



Results from the 2021 WA State Syringe Service Program Health Survey

Addictions, Drug and Alcohol Institute

University of Washington

February 2022



Thank YOU, your staff and your volunteers for the time and effort to make this survey happen – and not get COVID in the process!

Thank you to all participants who trusted us with their private info during the survey.

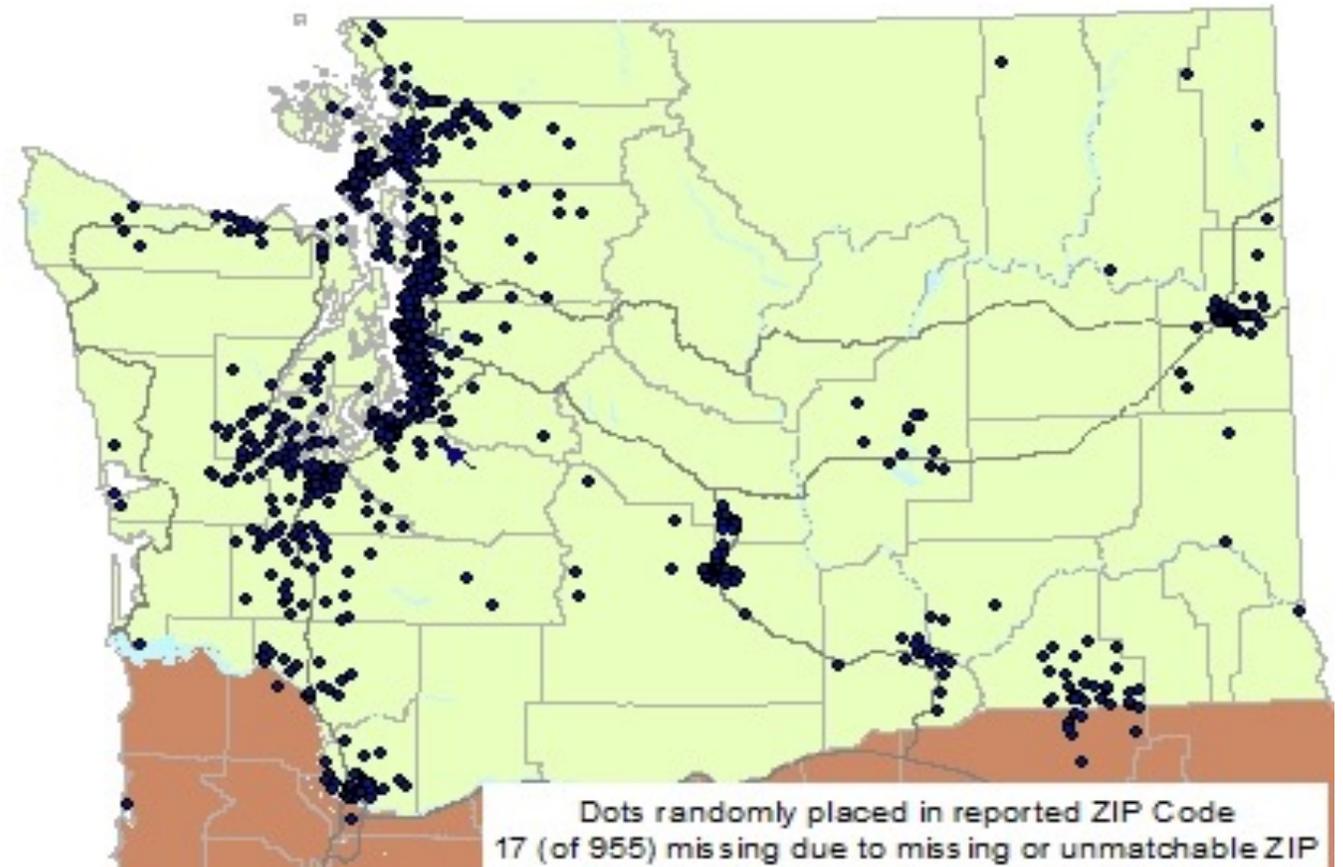
- 2019 statewide data are available online

<https://adai.uw.edu/wa-state-syringe-exchange-health-survey-2019-results/>



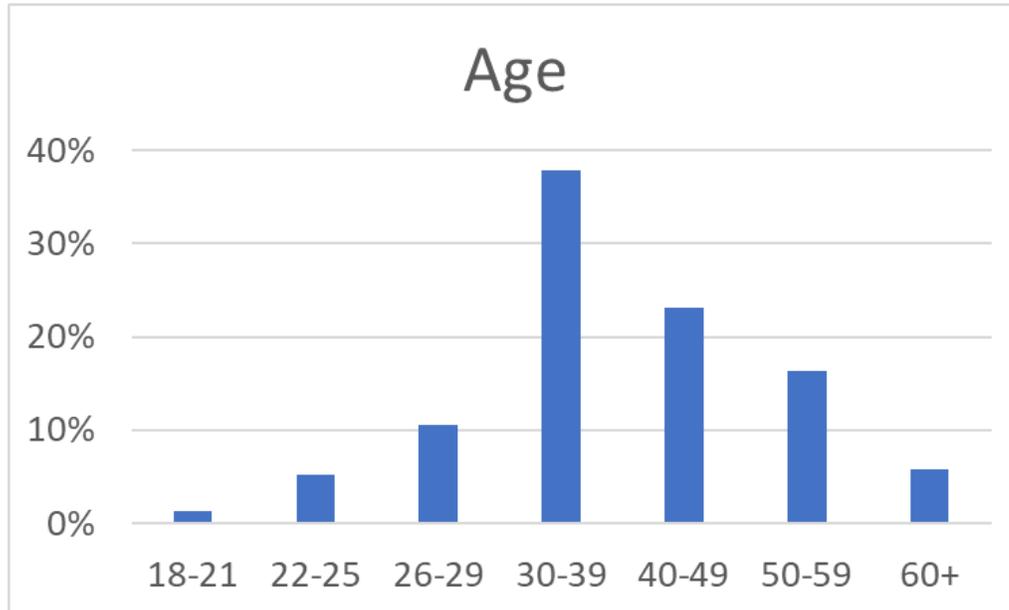
- 2021 survey results will be online soon

- Responses from SSPs in 20 counties.
- **955 respondents**, all reported some substance use in last 3 months.



Respondent demographics

Similar to 2019 survey



median age = 38

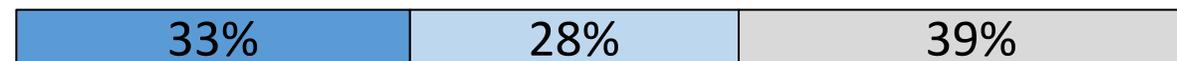
Race/ethnicity (Check all that apply)

	n	%
White	789	83%
American Indian/Alaska Native	95	10%
Latino/Hispanic	65	7%
Black/African American	48	5%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	20	2%
Asian/South Asian	10	1%
Another not listed	17	2%

Gender

	n	%
Man	555	58%
Woman	383	40%
Non-binary	12	1%
Trans woman	3	<1%
Trans man	1	<1%

Housing status



■ Permanent

■ Temporary/Unstable

■ Homeless

Among those who self-identified as a man or woman

	Men n=555	Women n=383
Sex partners in last 12 months...		
Men	14%	73%
Women	63%	11%
Partners of gender identities	3%	2%
None	20%	14%



SUBSTANCE USE

- 93% had injected any drug in the past three months.

