

Drug use in people living with HIV (PLWH): Impact of the COVID-19 epidemics and situation in the post-COVID-19 era .

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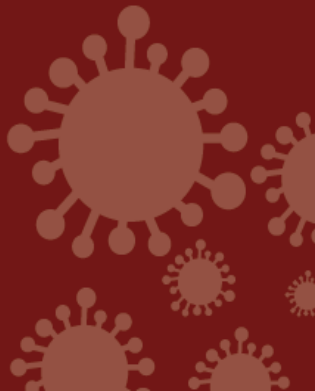


European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction



EU Drug Markets **Impact of COVID-19**

May 2020



13th
International
Symposium on
Neuropsychiatry & HIV

VIRTUAL EDITION 2020
October 20-22-27-29 & November 3

Universitat Pompeu Fabra



Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets

- Global restrictions on travel and other measures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a temporary disruptive impact on the drug market leading to shortages and higher prices for some drugs, but the situation is subject to rapid change.
- The disruption to the supply chain and logistics of drug trafficking in Europe is most evident at the distribution level, because of social distancing measures.



Specific substances

- Cocaine: there is little evidence. Experts in some countries report increasing prices and decreasing purity at the consumer level, indicative of local supply shortages.
- Heroin: The availability of heroin has decreased in some areas but this varies depending on national confinement rules and restrictions on movement, with higher prices.
- Community heroin has been substituted with other substances: synthetic opioids (diverted medicines or new psychoactive substances (NPS) or alternative drugs (e.g. crack cocaine, amphetamine, cathinones).



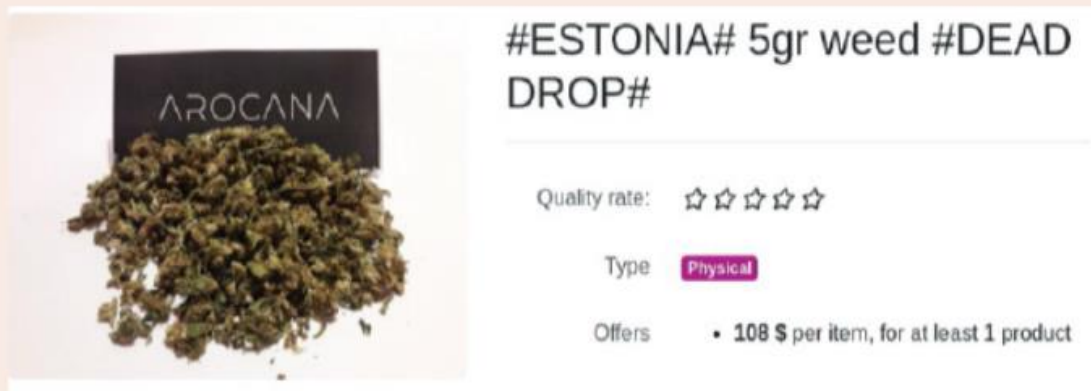
Drug-markets

- Organised crime groups (OCGs) remain resilient and are adapting their modi operandi to the current situation.
- Surface web and darknet markets, social media and secure encrypted communication applications now appear to be playing a more prominent role in the sourcing of drugs at user level.
- Home deliveries, less face-to-face dealing and less reliance on cash as a form of payment seem to be increasing.



Drug drops, aka 'dead drops'

This distribution method involves the buyer transferring funds to the seller, after which the drugs are secreted in a hidden place and the coordinates and a description of the hiding place are sent to the buyer to retrieve them. Frequently, cryptocurrencies and encrypted communication channels are used, such as Telegram, Wickr, Signal, etc. Clearly, the seller and the buyer need to be relatively close to each other, as they both have to travel to the same place.



