

A qualitative study of couple dynamics during smoking cessation

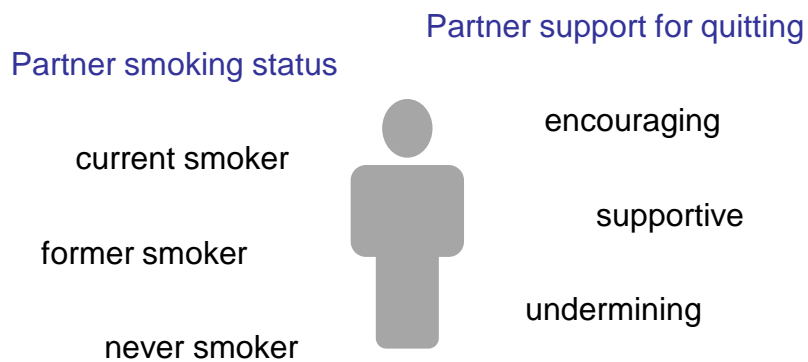
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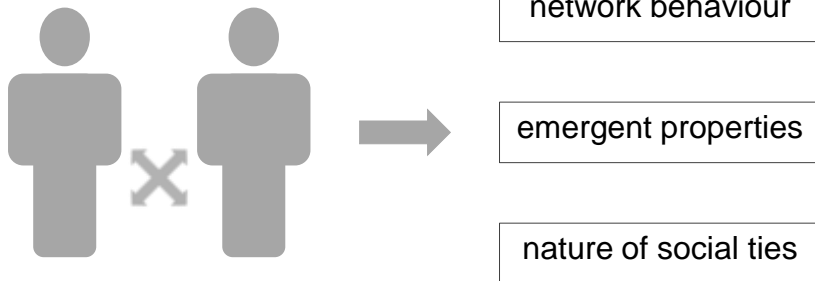
Traditional approaches



e.g. Coppotelli & Orleans (1985); Mermelstein et al. (1983, 1986)

Social network approaches

Interdependence



e.g. Christakis & Fowler (2008); Bottorff et al. (2005, 2006)

Study design & participants

- Longitudinal, qualitative design
- In-depth 1-1 interviews @ 4 & 13 weeks after quit date:
 - participants' wider lives & smoking routines
 - quit experience including part played by partner
- 12 participants (who had partners) recruited via stop smoking services in central Scotland
 - mixed demographic profile in terms of gender, age (30-68) and deprivation
 - partner: fellow quitter (7), non-smoker (4), smoker (1)
- Smoking status: 4 wks = 11 quit; 13 wks = 4 of 8 quit

Dyadic processes (1)

negotiated
decision
making

mutual
investment

maintaining
harmony

I said I was going to give up and I said "Look this time we're not doing it the same time, no pressure on you. Because the last time the pressure was so bad because we both got so noughty [irritable]."

So I started going to the smoking clinic and I managed to get it down to five a day on patches.

Sarah
[F60R]

And then George all of a sudden announced "I'm giving up smoking, I'm going to the doctor, I'm getting Champix". And that was it.

George kept saying to me "So when are you giving up?" Because it just wasn't happening.

Dyadic processes (2)

negotiated
decision
making

mutual
investment

maintaining
harmony

I think it has made it easier both of us stopping smoking because, if Paula would still smoke, I probably would have had a fag. It does make it easier, I think, that the two of us encourage each other.

Alex
[M30Q]

Because there was a guy that was smoking a big cigar. Me and Paula walked by and we both sneezed at the exact same time, from the smoke. So we just started laughing.

Because we had a laugh when me and Paula were going [to the clinic] because I got ones [on the CO monitor], which is the lowest you can get. And we went down, Paula got a two and I got a one and she wasn't happy.

Dyadic processes (3)

negotiated
decision
making

Douglas: The wife will say something like, "What are you like, go and get yourself some fags, you're needing them."

You think "Och, ken I could...", you were maybe watching telly "I could go a cigarette". Bob doesn't smoke and it was like... and he'd look at you, eh, and I'm like "No I just, I feel like one and it's past".

mutual
investment

Caroline: So your wife tells you that, even though she's a non-smoker.

Douglas: Well anything for a bit of peace I suppose.

Douglas
[M60L]

Heather
[F50R]

maintaining
harmony

He actually, if anything... I don't mean this the wrong way but, he didn't encourage me to smoke, if that makes sense but it was he wasn't discouraging me. It was like "If that makes you feel better just now, till you get through, that's fine"

Dyadic processes: summary

negotiated
decision
making

the decision to quit is a joint process: partners take each other's preferences into account, and (incrementally) work out the approach to be taken

mutual
investment

quitting is a shared endeavour: partners work collectively towards a successful outcome (regardless of their own smoking status)

maintaining
harmony

the wider relationship is protected: partners adjust their behaviour to reflect the needs of the couple, showing consideration and support to each other

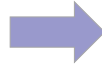
Conclusions

Reconceptualising partner support

Uni-directional

Predominantly
objective

Categories of
behaviour



Bi-directional

Predominantly
subjective

Interconnected
processes