Substances used in the last 3 months and "main" drug, n=955

	In last 3 months							
	Used this		Injected it		Smoked it		Main drug	
	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021
Methamphetamine*	84%	86%	73%	70%	79%	80%	26%	29%
Heroin*	78%	69%	96%	93%	51%	37%	57%	41%
Heroin & meth together	46%	48%	96%	96%	29%	39%	8%	21%
Heroin & cocaine together	7%	12%	95%	93%	14%	28%	1%	1
Fentanyl	19%	42%	84%	47%	36%	72%	0%	3%

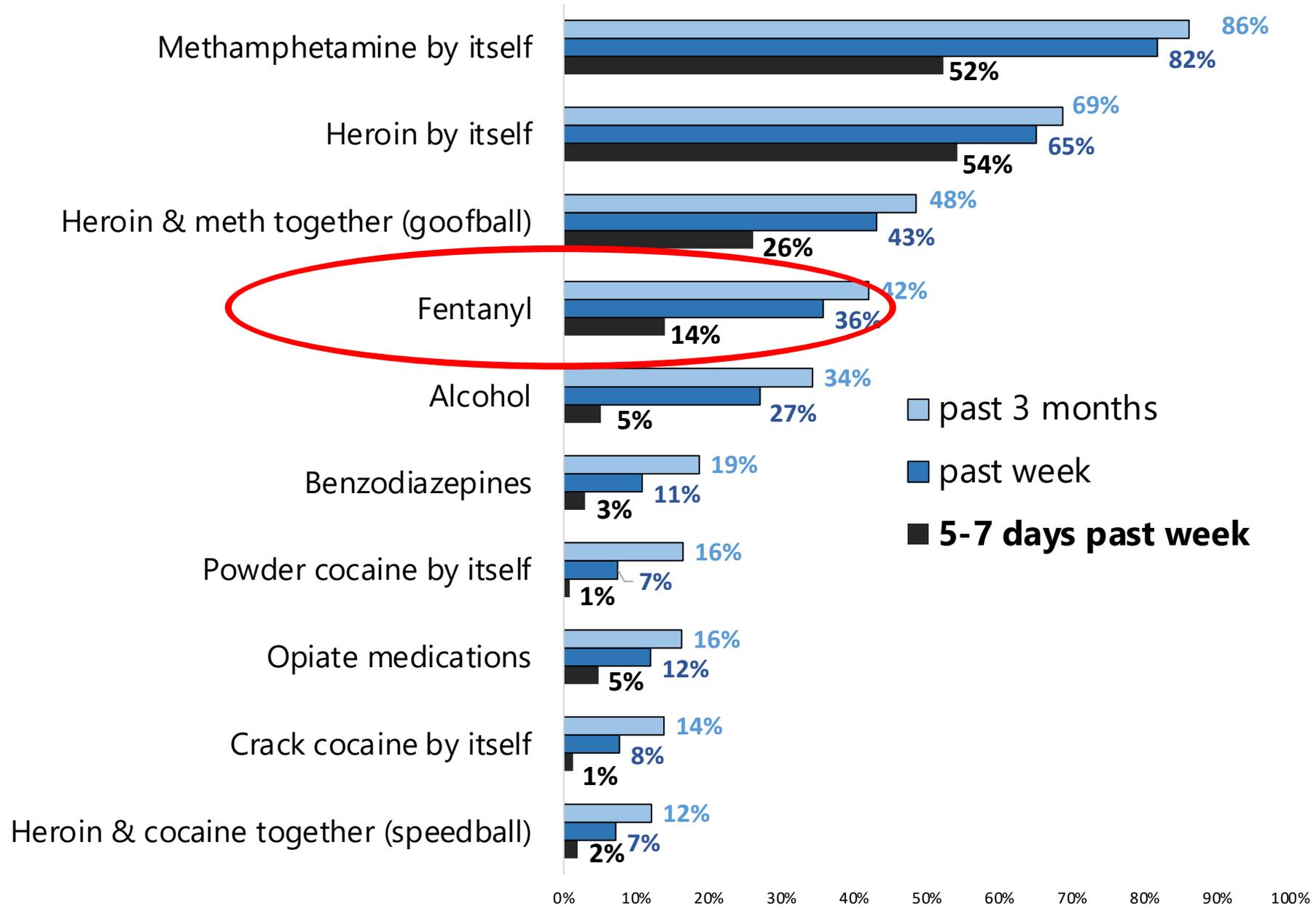
*by itself

Substances used in the last 3 months and “main” drug, n=955

	In last 3 months						Main drug	
	Used this		Injected it		Smoked it			
	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021
Crack cocaine*	10%	14%	24%	13%	87%	92%	1%	1%
Powder cocaine*	10%	16%	46%	42%	20%	39%	0%	0%
Other opiate medications	11%	16%	18%	18%	17%	55%	1%	0%
Benzodiazepines	17%	19%	5%	10%	2%	14%	0%	0%
Alcohol	30%	34%	-	-	-	-	2%	1%
Methadone not from a clinic		6%		13%		13%		0%
Buprenorphine not from a clinic		6%		7%		7%		0%

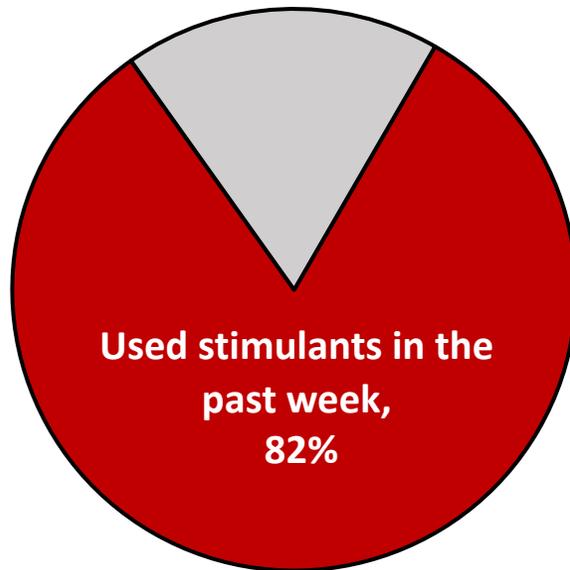
**by itself*

Frequency of drug use n=955



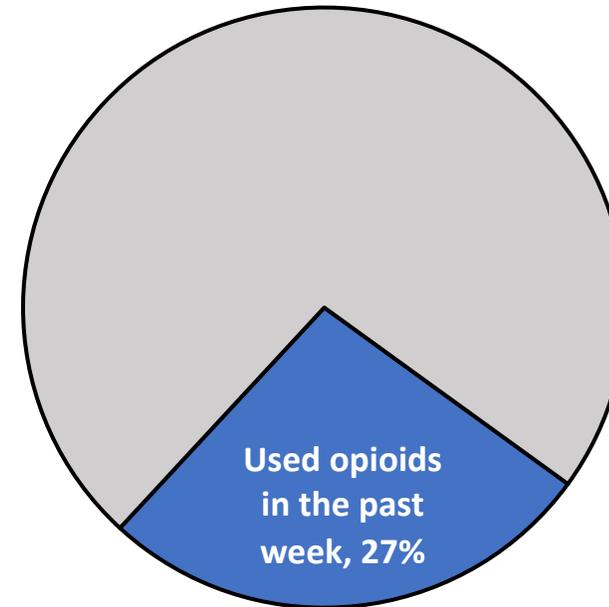
Main drug heroin

(n=386)



Main drug meth

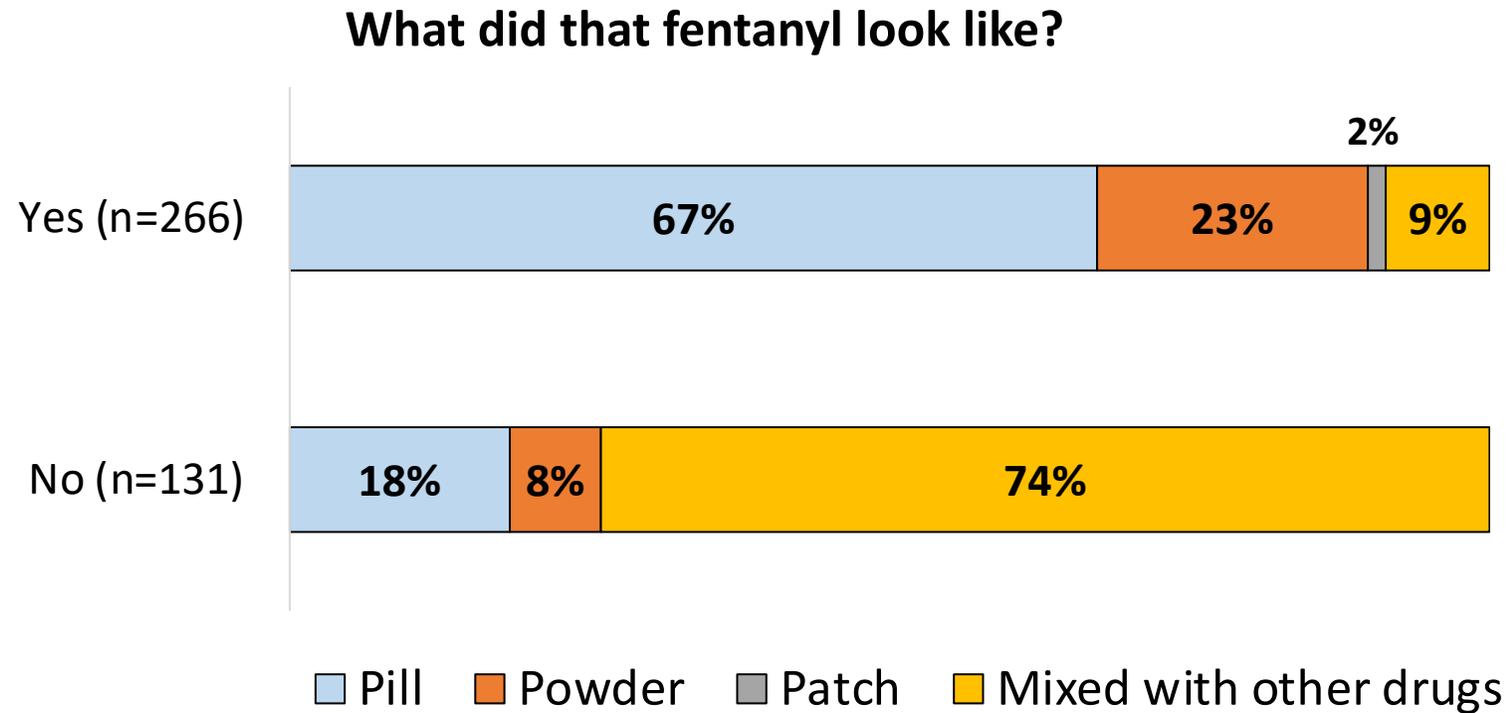
(n=268)