#ESTONIA# 5gr weed #DEAD DROP#

Quality rate: ☆☆☆☆☆

Type **Physical**

Offers • 108 \$ per item, for at least 1 product





European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

June 2020

EMCDDA trendspotter briefing

June 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use and drug-related harms in Europe

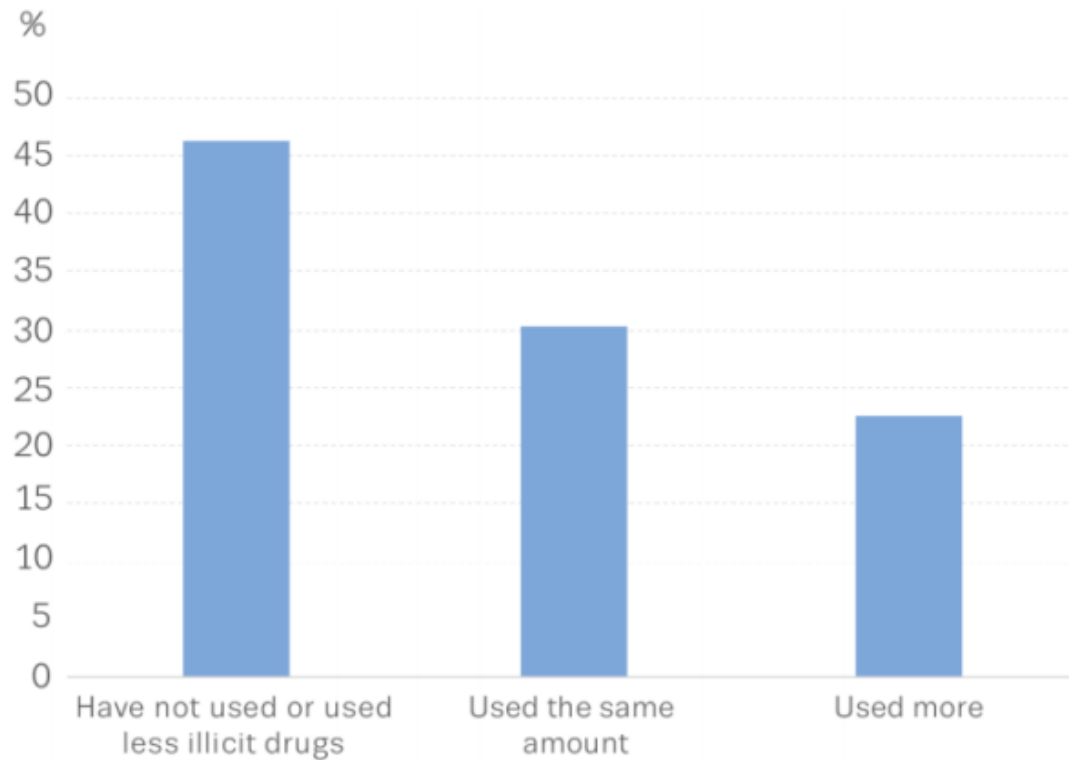


- Preliminary findings suggest an overall decline in drug use, or some forms of drug use in Europe during the first 3 months of the pandemic.
- A combination of factors could explain this:
 - notably national confinement measures, which have reduced opportunities to use drugs within social environments.
 - disruption of street drug markets, resulting in a decline in the availability of some substances.
- The use of cocaine and MDMA appears to have been most affected, largely linked to the closure of the night-time economy and the implementation of stay-at-home measures.



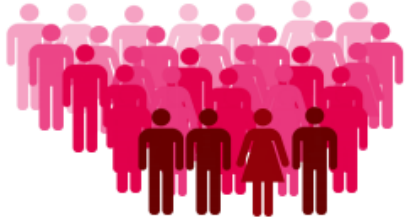
FIGURE 2

EWSD-COVID respondents (%) reporting how the amount of drugs they used changed after the implementation of COVID-19 containment measures



