



Charles Sturt
University

The Family Empowerment Program



Supporting Rural Families Affected by Substance Use

We are pleased to share our second update on the Family Empowerment Program, a research initiative led by the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute.

The Family Empowerment Program, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, is making a significant difference in the lives of families in rural Australia who are impacted by a loved one's substance use. As we approach the final stages of this initiative, we are proud to share key outcomes and insights from this important work.

Who Took Part in the Study?

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who participated in the Family Empowerment Program. Your involvement plays a crucial role in helping us better understand the challenges that families face and the types of support that are most effective. Here is a snapshot of the dedicated individuals who took part in this important research:

- Age: On average, participants were around 51 years old.
- Gender Representation: The majority of participants (92%) were women.
- Cultural Background: The majority (86.4%) of participants were born in Australia.
- Work & Life: Nearly half (48.4%) were employed full-time, balancing work and family responsibilities.
- Family Connections: Many participants were parents (41.3%) or partners/spouses (30.95%) supporting a loved one struggling with substance use.
- Substance Use Patterns: 70% of those affected by substance use were male.

Positive Impact on Well-being

We are pleased to share the positive mental health outcomes observed among participants in the program. The results speak to the power of support and intervention in fostering improved well-being, including:

- Significant reductions in depression scores
- Notable improvements in life satisfaction scores
- A marked increase in problem-focused coping strategies

These results underscore the importance of providing support to families facing these challenges and highlight the success of the program in promoting better mental health.

Podcast Series Launching May 2025!

We are excited to announce that recordings for our upcoming podcast series are already underway! This series will feature insights from participants, researchers, and professionals, offering valuable perspectives on how to better support families affected by substance use. Stay tuned for the official launch in May 2025, where we'll dive deeper into these topics and share meaningful conversations with you.

Meet the Research Team

Dr Kedir Ahmed



We are thrilled to introduce Dr Kedir Ahmed, who has played a key role in assisting the team with the statistical analysis that supports the study results for the Family Empowerment Program.

Dr Ahmed is a Research Fellow of Rural Public Health with expertise in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, based in the Rural Health Research Institute at Charles Sturt University. Over the past decade, he has honed his skills and gained extensive experience in the fields of maternal and child health, spatial epidemiology, health disparities, overweight and obesity, health risk behaviours, and remote and rural health.

Please feel free to share these updates with anyone who may find them valuable. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us!

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