Similar to 2019 survey

Fentanyl- intentional use and form

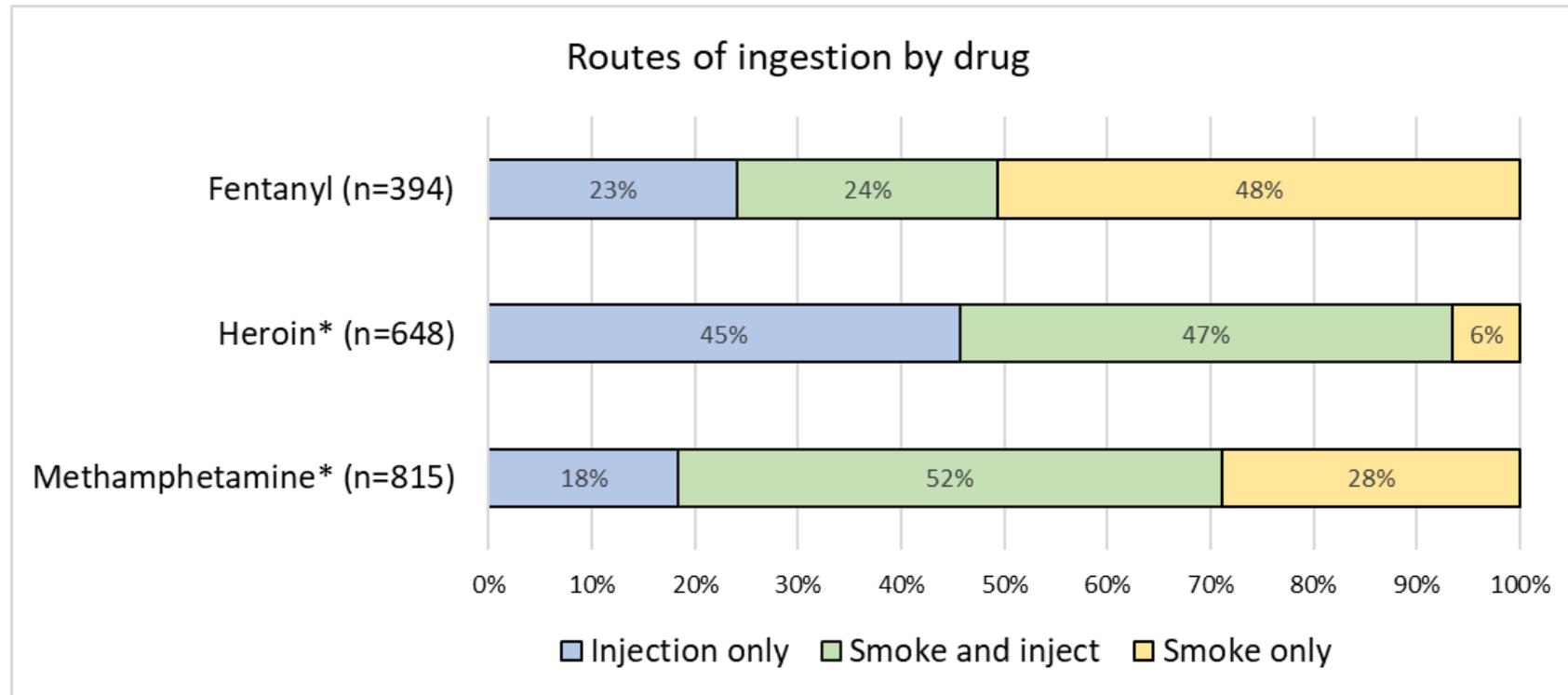
The last time you used fentanyl
was it on purpose?





SMOKING

Routes of ingestion by drug



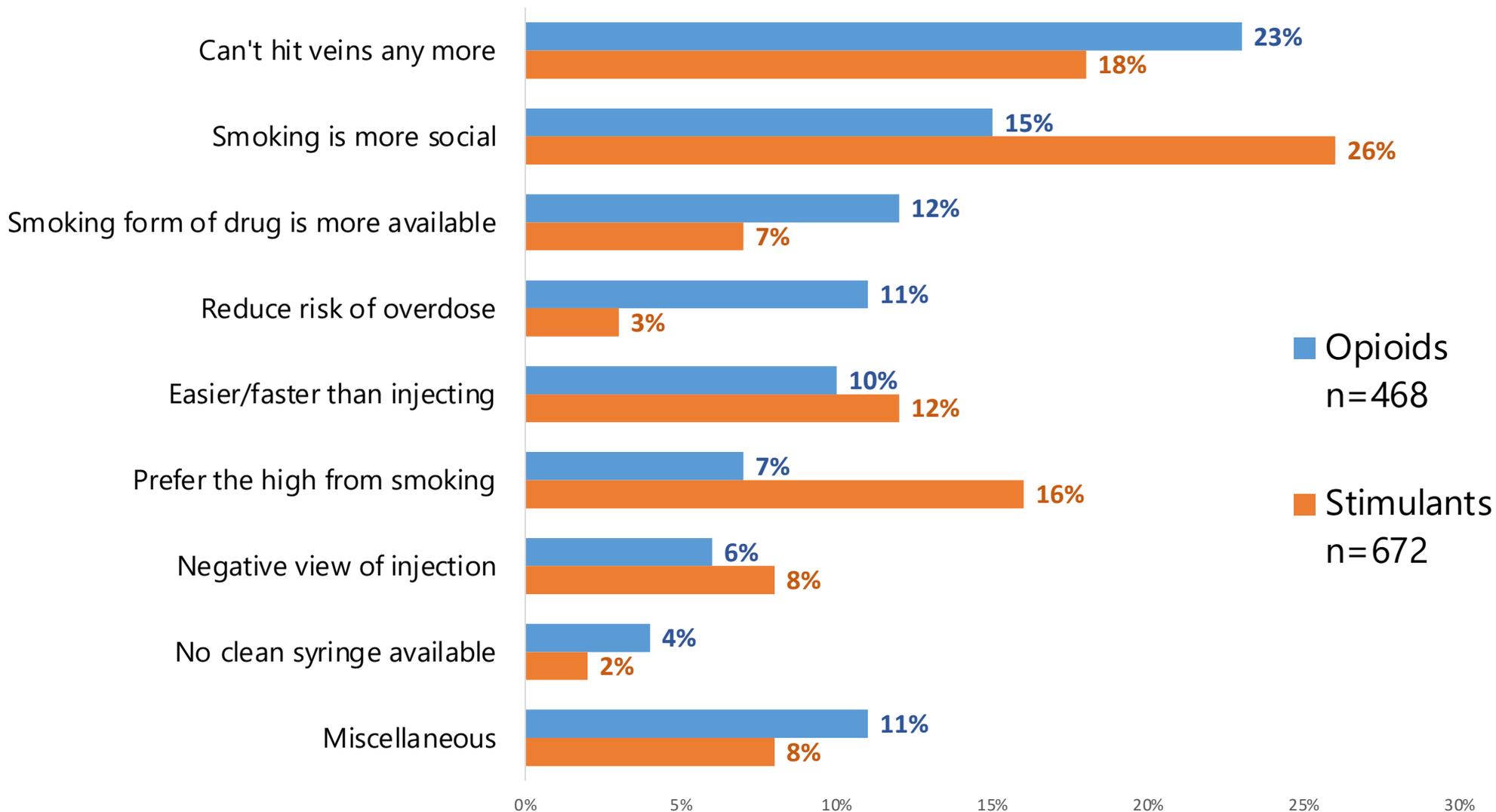
Smoking of other substances:

In last 3 months:

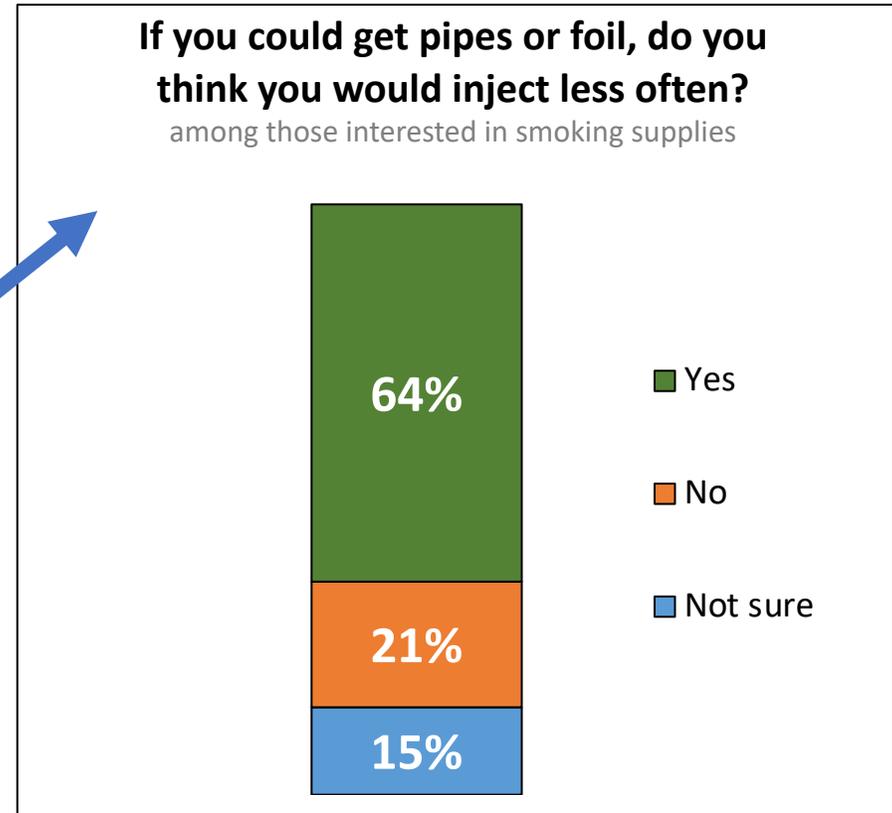
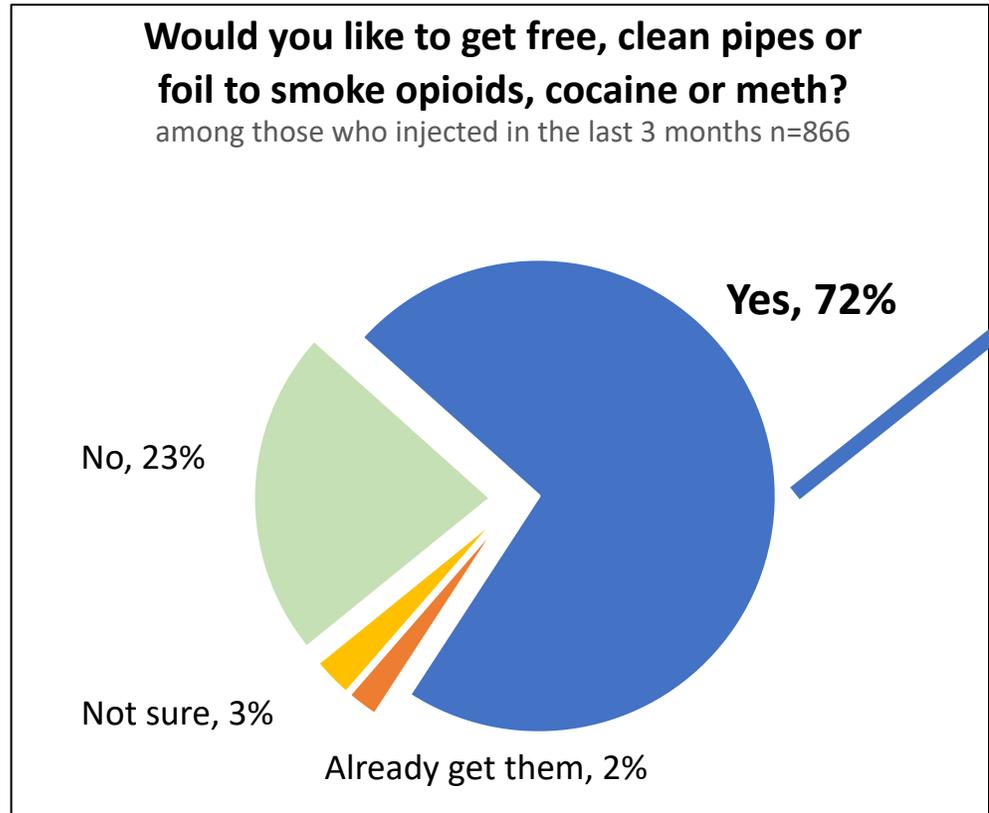
- **83% smoked or vaped tobacco**
- **54% smoked, vaped or dabbled cannabis**

What is your MAIN reason for... smoking opioids? smoking stimulants?

among those who reported smoking an opioid/stimulant in last 3 months



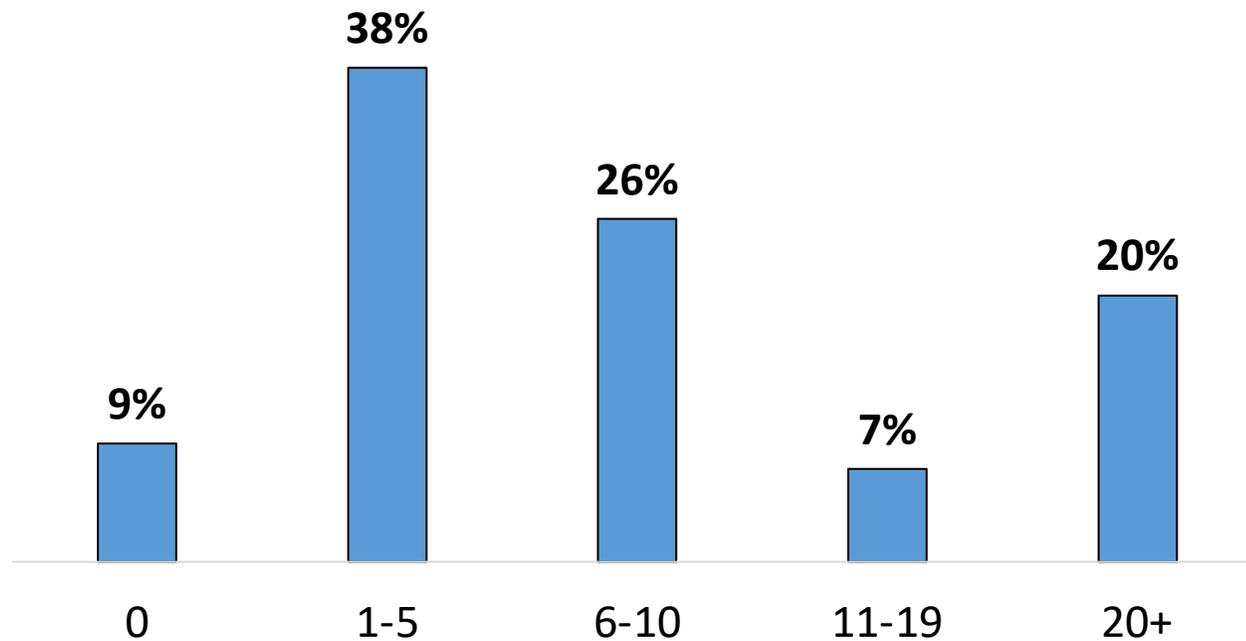
Interest in smoking supplies



Peer networks of people who do NOT inject

How many people do you know right now who smoke opioids, cocaine or meth but don't inject them?

