Review of: "The HERMESS model for addictive behaviors recovery"

Keith Warren[1]

1 Ohio State University, Columbus

This article is an interesting attempt to integrate insights from current research that finds that recovery from substance misuse must include changes in emotional and cognitive skills, social networks and even social structures that go well beyond simple cessation of use. I'm particularly impressed by the multilevel structure of the HERMESS model, which considers not only the welfare of those in recovery but also that of the agencies that serve them. It's also nice to see the author at least touching on the importance of interagency coordination.

I do believe that the article itself and the model could be improved in a number of ways. I'll start with some proofreading comments:

Pg. 1: "broaden these problems" should be "broaden treatment of these problems."

Pg. 2: The sentence, "Moreover, it also does not mean a process of 'natural recovery' by which the addicted individuals (Moos Finney, 2011)," is incomplete.

Pg. 3: Figure 1 is interesting and thought provoking, but it has simply been dropped into the manuscript with no discussion or explanation. It deserves quite a bit more discussion than that. Within the figure it is not clear what is meant by "Specific Groups." Are these self-help groups, friends and family, or something else? Similarly, the most central node is labeled "Network," but is this the social network of the person in recovery or the network of agencies and services that Figure 1 describes? There is also no separate box for mental health treatment, which is often an important aspect of recovery.

Pg. 3: Vanderplasschen, Vandevelde & Brockaerst, 2014 should be Vanderplasschen, Vandevelde & Broekaert, 2014.

Pg. 4: The reference (Best, Bliuc, Iqbal, Upton& Hodgkins, 2017) is missing a space after Upton.

Pg. 5: Figure 2 is discussed quite a bit, but it is never actually referenced as a figure in the article.

Pg. 9: The references Boyle& Johnstone, 2014 and Bumbarger& Campbell, 2012 are also missing spaces between words and ampersands.

I have several more substantive critiques. It seems to me that the HERMESS model as presented shortchanges the importance of social support and social networks. While these factors of recovery capital arguably fit under the category of reintegration, research is showing that they are also critical factors in treatment, particularly in therapeutic communities,

which presumably precedes and continues to run parallel to reintegration. They should at the least be more specifically described.

The article also ignores some tensions that arise in the treatment of substance misuse. Most obviously, many peer support substance abuse groups, particularly those in the twelve step tradition, struggle with integrating people in recovery who are using medication assisted treatment, and there is often tension between mental health and substance abuse providers. I should add that this is hardly unique to this piece—researchers have a depressing tendency to let clinicians discover any problems that might arise—but it is more noticeable because the model attempts to integrate multiple system levels. Some discussion of tensions that are likely to arise within the comprehensive system that the authors are suggesting would be of value.

The presentation of the HERMESS model would benefit from more specific examples of the changes for which the authors are calling. This is most obvious in the "Social Need Oriented" section, but other sections could benefit as well.

Overall the article could be much more tightly tied to the current literature on both recovery from substance abuse and agency coordination. The most obvious example of this lies in the discussion of the HERMESS model itself, which does not include a single reference even though the authors make strong assertions about the roles of education, working with the root causes of addiction, motivation and other topics. I agree with many of the assertions, but that's not really the point. When developing a new model it's important to know why it should work.

All of this having been said, this seems to me to be a promising framework for further research and implementation and I would encourage the author to continue pursuing this work.