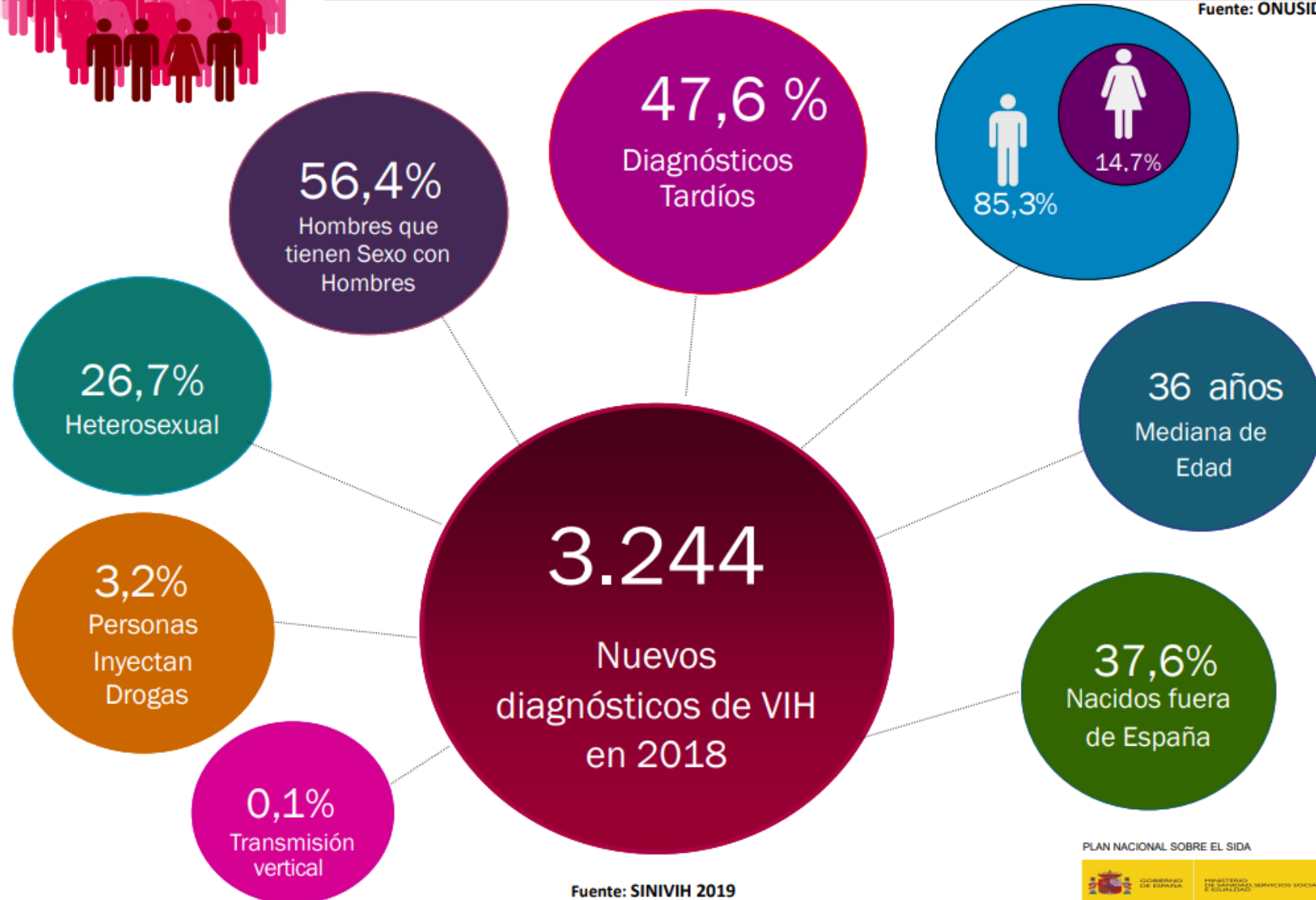
Note: number of respondents = 7 352.





Estimación de la prevalencia de personas con el VIH en la población general 0,3%

Fuente: ONUSIDA 2019



PLAN NACIONAL SOBRE EL SIDA



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prevalence and patterns of illicit drug use in people living with HIV in Spain: A cross-sectional study

Maria Jose Fuster-RuizdeApodaca ¹ ^{*}, Vanessa Castro-Granell^{2,3} ^{*}, Noé Garin^{4,5,6}, Ana Laguía⁷, Ángeles Jaén ⁸, Carlos Iniesta ^{1,9}, Santiago Cenoz¹⁰, María José Galindo^{1,11}



- Observational cross-sectional study including 1401 PLWHIV.
- 33 sites across Spain

- Most frequently consumed substances:
 - Alcohol (86.7%)
 - Tobacco (55.0%)
 - Illicit drugs (49.5%)
 - Other substances (27.1%)



- Most prevalent illicit drugs:
 - Cannabis (73,8%)
 - Cocaine powder (53,9%)
 - Poppers (45,4%)



Cluster analysis: 4 clusters

- 2 clusters composed mainly by HTX.
 - Cluster 1 (n=172): lowest polydrug use, cannabis.
 - Cluster 2 (n=84): men, heroine and cocaine, lowest level of treatment adherence.
- 2 clusters of MSM, mostly users of recreational drugs.
 - Cluster 3 (n=285): moderate consumption regarding frequency and diversity of drugs.
 - Cluster 4 (n=153): highest drug polyconsumption, injection of recreational drugs, sex related drugs use, higher rates of STIs.





