

Table 1: Studies included in the review

Authors	Aims	Country	Sample	Recruitment	Methods	Type of programme attending/attended
Boyd and Mackey (2000)	To describe women's perspectives in becoming alcohol dependent.	USA/not clearly stated	14 women, Black & White, (aged 26-53).	Purposive sampling from women's groups at Substance abuse treatment centres in rural counties	Interviews	Substance abuse treatment centres
Paris and Bradley (2001)	To present psychosocial development of women involved in Mills Longitudinal Study.	USA	3 women (early 60s) who had achieved abstinence	Participants from the Mills Longitudinal Study based on a representative sample of the senior classes at Mills College in 1958 and 1960.	Narrative Interviews	AA and support groups
Lillie (2002)	To explore the self-concept and self-esteem of women with alcohol problems.	Scotland	8 women (aged 38-63), all had person-centred counselling, 4 currently abstinent	Recruited from Edinburgh alcohol service on basis of self-defining as having serious alcohol problems	Open-ended interviews	A range of 'treatments' inc. counselling, group therapy, AA, aversion therapy, drug treatment and in-patient detoxification and RP
Hood (2003)	To investigate the role of leisure in the recovery process of women.	USA	3 women in recovery between 4-10 years,	Via personal acquaintance allowing access to the group and women's willingness to participate.	Semi-structured in-depth interviews, three focus groups, and meeting observations (non-AA)	Own-formed support group/recovery network outside AA
Brewer (2006)	To identify the contextual factors that fostered or hindered the process of recovery.	USA	11 women (aged 32-76), in recovery 2-37 years	Networking and snowball sampling	Interviews	AA, SOS, Rational Recovery
Sanders (2006)	To provide insight into how women in AA approach, interpret, and utilize the Twelve Steps in recovery.	USA	167 women, predominantly white from 26 different meetings	AA women-only meetings listed in the AA directory	Survey answers and personal narratives provided	AA

Prussing (2007)	Describes how addiction/recovery discourse has been selectively engaged by the younger generation.	USA	35 North Cheyenne women (aged 18-84)	Recruited from Recovery Centre in the Northern Cheyenne Reservation	Open-ended interviews	12 step programmes
Pettinato (2008)	To develop a substantive theory regarding the life experience of the alcohol among lesbians.	USA	13 lesbian women (although one identified as bisexual) (aged 43-62), 4-26 years in recovery (apart from one who was still drinking), mostly Caucasian	Invitational flyers, advertisements inviting voluntary participation in newspapers, and word of mouth.	Interviews	Not specified
Mackie (2008)	To examine the author's years of drinking and her "journey towards sobriety".	USA	1 woman	N/A	Autoethnographic essay	AA implied but not confirmed
Sobczak (2009)	Explores the experiences of women who were dependent on and the relation between alcohol abuse and sexual function.	USA	13 women (aged 25-45), abstinence 14 days-13 years	Purposive and network sampling, through advertisements in local newspapers, also word of mouth	Interviews and observations	12-step
Shinebourne and Smith (2009)	How experiences of addiction and accompanying feelings, thoughts and expressions appear to the participant in the context of her life.	UK	1 woman (aged 31)	One of four women who agreed to be interviewed for a larger study of women's experiences of addiction and recovery from a Women's Day Centre	Semi-structured interviews	Women's day centre
Sanders (2010)	Examines, from a feminist perspective, the participation of women in the gendered space of women-only AA meetings.	USA	167 women	Non-probability sample of woman who attended women-only AA meetings on the AA directory in that area (from 26 meetings)	Survey with structured and open-ended questions	Women-only AA meetings
Bradley (2011)	To examine how specific practices within AA assist women to develop an understanding of spirituality that promotes and sustains sobriety.	USA	29 women (aged 40-75) predominantly white, abstinence ranged from 2 days-25 years	Recruited from AA women's discussion meetings	Five face-to-face non-directive structured focus groups	AA

Shinebourne and Smith (2011)	To explore experiences and understandings of those who have engaged with the process of recovery.	UK	3 women, (aged 30s-50s), min. 15 years abstinent	Snowballing sampling	Semi-structured interviews and participants' drawings	AA
Nehlin, Fredriksson and Oster (2013)	Explores high risk-drinking young female psychiatric patients' view of the role of alcohol in their lives.	Sweden	9 women (mean age 22.2 years)	Women who were previously enrolled in a Brief alcohol intervention	Semi-structured open-ended interviews	Psychiatric outpatient setting
Bond and Csordas (2014)	To question how women in AA navigate and negotiate the contradictions found within a male-dominated and centred program.	USA	10 women (aged 26-54), abstinence min. 3 years	Recruited from AA	In-depth interviews	AA attending women's only and home meetings
Rowan and Butler (2014)	Examines the lived experiences of older lesbians with alcoholism and their journey to and maintenance of sobriety.	USA	20 lesbian women, (aged 50-70), min. 1-year continuous abstinence	Purposive and snowball sampling via recovery and treatment centres, Web sites, coffee shops	3 in-depth interviews per participant	Not specified? N/A
Kornfield (2014)	Explores how women portray the role of individual and social forces in their addictions.	USA	10 Black women	Recruited in person from Circle of Women	Participant-observations at mixed-sex AA meetings at "Mount Zion Hospital" and at Circle of Women (a monthly women-only group) and interviews	AA, Circle of Women (not AA related) women only

Jacobs and Jacobs (2014)	Life stories about South African mothers' who had a heavy drinking problem and their barriers to accessing treatment.	South Africa	10 women (aged 30-65), 70% white.	Purposive & snowballing sampling, via collaboration with Western Cape AA office records.	Narrative interviews	AA
Jacobs, Naidoo and Reddy (2014)	To (a) explore women's alcohol dependence history and treatment history (b) identify barriers and nature of barriers that limit women's access to alcohol dependence treatment and (c) identify the reasons for women not accessing treatment..	South Africa	As above	As above	Life story (narrative) interviews	AA
Doty-Sweetnam and Morrissette (2016)	To share individuals' journey and experience of those in recovery and provide information on recovery strategies utilized.	Canada	7 Manitoban First Nations and Aboriginal women (aged 32-68 years)	Recruited from First Nations and Aboriginal Friendship Centre's throughout the Province of Manitoba	Individual interviews	Mainstream treatment approaches (e.g. AA, family support programs), traditional healing practices, or a combination
Gee et al. (2017)	To present one person's voice of her journey from addiction to recovery.	USA	1 woman (aged 59)	Recruited from a larger study examining life patterns of 9 people in recovery	Life story narrative of an individual from a larger study	12-step group
Hanpatchaiyakul, et al. (2017)	To explore the lived experiences of women in relation to alcohol addiction in treatment.	Thailand	12 women (aged 20-65) who had experienced alcohol addiction for at least 3 years	Purposive snowball sampling from two special hospitals, one outpatient clinic in a general hospital	Interviews	Some attended AA

UK = United Kingdom; USA = United States of America; AA = Alcoholics Anonymous; SOS = Seculars for Sobriety; RP = relapse prevention