Among people who injected any drug in the past three months (n=878)



range: 0-75 people

average: 11 people

median: 6 people

INJECTION AND SSP UTILIZATION

Drug injection frequency

In the last 7 days, on how many days did you inject any drug? n=886		
0 days	4%	Average = 6 days
1-4 days	17%	73% inject every day
5-7 days	79%	
On an average injecting day, how many times do you inject? n=883		
1 time	12%	Average = 3.6 times
2 times	23%	
3-5 times	52%	
6+ times	13%	
On average, about how many times do you use a syringe before you get rid of it? n=885		
1 time	73%	Average = 1.6 times
2 times	14%	
3+ times	13%	

Similar to 2019 survey

In the last 3 months, how many different people did you share a syringe with - either you used it first or they did? <i>n=885</i>		
No one else	87%	Average = 0.2 people
1+ people	13%	
In the last 3 months, how many different people did you share cookers, cotton, water, or backload with? <i>n=885</i>		
No one else	66%	Average = 0.9 people
1+ people	34%	

Similar to 2019 survey

How many other people are you getting syringes for today, not including yourself? <i>n=911</i>	
No one else	37%
1 person	26%
2 people	14%
3+ people	23%
average = 1.9 people	
Including today, how many times did you get syringes from an exchange in the last 30 days? <i>n=911</i>	
1 time	43%
2 times	23%
3+ times	34%
average = 2.6 times	

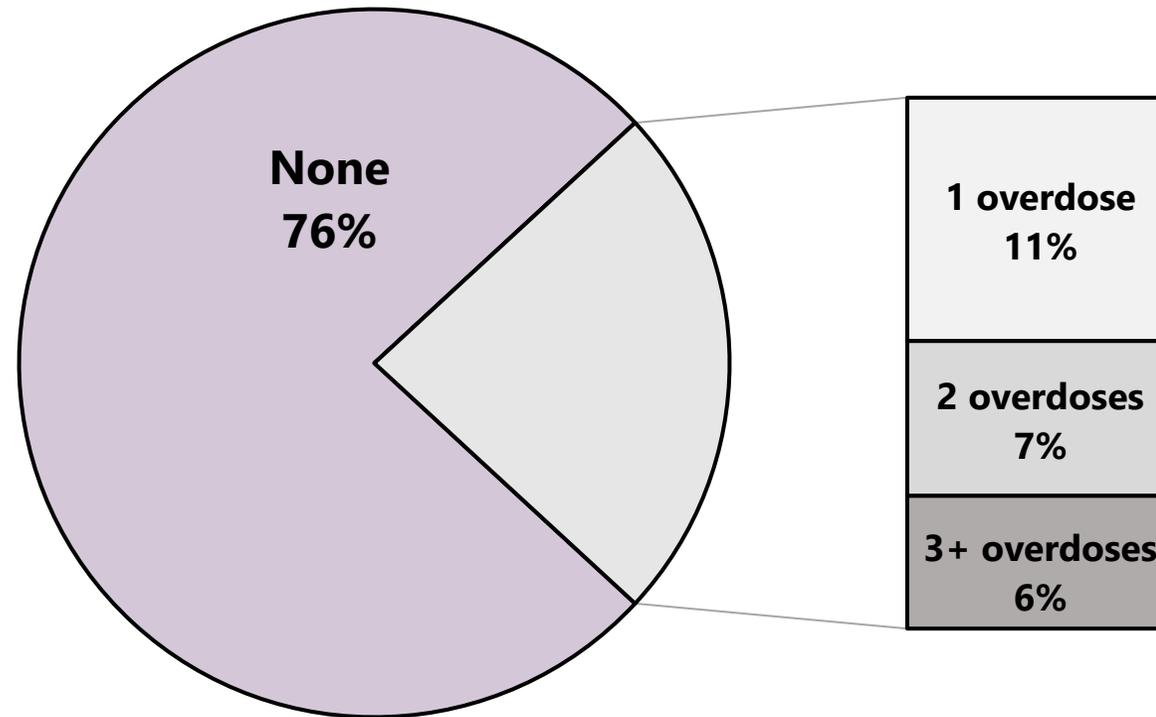
Similar to 2019 survey



OVERDOSE

Opioid overdoses had, last 12 months

among those who had used opioids n=764



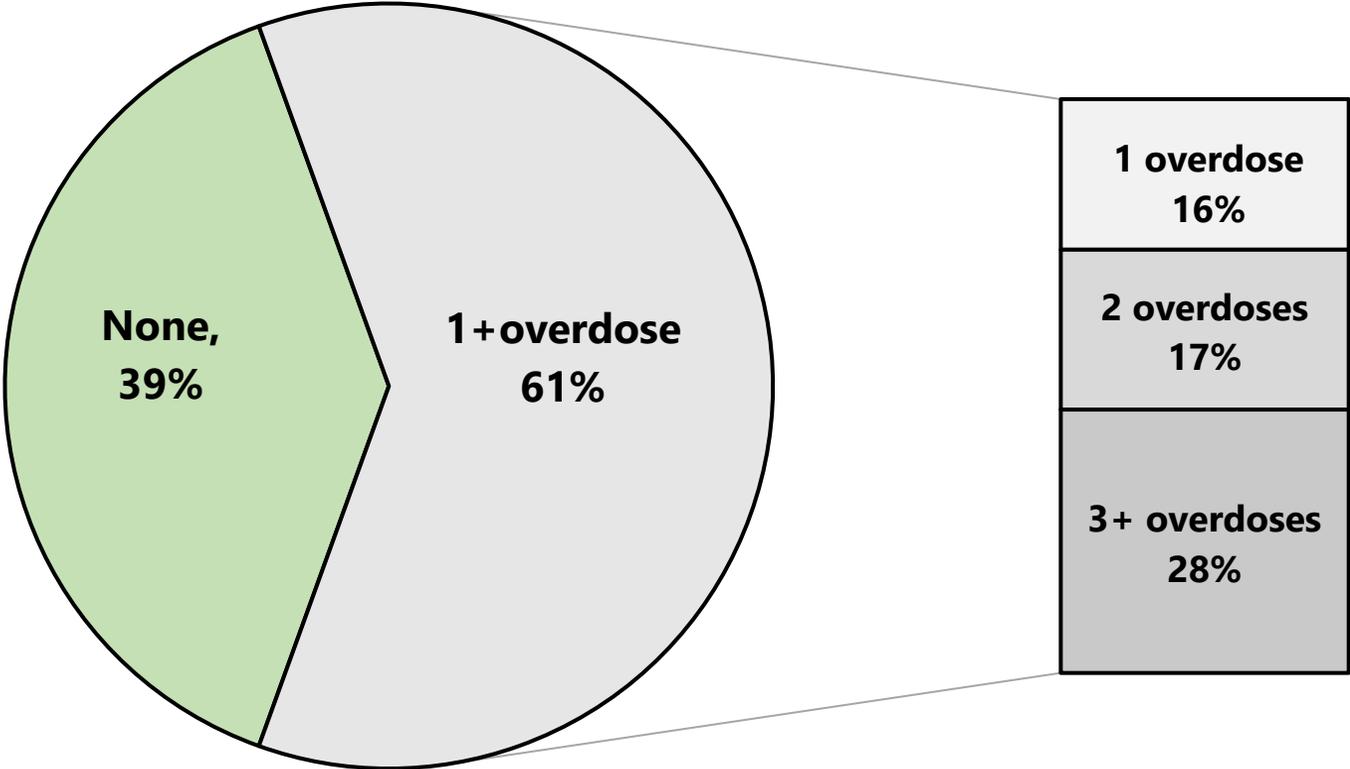
Similar to 2019 survey

Opioid overdose by fentanyl use

Had at least 1 opioid OD in last 12 months (n=751)



