

CHEMSEKS - SEXOLOGY OR ADDICTION CLINIC ISSUE?

Therapeutic response implications

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BACKGROUND

The growing number of patients reporting problematic chemsex use (the use of psychoactive substances, mainly stimulants, before or during sexual activity), has led to a need for more effective therapeutic approaches.

Clinical practice has shown that the traditional healthcare silo approach, where addiction therapy is kept separate from sex therapy, and patients are offered to participate in therapy groups for people struggling with various addictions types, often results in relapses and hampers the overall effectiveness of treatment.

METHOD

An analysis was conducted on the biographies and treatment histories of seven patients who reported problematic chemsex use. They took advantage of interdisciplinary interventions in 2022-23, combined addiction and sexual dysfunction treatment approaches. These interventions included psychiatric treatment, individual therapy (both online and in-person), and online group therapy. Through this analysis, key factors contributing to the disorders experienced by patients were identified.

Given the absence of therapeutic protocols, individual interventions were customized. They incorporated cognitive-behavioral, dialectical-behavioral, and systemic approaches, all of which have shown effectiveness in the treatment process.

**BIOGRAPHIES ANALYSED
ARE AVAILABLE NEXT TO
THE POSTER.**

KEYWORDS

MSM GSRD
Chemsex
Sexual dysfunctions
Hypersexuality



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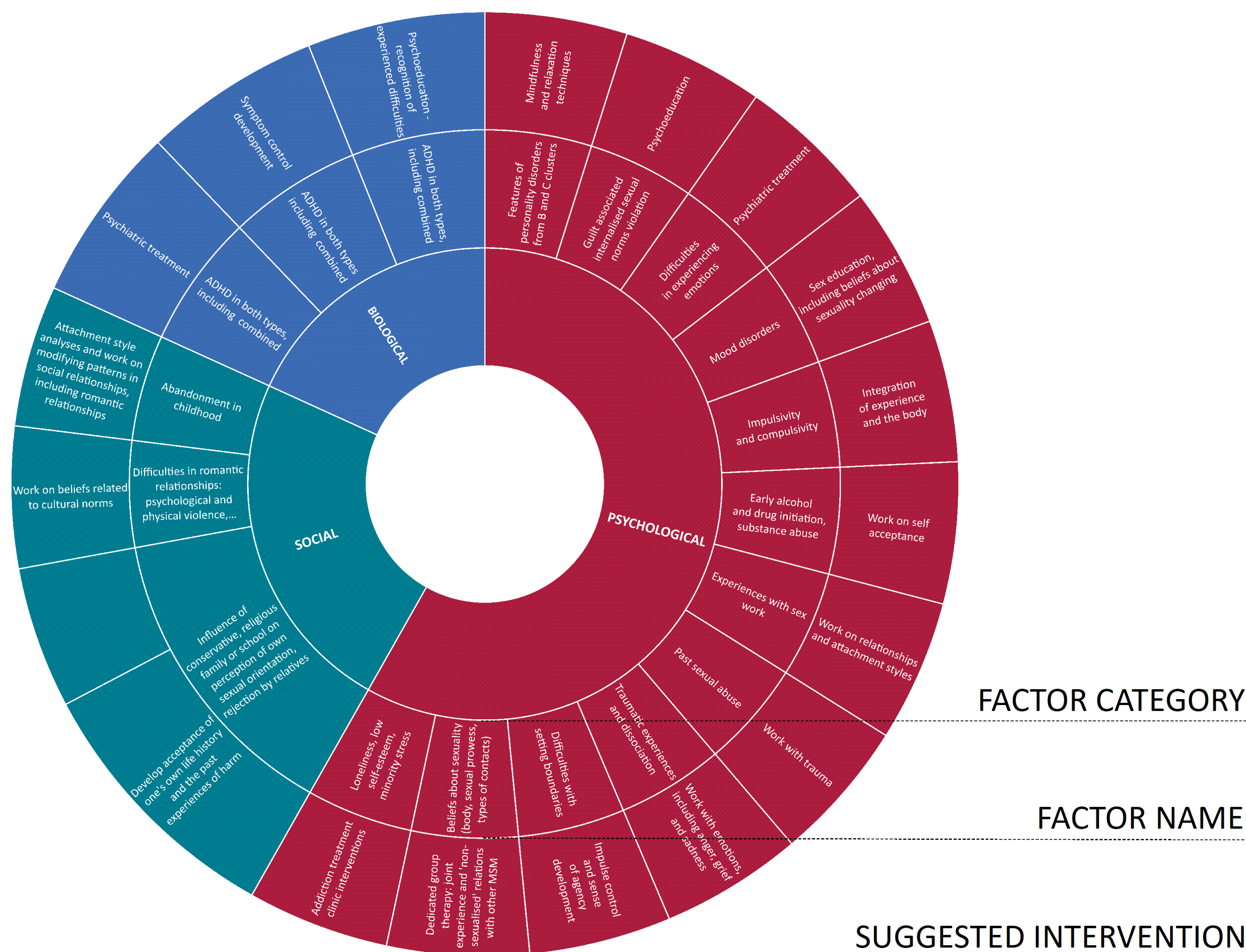
FINDINGS

The analysis conducted revealed diverse reasons for taking up chemsex and its impact on the mental and sexual health of patients. Mental health support therefore requires a multidisciplinary approach combining psychiatric treatment, addiction therapy and psychotherapy, both in group and individual form. Key aspects are:

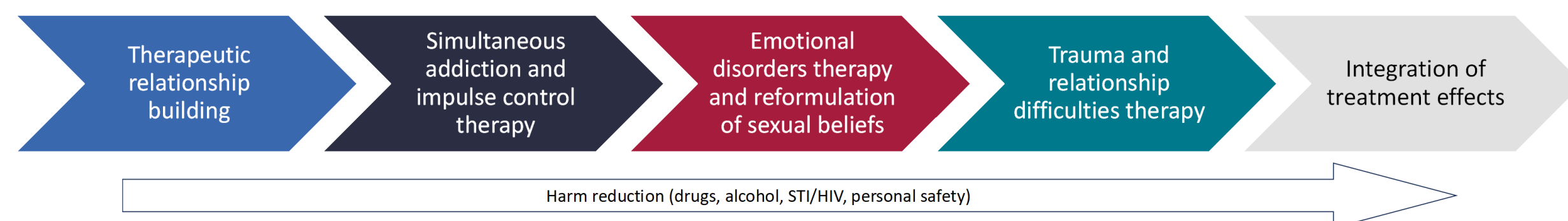
- Understanding the complexity of chemsex, its causes and related disorders
- Interdisciplinary competence of female therapists including GRSD (Gender, Relationship, and Sexual Diversity), sexual and addiction disorder therapy, drug harm reduction and sexually transmitted infection control.
- Cultural competence required for working with groups such as MSM, people with HIV and drug users, including injecting use.
- **It also seems reasonable to identify approaches in problematic chemsex treatment from national and international centres and to try to develop a treatment protocol.**

RESULTS

During the analysis, three groups of factors commonly associated with problematic chemsex use were identified: biological, psychological, and social. Interdisciplinary therapeutic interventions were subsequently developed, including individual and group therapy, and psychiatric treatment (optional). These proposed interventions were based on CBT, DBT, and schema therapy approaches, supplemented by therapeutic relationship work and narrative techniques.



Given the complexity of the challenges faced by problematic chemsex users, a structured sequence of therapeutic interventions was proposed. This sequence was validated during the provision of mental health support. Each set of interventions was tailored to the individual needs and circumstances of the patient. In response to the frequent occurrence of relapses, a harm reduction approach was implemented alongside these measures.



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