

## **SMART RECOVERY AUSTRALIA: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS**

**Authors:** Peter J. Kelly\*<sup>1</sup>, Brittany Corkish<sup>1</sup>, Frank P. Deane<sup>1</sup>, Christopher Magee<sup>1</sup>, Amanda L. Baker<sup>2</sup> and Dayle Raftery<sup>1</sup>

**Affiliations:** <sup>1</sup>Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, School of Psychology, University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia; <sup>2</sup>School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia.

### **Introduction and Aims:**

SMART Recovery is increasingly being recognised as an important option for people with problem behaviours. While SMART Recovery has undergone substantial growth, both within Australia and internationally, there is still limited research about the people who attend these groups. The current discussion will present results from the third national survey of participants attending SMART Recovery groups in Australia.

### **Design and Methods:**

The study was conducted as a cross sectional survey of people attending SMART Recovery groups across Australia (N = 162). The survey included measures of substance use, mental illness, quality of life, use of cognitive behavioural skills and experiential avoidance.

### **Results:**

On average, people attending SMART Recovery were 43 years of age, had been experiencing substance use problems for 17 years, and had been attending SMART Recovery groups for 10-months. Participants report high use of both cognitive and behavioural skills to support their recovery. With behavioural activation appearing to be particularly beneficial in mediating the relationship between experiential avoidance and quality of life outcomes.

### **Discussion and Conclusions:**

The research demonstrates that people attending SMART Recovery groups present with significant levels of substance dependence and co-occurring mental illness. It is important that future research starts to examine the longitudinal involvement of participants in SMART Recovery groups.