Opioid overdoses witnessed, last 12 months

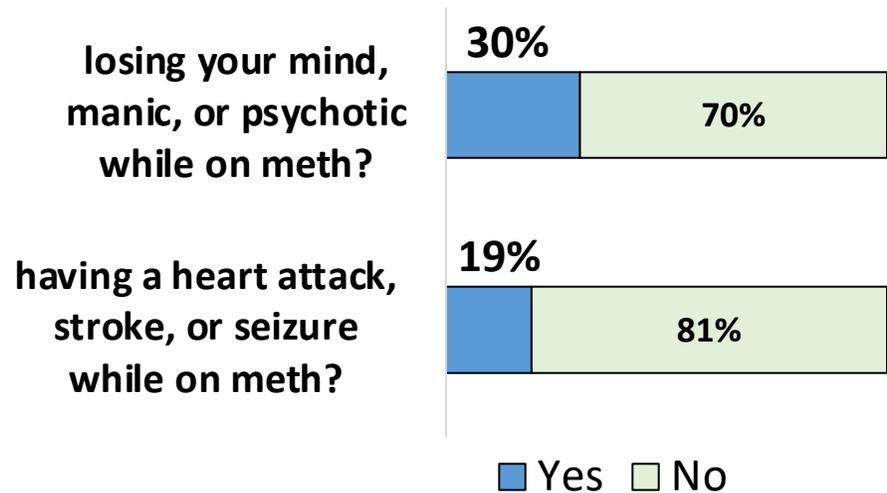


Similar to 2019 survey

Acute consequences of meth use

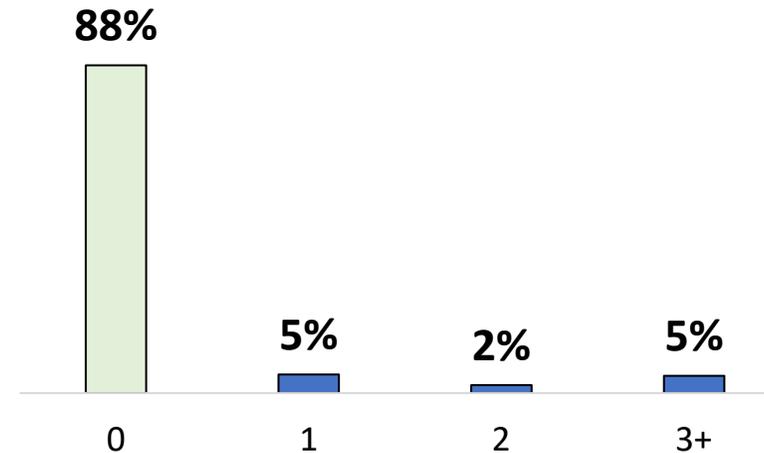
In the past 3 months, have you ever felt like you were...

Among those who had used meth in the past 3 months n=863



In the past 3 months, how many times have you been to the ER for a medical or psychiatric problem from meth?

Among those who used meth in the past 3 months n=837



Slightly higher than 2019 survey



HEALTH CARE TOPICS

92% have health insurance. Of those, 83% have Medicaid.

HIV testing:

- 44% within last year
- 45% over a year ago
- 11% never tested

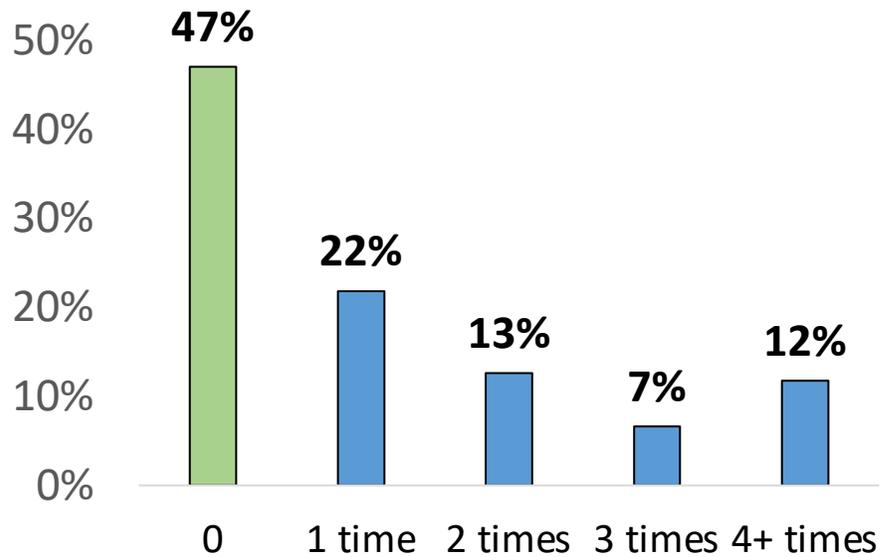
Syphilis testing in last 12 months?

- 71% No
- 6% Not sure
- 23% Yes → 14% of these (n=29) were told they had syphilis.
- 3% (n=30) had been told by a sex partner or public health worker that they had been exposed to syphilis.

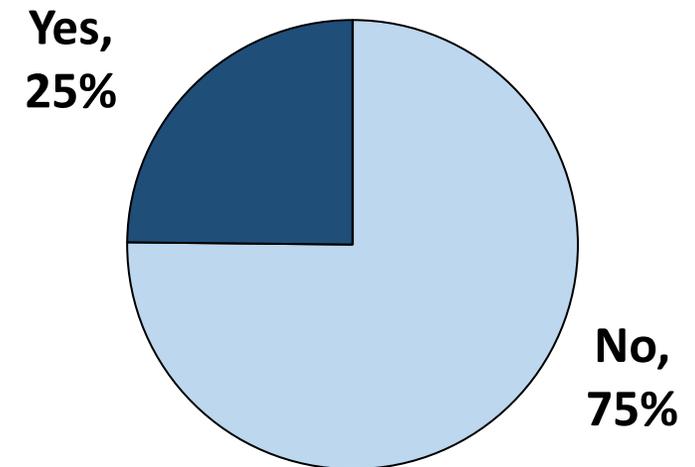
Injection-related infections:

- Abscesses, skin infections 38%
- Blood clot/infection 6%
- Endocarditis 2%

How many times have you been to the ER or urgent care in the past 12 months?

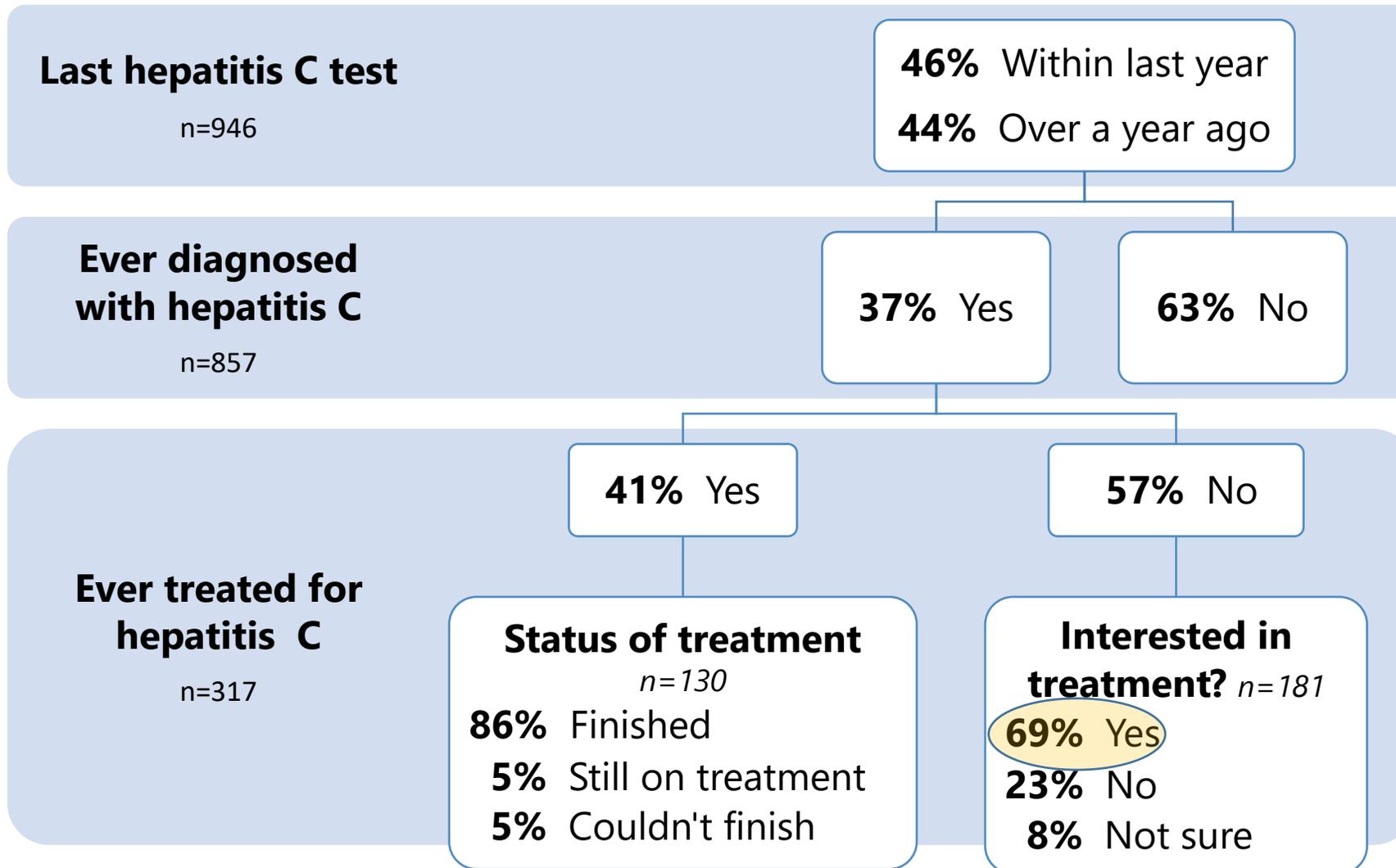


Were you in jail or prison in the past 12 months?



