online survey and qualitative interview. The present analysis was limited to 8 adults. All identified as fully recovered from an addiction to cocaine, crystal meth, and/or opioids while living in rural southern Alberta (4 males, 4 females; 25-46 years). All had used a variety of supports to recover. A theme in their success was “easy” transitions into and between addiction recovery services. Services that made it easy to book appointments and receive referrals and services that provided a seamless transition from treatment centre to supportive housing and other supports played an important role in recovery success. A key theme in recovery success and maintenance was a change in environment, such as removing oneself from relationships and locations with use history. This study provides insight into the lived experiences of drug addiction recovery in rural Alberta.

Key Words (Max 5)

- Mutual help/ Peer Support/ Lived Experience
- Recovery
- Rural

Learning Objective #1

Understand what factors promoted success in illicit drug recovery among adults in rural southern Alberta

Learning Objective #2

Recognize the current gaps for adults attempting to initiate or maintain recovery in rural southern Alberta

Reference #1

Burgess, A., Bauer, E., Gallagher, S., Karstens, B., Lavoie, L., Ahrens, K. A., & O'Connor, A. B. (2021). Experiences of stigma among individuals in recovery from opioid use disorder in a rural setting: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 130, 108488. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2021.108488>

Reference #2

Keyes, K. M., Cerdá, M., Brady, J. E., Havens, J. R., & Galea, S. (2014). Understanding the Rural–Urban differences in nonmedical prescription opioid use and abuse in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104(2), e52–e59. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2013.301709>

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