

Laudet, A.B., Becker, J.B. & White, W.L. (2009) Don't wanna go through that madness no more: Quality of life satisfaction as a predictor of sustained substance use remission. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 44(2), 227-252.

Abstract

Individuals who have developed a clinical dependence on drugs and/or alcohol often report that they sought help because they were "sick and tired of being sick and tired." Quality of life (QOL) remains the missing measurement in the addictions arena. The few studies conducted to date show that QOL is typically poor during active addiction and improves as a function of remission. An intriguing question bears on the role of QOL in subsequent remission status. Reasoning that higher life satisfaction may "increase the price" of future use and thus enhance the likelihood of sustained remission, this exploratory study tests the hypotheses that QOL satisfaction prospectively predicts sustained remission, and that motivational constructs mediate the association. Inner city residents (N = 289, 53.6% male, mean age 43) remitting from chronic and severe histories of dependence to crack and/or heroin were interviewed three times at yearly interval beginning in April 2003. Logistic regression findings generally support our hypotheses: Controlling for other relevant variables, baseline life satisfaction predicted remission status 1 and 2 years later and the association was partially mediated by motivation (commitment to abstinence) although the indirect effect did not reach statistical significance. Findings underline the importance of examining the role of QOL satisfaction in remission processes. Limitations of this exploratory study are discussed, including the use of a single-item global life satisfaction rating; suggestions for future studies are discussed including the need to embrace QOL as a bona fide clinical outcome and to use comprehensive standardized QOL measures that speak to individual dimensions of functioning. Implications are noted, especially the need for the addiction field to continue moving away from the pathology-focused model of care toward a broader model that embraces multiple dimensions of positive health as a key outcome.

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