Rapid Implementation of Service Delivery Changes to Mitigate COVID-19 and Maintain Access to Methadone Among Persons with and at High-Risk for HIV in an Opioid Treatment Program

K. Michelle Peavy¹ · James Darnton^{1,2} · Paul Grekin^{1,3} · Monica Russo¹ · Caleb J. Banta Green⁴ · Joseph O. Merrill² · Charissa Fotinos⁵ · Steve Woolworth¹ · Sean Soth¹ · Judith I. Tsui²

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- Medication treatment for opioid use disorder with methadone and buprenorphine is a key HIV prevention strategy; reduction in injections drug use, syringe/equipment sharing, risky sexual behavior, higher rates of ART adherence.
- COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this modality of treatment service delivery.
- Need to implement service delivery changes to maintain Access to methadone in high-risk opioid users: COVID-19 screening, take-home doses, implementation of video-directly observed therapy.



CHEMSEX



- Chemsex is a particular type of sexualised substance practice amongst gay and bisexual men, other men who have sex with men (MSM), and trans and non-binary people who participate in gay “hook-up culture”.
- Slam/Slamsex: sexualised injection of drugs
- Recreational drugs: mephedrone/other cathinones, crystal-meth, GHB/GBL, others.
- Long periods of time, multiple partners, unprotected sex.

2nd European Chemsex F
Berlin, 22-24 March 2018



CHEMSEX & HIV

- **CHEMSEX:** More frequent in HIV positive MSM in comparison with seronegative MSM (González-Baeza et al., 2018; Guerras, 2020; Maxwell et al., 2019).

