

# COUN2041 Alcohol and Other Drugs Counselling

## Guide to Assignment 1: Research Review

- Sample plans
- Writing examples

## Possible Plan A

Assignment section		Marking Criteria
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefly explain assignment topic</li> <li>- Explain search strategy</li> <li>- Briefly explain what the assignment covers</li> <li>- Thesis statement</li> </ul>	1	Search strategy is outlined in introduction
Research study 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research method</li> <li>- Research findings</li> <li>- Evaluation of research quality</li> </ul>	3 4 2	Method and major findings are outlined ( <del>and compared</del> <del>for each study done later on</del> ) Quality of research studies is appraised Possibly: Research is Australian
Research study 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research method</li> <li>- Research findings</li> <li>- Evaluation of research quality</li> </ul>	3 4 2	Method and major findings are outlined ( <del>and compared</del> <del>for each study done later on</del> ) Quality of research studies is appraised Possibly: Research is Australian
Research study 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research method</li> <li>- Research findings</li> <li>- Evaluation of research quality</li> </ul>	3 4 2	Method and major findings are outlined ( <del>and compared</del> <del>for each study done later on</del> ) Quality of research studies is appraised Possibly: Research is Australian
Comparison / synthesis of the three research studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compare methods and quality of studies</li> <li>- Compare / synthesise findings</li> </ul>	3 4 6	Method and major findings are ( <del>outlined and done earlier</del> ) compared for each study Quality of research studies is appraised Synthesis of research findings
Evaluate whether these research study findings are applicable and relevant to AOD counselling	5 6	Evaluation of application and relevance of research findings to AOD counselling field Synthesis of research findings
Conclusion	4 6 5	Quality of research studies is appraised Synthesis of research findings Evaluation of application and relevance of research findings to AOD counselling field

## Possible Plan B

Assignment section		Marking Criteria
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefly explain assignment topic</li> <li>- Explain search strategy</li> <li>- Briefly explain what the assignment covers</li> <li>- Thesis statement</li> </ul>	1	Search strategy is outlined in introduction
Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research article 1</li> <li>- Research article 2</li> <li>- Research article 3</li> <li>- Compare methods and include an evaluation of method quality</li> </ul>	3 4 2	Method ( <del>and major findings done later on</del> ) are outlined and compared for each study Quality of research studies is appraised At least one study is Australian
Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research article 1</li> <li>- Research article 2</li> <li>- Research article 3</li> <li>- Compare findings and include an evaluation of findings</li> </ul>	3 4 2	<del>(Method and done earlier)</del> major findings are outlined and compared for each study Quality of research studies is appraised At least one study is Australian
Synthesis / comparison of the three research studies	6 3 4	Synthesis of research findings Method and major findings are ( <del>outlined and done earlier</del> ) compared for each study Quality of research studies is appraised
Evaluate whether these research study findings are applicable and relevant to AOD counselling	5	Evaluation of application and relevance of research to AOD counselling field.
Conclusion	4 6 5	Quality of research studies is appraised Synthesis of research findings Evaluation of application and relevance of research findings to AOD counselling field

## Example of two paragraphs about research methods

Two of the three studies analysed in this paper used a quantitative approach and the third employed a mixed methods approach. Jones and Amhad's (2010) study is based on a questionnaire that was distributed through social media. The questionnaire used rating scales to capture data on methamphetamine use and reasons for use. Distribution of the questionnaire via social media enabled collection of a large volume of responses (345). However, the reliability of the results may have been affected as there was no way of checking whether the respondents were actually living in rural towns, nor confirm the respondents' age. The similar study by Sunnard and Peta (2009) also used a quantitative approach, although perhaps one that is more reliable in terms of the respondents' characteristics. Sunnard and Peta (2009) approached potential participants in the centre of rural towns, and could therefore check place of residence and age. The questionnaire used was completed by eligible respondents on the spot. The physical proximity to the researchers to the respondents does, however, raise the question of whether respondents felt able to answer truthfully.

In contrast to the two quantitative studies discussed above, Ching's (2011) research used both a qualitative questionnaire distributed via email to a pool of potential respondents, and qualitative phone interviews with a random selection of questionnaire respondents. The interviews allowed more in-depth information to be collected. However, with 64 questionnaire respondents and only 15 respondents interviewed, the generalisability of the findings are somewhat compromised. The three studies discussed above each have strengths and weaknesses in their methodology. If the findings of these studies are taken together however, the individual weaknesses of each are to some extent cancelled out by the strengths of the others.

## Example of comparison language

All three studies found that methamphetamine use was higher in rural areas than metropolitan areas among the 15 – 25 age group. Jones and Amhad's (2010) study focused on the personal reasons for methamphetamine use in young rural people and found that high unemployment was the most important factor. Sunnard and Peta (2009) also collected data on personal reasons for use; however, their results showed that lack of social services in rural areas was also a major predictor of methamphetamine use, along with unemployment. Ching's (2011) research had a different aim; to test the hypothesis that methamphetamine use is higher in large rural towns, as compared to smaller towns. Her study did find that a higher percentage of young people use methamphetamine in large rural towns.

## Example of synthesis language

Looking at these three studies together raises some interesting questions. Unemployment is often higher in larger rural towns (ABS, 2015), and this may help explain Ching's (2011) results that larger towns had higher methamphetamine use. However, larger towns usually have more social services, which in Sunnard and Peta's (2009) study was correlated with lower methamphetamine use. A possible explanation for this could be that the presence of social services does not protect against the negative impact unemployment can have on drug use. In any case, the interrelationship between methamphetamine use, community size, unemployment, and social services seems to be complex, and researchers should consider incorporating all these variables in future studies.

## Example of a thesis statement

The research reviewed here suggests links between unemployment and methamphetamine use among young rural people. Counsellors in rural communities need to be aware of these links in order to effectively assess and work with clients.

## Example of a thesis statement as part of an introduction

Cannabis, although not considered a grossly harmful drug relative to substances such as heroin or cocaine, is psychologically addictive in addition to correlating with numerous cognitive deficits (Weiten, 2013). It is the most commonly used illicit drug in the world with most users having begun their cannabis use in adolescence (Cousijn, Goudriaan, & Weirs, 2011). Furthermore, many studies have reported a relationship between cannabis use and psychotic like symptoms, especially in the presence of genetic or neural vulnerability (Dragt, et al., 2012). Because the adolescent brain is still maturing and vulnerable, this research review was conducted with the intention of investigating the relationship between adolescent cannabis use and subsequent psychotic symptoms. Three journal articles on this topic were obtained by using ACAP's advanced multisearch tool in the online library database. The search term "(cannabis OR marijuana) AND adolescents AND psychosis" was used to obtain the journal articles. This research review will compare these articles, evaluate their quality and usefulness in counselling. **The studies show that early and ongoing cannabis use can harm neurological and psychological systems. This suggests that age of first use and length of use are important criteria in psychosis risk assessment tools.**