



# The experience of pregnancy and early parenting for women who are addicted to heroin

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# 概况介绍      Presentation Overview

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今天，我们的目标是：

1. 说明社会环境对我们的项目
2. 描述项目设计
3. 从案例研究中发现的份额
4. 为我们的研究结果解释
5. 考虑政策和实践的影响

Today I aim to:

1. explain the social context for the project
2. describe the project design
3. share findings from the case studies
4. offer interpretations of the findings
5. suggest implications for policy & practice

# 该项目的社会背景 Social Context

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- Problematic use of heroin experienced by less than 1% of the population.
- Around 90% of women who use heroin are of child bearing age.
- Individuals enter treatment for problematic heroin use for a number of reasons.
- Treatment is usually as an 'outpatient' and methadone is the most common therapy.
- Treatment for pregnant and parenting women varies across the country.
- A 'team around the family' may assess the risk of the child remaining with the mother.

# 该项目的社会背景 Social Context

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- A population of women who have traditionally been marginalized, demonized and blamed for harm to both their children and society.
- ‘Hidden’ and hence under-researched population.
- The convergence of two potent stages in a women’s life offers exciting opportunities for an exploration of the psychological processes involved.

# 项目设计和方法

# Project Design



- 20 pregnant women in treatment for heroin addiction were recruited through antenatal clinics and drug centres



- I interviewed the women in pregnancy and once or twice in the postnatal period (after their babies were born)
- I asked them about what they were enjoying or finding difficult about their lives, how they were managing their addictions and what they were expecting for theirs and their babies' future



- The interviews were semi-structured: the women were invited to talk about what was important for them
- I analysed the themes that emerged from the interviews

# 案例研究结果 Case study findings: Susan

## Pregnancy:

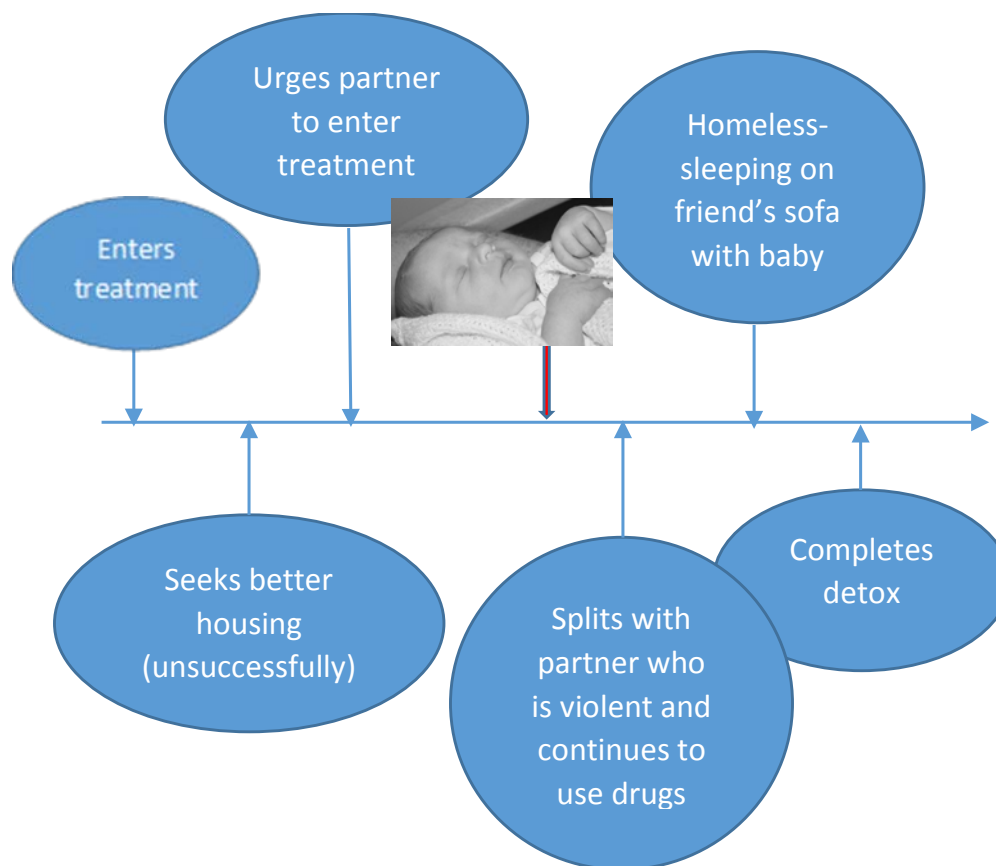
High level of addiction to opiates;

History of prostitution;  
History of addiction to other substances;

Living in inadequate housing with addicted partner

Has friends & family who do not use drugs

Strong resolve to achieve 'normality'



## 1 year postnatal:

Not using heroin or methadone;

Living with son in rented house close to own mother;

No contact with ex-partner;

Happy;

Planning to start college course.

# 案例研究结果 Case study findings

## Susan's story

### Facilitators

- Strong personal resolve to achieve goals
- Supportive relationship with mother
- Existing networks outside of drug communities
- Courage to leave violent and addicted partner

### Hindrances

- Significantly addicted when pregnancy discovered
- Baby's father not in treatment for addiction
- Homelessness
- Poverty

# 研究结果的解释 Interpreting findings

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- The women's perinatal experience is characterised by powerful aspirations for
  - a 'normal life',
  - security
  - and independence.
- These aspirations are catalysed by pregnancy and are furthered strengthened by the arrival of the baby
- Moving towards these goals requires negotiation of a complex process of evolution which is personal and social





# Implications for policy and practice

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- There is a uniqueness of the stressors experienced and coping resources utilised by this group of women.
- The transition to motherhood can be a positive, psychologically evolutionary experience which can change these women's lives for the better.
- A 'window of opportunity' exists for positive changes to heroin consumption levels if the women are able to successfully achieve their aspirations.
- The evolutionary process is individual and social: there are specific roles that other people play in assisting or hindering the women in achieving their aspirations.

# 非常感谢！

# Thank you!

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