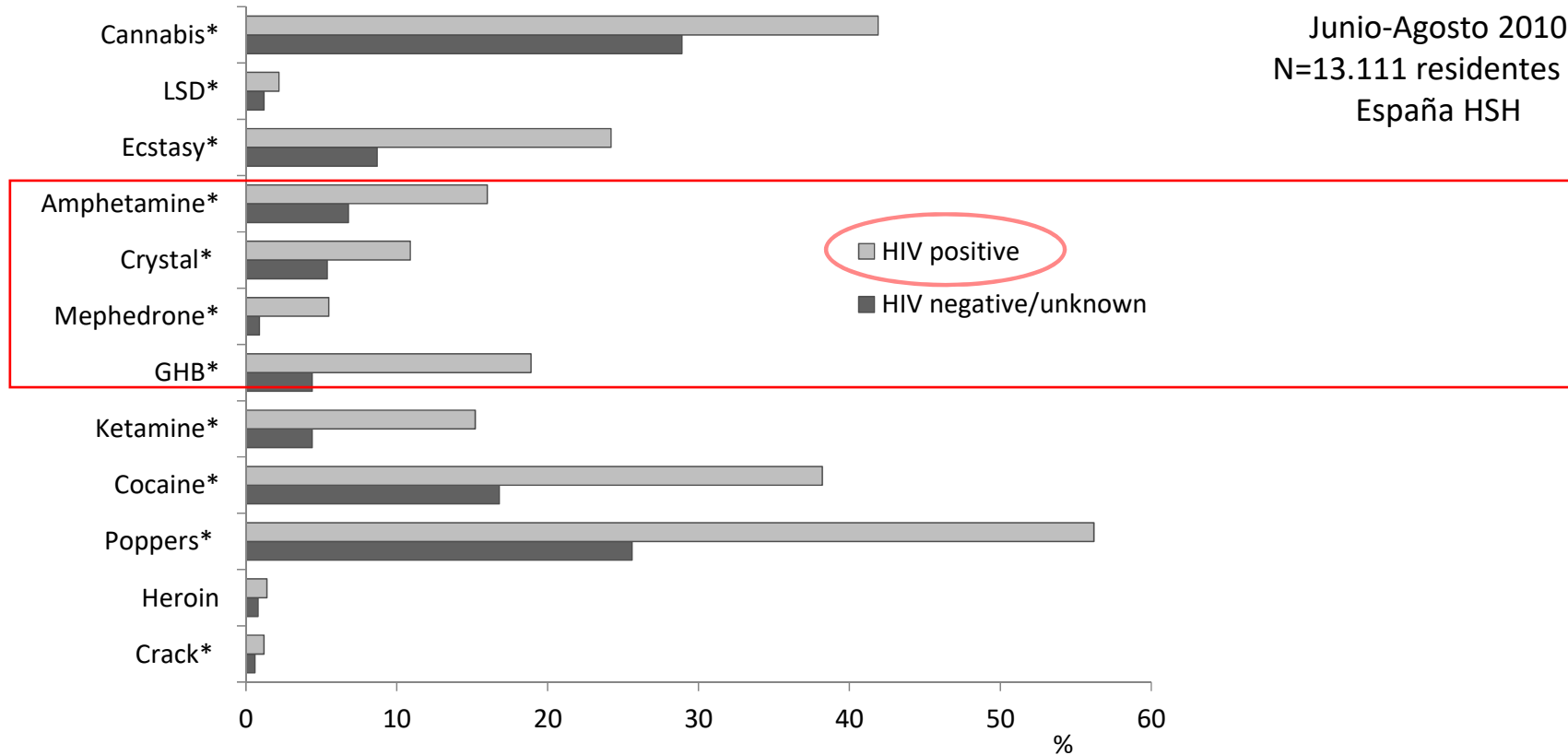


<https://www.playground.media/>



Chemsex drug-use HIV+

Estudio EMIS
Junio-Agosto 2010
N=13.111 residentes en
España HSH



Cinta Folch. Consumo de drogas en hombres que tienen relaciones sexuales con hombres (ChemSex). Comunicación oral, 36º congreso semFYC, A Coruña, 2016

EMIS Europa: 4.96 mayor probabilidad de uso de las 4 drogas si V



CHEMSEX & HIV



- EMIS SPAIN 2017:
 - Use of stimulant drugs to enhance sexual encounters (last 4 weeks):
 - HIV positive MSM (22,1%)
 - Seronegative MSM (6,2%)
 - Serologic state unknown (6,2%)

(Conway et al., 2019; Ministerio de Sanidad, 2020).





- Data in Spain:
 - Sexualised drug use in the last 12 months:
 - HIV positive MSM (21,9%)
 - Seronegative MSM (6,6%)
 - Serologic state unknown (2,1%)

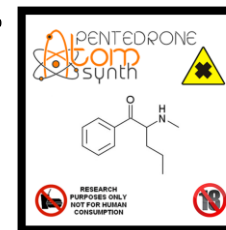
(Guerras, 2020).



RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CHEMSEX DRUG USE



- **Mephedrone/other cathinones:** High addictive potential (slam): abuse, intense craving. Psychosis, agitation, delirium, suicidal conduct.
- **GHB/GBL:** overdoses (G-Hole), death.
- **Crystal-meth (TINA):** High addictive potential, psychosis. Loss of inhibitions, risk of HIV.
- **Poly-drug abuse:** *Poppers*, cocaine, ketamine, MDMA, erectile dysfunction drugs.



CHEMSEX

- Drug abuse disorders, induced psychiatric disorders, undiagnosed previous psychopathology, history of trauma, sexual-abuse, overdoses.
- **High-risk sexual conducts:** HIV.
- **Slam:** VHC.
- **Drug/ART interactions:** cobicistat, ritonavir
- **Drug/Drug interactions:**
 - GHB/alcohol: respiratory depression, coma, death.
 - TINA/Mephedrone: adrenergic syndrome, arrhythmia, death.
 - Poppers/sildenafil: severe hypotention.



AIDS and Behavior

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-020-02854-w>

NOTES FROM THE FIELD



Double Jeopardy: Methamphetamine Use and HIV as Risk Factors for COVID-19

Adam W. Carrico^{1,6} · Keith J. Horvath² · Christian Grov³ · Judith T. Moskowitz⁴ · Savita Pahwa¹ · Suresh Pallikkuth¹ · Sabina Hirshfield⁵





