

Exploring lived experience in the AOD workforce

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Introduction and Aims: Workers with lived experience (LE) have a key role in the AOD workforce, for example in peer mentor and support roles. Little is known about the wider LE workforce, comprising individuals with LE who are not in dedicated LE roles. This study explored: (a) the prevalence of LE across the whole AOD workforce, (b) workplace factors that impact on the wellbeing of this group, and (c) implications for workforce sustainability (job satisfaction, retention).

Design and Methods: Data were analysed from a national online survey of AOD workers (2019-2020). Two thirds (63%) of respondents reported personal or family LE. Frequency analyses examined the profile of the LE workforce and multinomial logistic regression modelled the relationship between LE and employment outcomes.

Results: Workers with LE reported moderate levels of burnout, overtime, work intensity and health, and relatively high levels of engagement, support, job satisfaction and quality of life. Turnover intentions and job insecurity were relatively low. LE respondents were more likely ($p < .05$) to be burnt out (than engaged) if they were younger, had high work intensity, experienced low organisational openness to change and low support. Bonferroni post-hoc tests ($p \leq .001$) indicated that burnt out respondents had low job satisfaction, health and quality of life, and high turnover intention.

Discussions and Conclusions: Although LE AOD workers report generally high levels of wellbeing, some groups may be at risk of burnout and turnover. In particular, young workers with challenging work conditions require increased support.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Managers and organisations need to be aware of the relatively high prevalence of AOD workers with LE, and of the unique factors that contribute to burnout and engagement among this group. Targeted professional development opportunities and supports for LE workers will help to ensure the continuation of their valuable input to AOD services.

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