

Best, D. Gow, J., Knox, T., Taylor, A. & White, W. (2011) Recovery from heroin or alcohol dependence: A qualitative account of the recovery experience in Glasgow. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 41(3), 359-378.

Abstract

While it is increasingly recognized that recovery from dependent use of heroin or alcohol is possible, little is known about the long-term process of recovery. A study in Glasgow, Scotland used interviews and self-completed questionnaires to investigate the recovery journeys of former problematic users of heroin or alcohol. Qualitative data showed that recovery was understood as including but transcending freedom from dependence, and that most participants saw their own recovery as an ongoing process rather than a time-limited milestone. Motivating factors were usually negative personal experiences—with former heroin users more likely to cite “the lifestyle” and former alcohol users their behavior and health problems – and more positively around issues of personal identity. Social factors were often cited as key in sustaining recovery, especially peer support. An understanding of the views and perceptions of those who have experienced recovery from dependent use of alcohol or heroin can help to develop and improve recovery services and support.