Slightly lower than 2019 survey

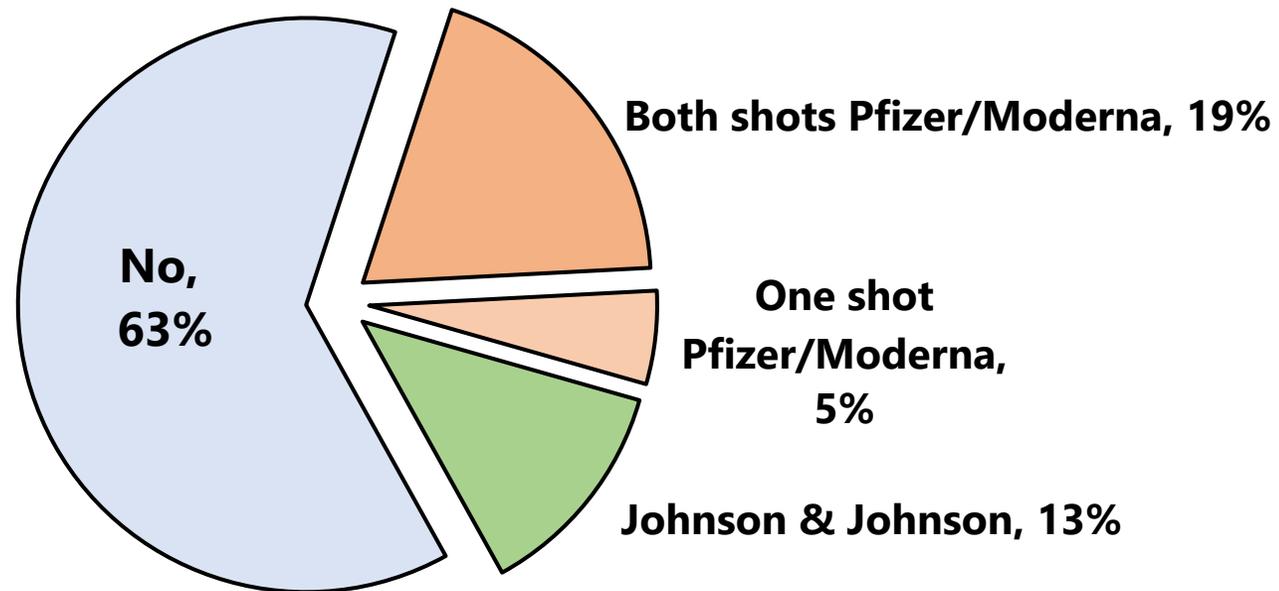
Hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment



Covid diagnosis & vaccination

- 11% had been diagnosed with Covid, 3% unsure.
- “No vaccination” ranged from 46% - 84%.
- Unvaccinated rates generally higher in more rural areas.

Have you been vaccinated for COVID-19? n=934



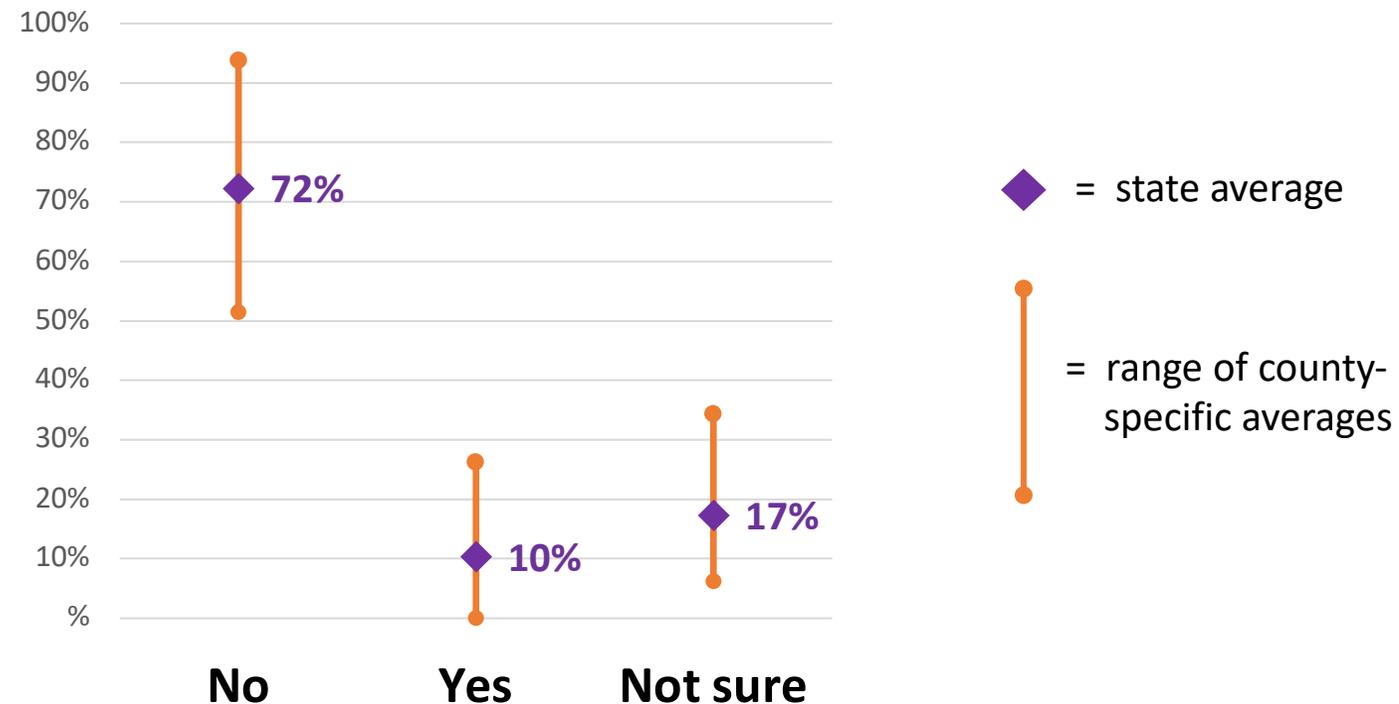
**Did not ask about booster shots*

Covid vaccination interest

- Interest in COVID vaccination was generally low but varied by county.
- By county, highest levels of vaccination uncertainty (“not sures”) were often in more rural counties where rates of vaccination were often the lowest. **Opportunity???**

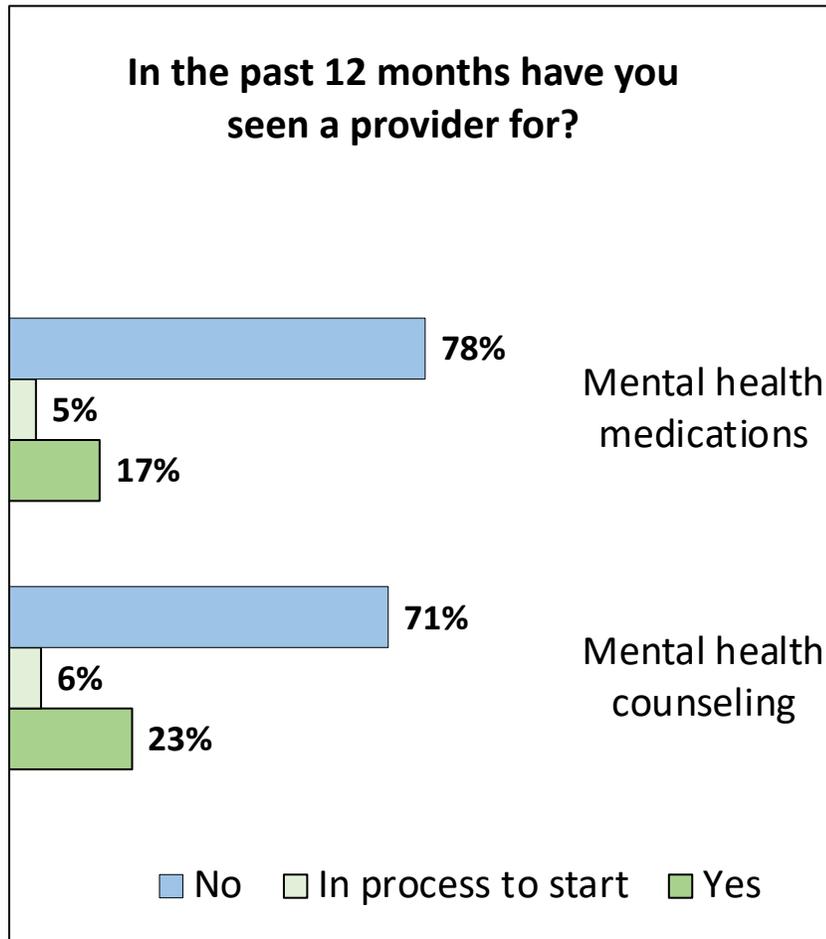
Do you want to get vaccinated?

