

Addressing Gender in Opioid Addiction Treatment in Punjab, India

Manvinder Gill, University of Michigan, School of Social Work and Department of Anthropology

Introduction

- Opioid use in India is 3x global average - Punjab disproportionately affected
- Increase in use due to: increased availability (border state), unemployment, historical, political, and institutional failures
- Large gap between rates of substance-using people and those seeking treatment
- Increased overdose fatalities and high transmission rates of HIV and Hepatitis C
- 2019 → 0.2% prevalence of opioid use in females
- 2022 → 2x increase in women arrested for drug smuggling
- Lack of services for women which overlook crucial needs
- Policy window: war against drugs initiative includes building 3 women-specific facilities

Methods

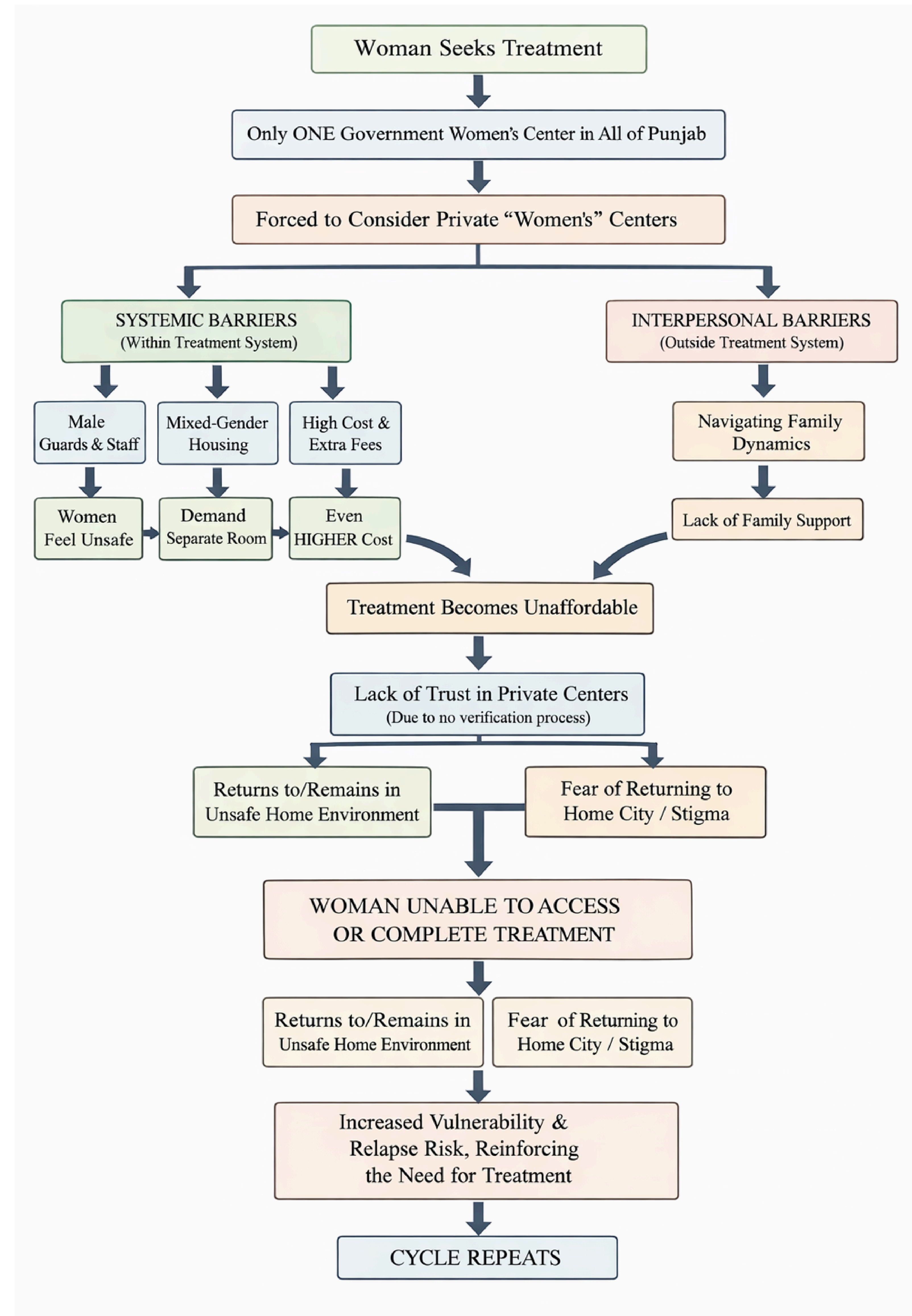
- Conducted interviews, solicited feedback from community partners, and began design of a gender-responsive policy brief
- Next steps: evaluation of one-stop integrated model for women who use drugs



Wheat fields in the Malwa Region of Punjab, India

Results

- Key challenges: accessibility, safety, cost, trustworthiness, and interpersonal barriers
- Need for accessible treatment & sustained addiction and overdose prevention activities



Accessibility, safety, cost, trustworthiness, and interpersonal barriers remain **challenges** for women seeking treatment for opioid use disorder.

Need for accessible **treatment** and sustained **prevention.**