

The Parents under Pressure parenting programme for families with fathers receiving treatment for opioid dependence: the PuP4Dads feasibility study

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Declared competing interests of authors: Sharon Dawe is co-developer of the Parents under Pressure (PuP) programme. The PuP programme is owned and disseminated by Griffith University (Brisbane, QLD, Australia) and the university receives payment for training and implementation support. Proceeds from dissemination are distributed in accordance with Griffith University policy. Surplus funds from training contracts are used to support research activities associated with the PuP programme. No payments for training or implementation support were received from participating agencies during the course of this study. Paul Harnett is the co-developer of the PuP programme.

Plain English summary

The PuP4Dads feasibility study

Public Health Research 2022; Vol. 10: No. 3

DOI: 10.3310/YOWK7214

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What is the problem?

Fathers who use drugs have been excluded from most parenting research. However, fathers have an important role to play in the well-being of children and families. This study included fathers who use drugs in a Parents under Pressure programme for fathers (PuP4Dads).

What was the question?

Is PuP4Dads acceptable and suitable for fathers who use drugs and can we test PuP4Dads in an even bigger study?

What did we do?

We enrolled 25 fathers (with at least one child aged 0–8 years) in the study. We trained staff to deliver PuP4Dads and 20 families started the programme. Parents were interviewed once before they started the programme and then again at around 6 and 12 months. Parents answered questions about the health and well-being of the whole family and spoke about their experiences of receiving the programme. We asked to video parents playing with their child at each visit and we gave parents a survey to complete on their use of services. Details of prescription drugs and the family's social work records were obtained with the parent's consent.

What did we find?

Fathers, mothers, professionals and services thought that PuP4Dads was a positive, supportive and helpful programme. The programme was flexible and could be tailored to the needs of each family. Most fathers engaged well with the programme and would recommend PuP4Dads to other drug-using fathers. The time taken to complete PuP4Dads varied between families. Most study questions were answered well and around half of the fathers stayed in the study to the end.

Professionals who attended the end-of-study 'expert event' thought that PuP4Dads could address the unmet needs of fathers and their families, and that this was a policy priority.

What does this mean?

Our results show that a bigger study of PuP4Dads is possible and can be recommended for the future.

Public Health Research

ISSN 2050-4381 (Print)

ISSN 2050-439X (Online)

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Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the PHR programme as project number 15/82/01. The contractual start date was in April 2017. The final report began editorial review in March 2021 and was accepted for publication in August 2021. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PHR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PHR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

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