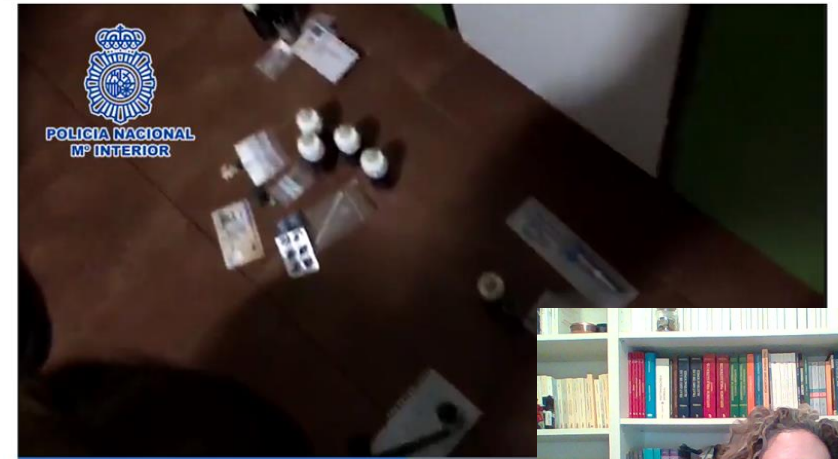
<https://www.playground.media/>



- The prevalence of stimulant use is twofold greater among MSM living with HIV.
- HIV damages the immune system even when people are virally suppressed, a phenomenon referred to as residual immune dysregulation, which meth use amplifies to create a double jeopardy for COVID-19.



- Meth use has been consistently linked to sexual risk taking behaviors among MSM, so it is likely that people who use meth will experience greater difficulties with adhering to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines.



Algunos de los detenidos en la sauna

Desalojan una sauna con 100 personas y gran cantidad de drogas

• La Policía Nacional detuvo a ocho personas como presuntos responsables de un d



AIDS PATIENT CARE and STDs
Volume 32, Number 3, 2018
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DOI: 10.1089/apc.2017.0263

BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH

Sexualized Drug Use (Chemsex) Is Associated with High-Risk Sexual Behaviors and Sexually Transmitted Infections in HIV-Positive Men Who Have Sex with Men: Data from the U-SEX GESIDA 9416 Study

Alicia González-Baeza, PhD,¹ Helen Dolengevich-Segal, MD,² Ignacio Pérez-Valero, MD, PhD,¹
Alfonso Cabello, MD,³ María Jesús Téllez, MD, PhD,⁴ José Sanz, MD, PhD,⁵ Leire Pérez-Latorre, MD, PhD,⁶
José Ignacio Bernardino, MD,¹ Jesús Troya, MD,⁷ Sara De La Fuente, MD, PhD,⁸ Otilia Bisbal, MD,⁹
Ignacio Santos, MD, PhD,¹⁰ Sari Arponen, MD, PhD,¹¹ Víctor Hontañón, MD,¹ José Luis Casado, MD, PhD,¹
and Pablo Ryan, MD, PhD,^{7,13} on Behalf of the U-SEX GESIDA 9416 Study

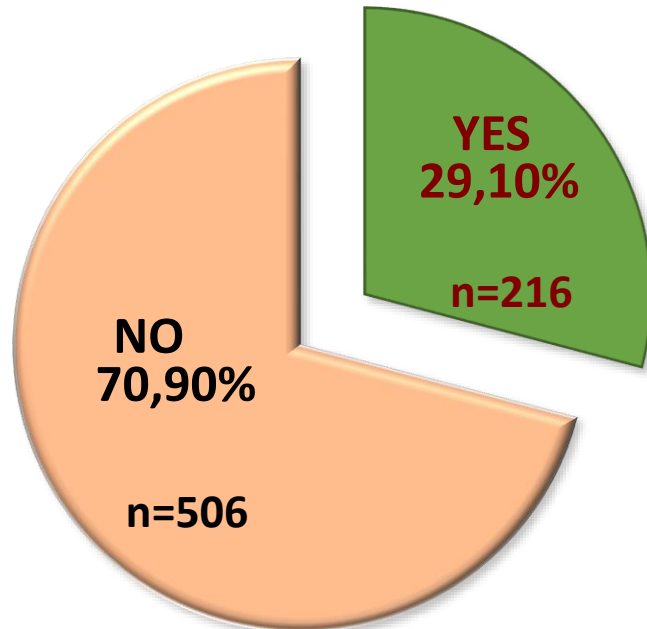


Chemsex practice (n=742)

Mephedrone, pentedrone, 4-MEC, Crystal-meth, GHB, ketamine, cocaine, MDMA

U-Sex Study
(GESIDA 9416)