Among those who were not vaccinated n= 587





MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG TREATMENT



In 2019:

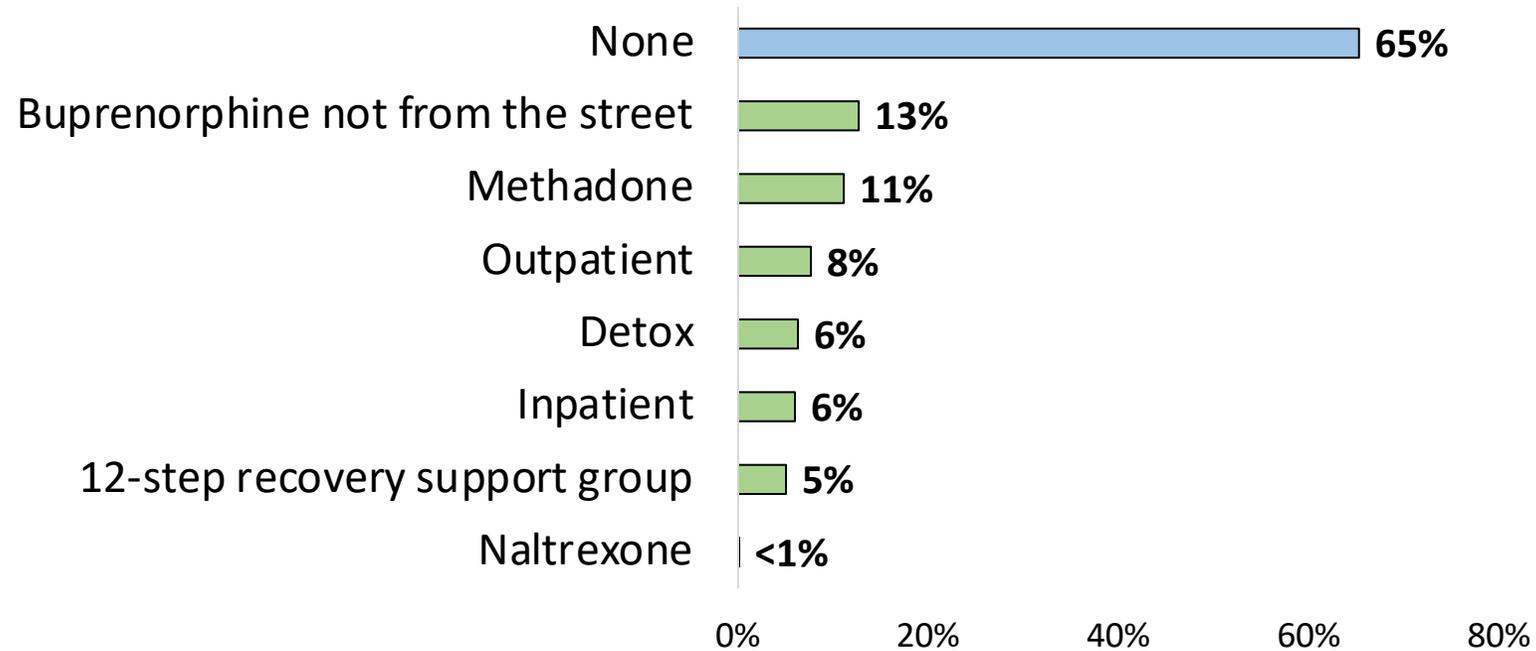
26% were *very concerned* about depression.

36% were *very concerned* about anxiety.

20% were *very concerned* about both.

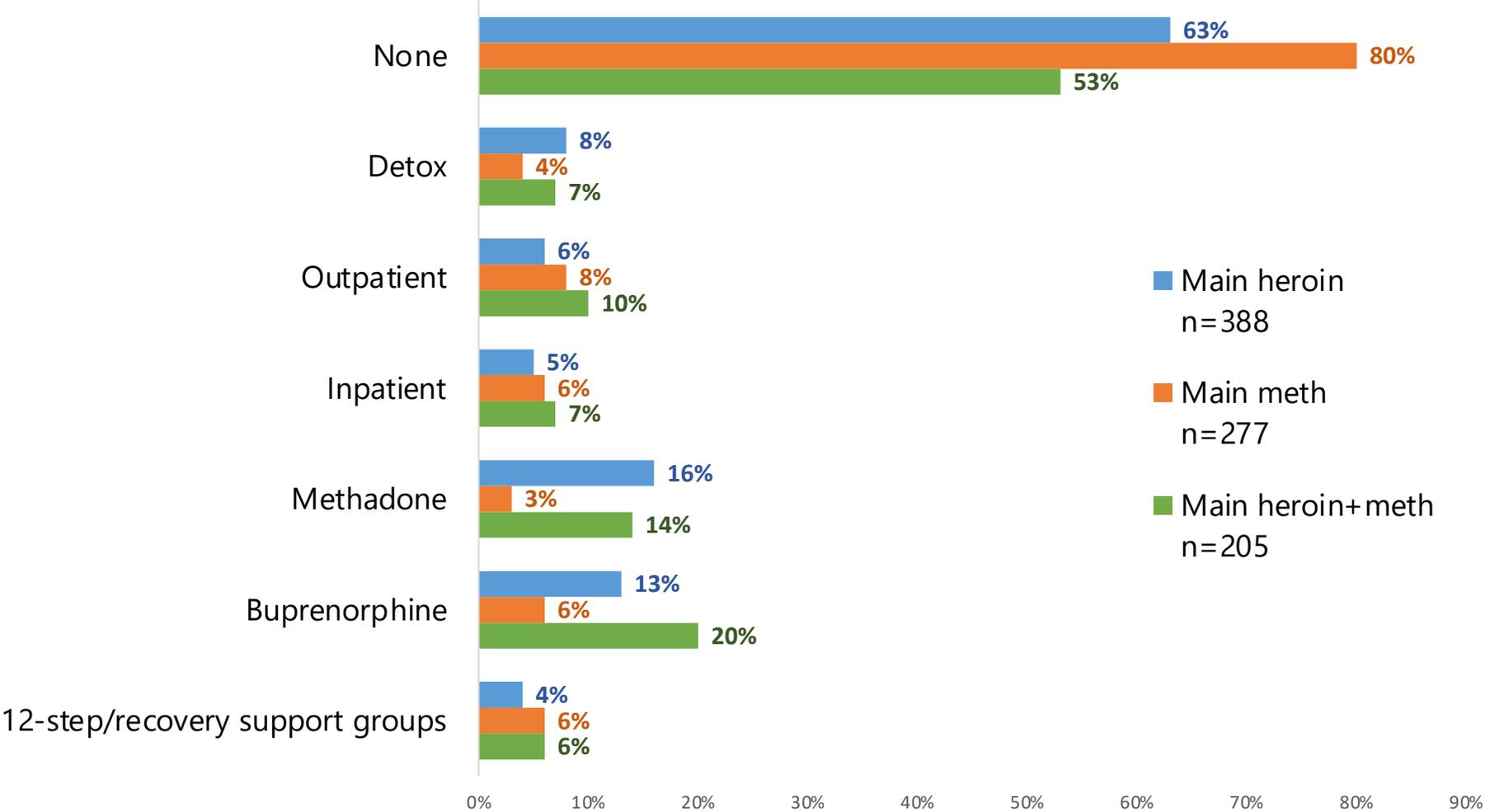
Drug treatment in last 12 months

In the past 12 months, what types of drug treatment, if any, did you get? (n=955)



Drug treatment by main drug

Drug treatment/support services used in last 12 months



*only one person used naltrexone