Some time in the last year

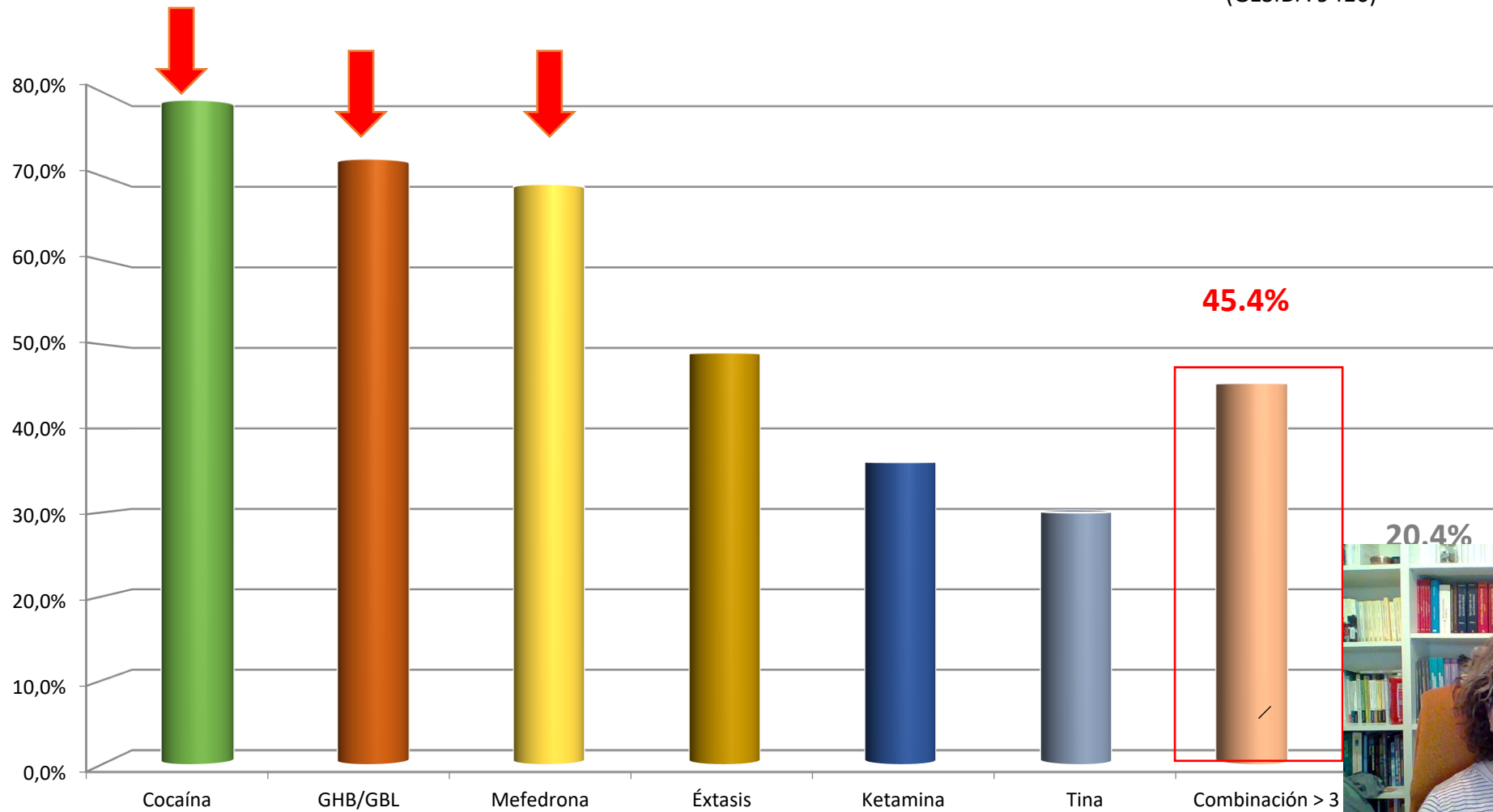


Slammig/Slamsex:
34/216 (15.7%)



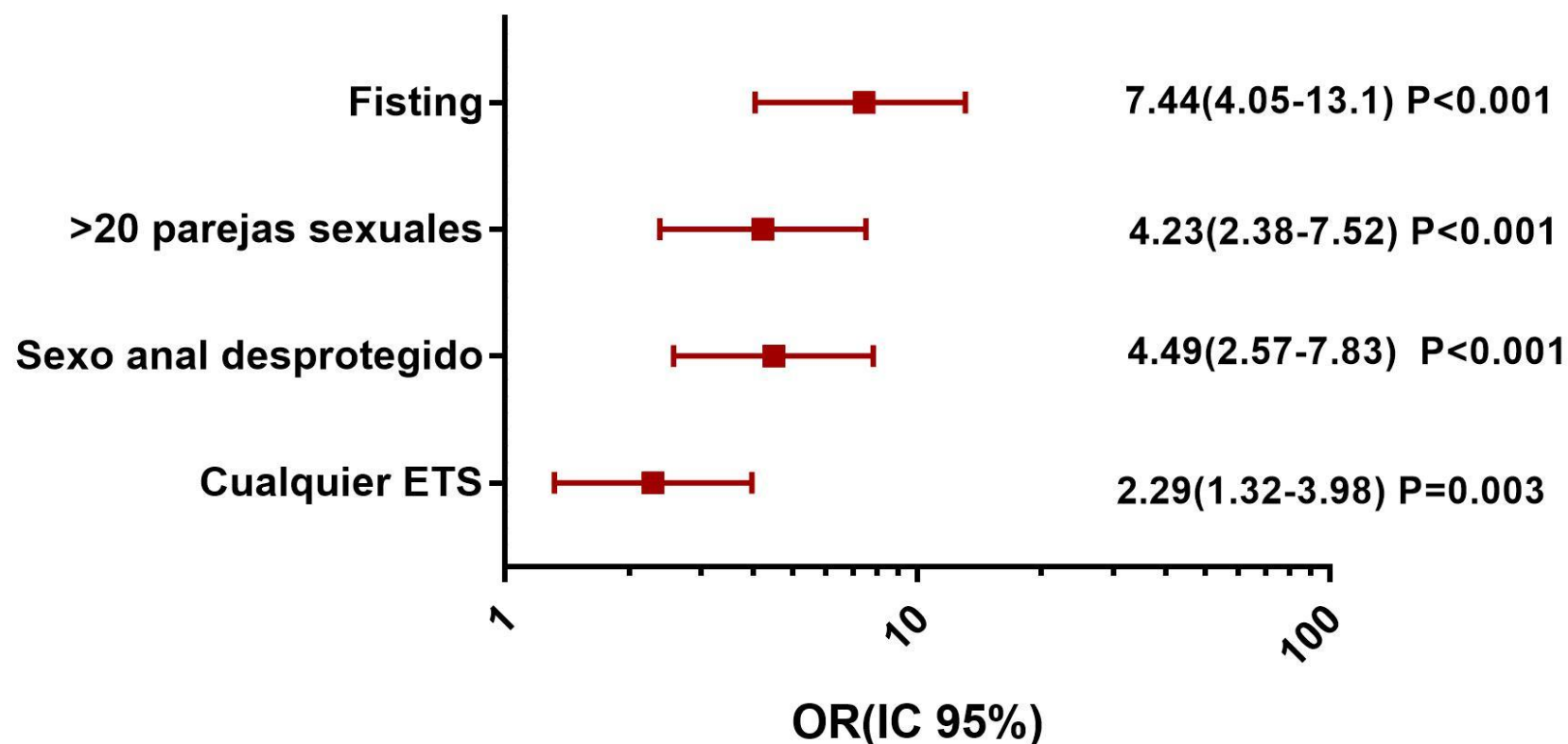
Sexualised drug use in the last year (n=216)

U-Sex Study
(GESIDA 9416)



Multivariant analysis: *Chemsex related factors*

U-Sex Study
(GESIDA 9416)






Ajustadas por variables con asociación en univariante $p<.05$, selección de variables asociadas al mismo fenómeno y



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Drug-related and psychopathological symptoms in HIV-positive men who have sex with men who inject drugs during sex (slamsex): Data from the U-SEX GESIDA 9416 Study

Helen Dolengevich-Segal ^{1,2*}, Alicia Gonzalez-Baeza³, Jorge Valencia ⁴, Eulalia Valencia-Ortega³, Alfonso Cabello⁵, Maria Jesus Tellez-Molina⁶, Maria Jesus Perez-Elias ⁷, Regino Serrano^{2,8}, Leire Perez-Latorre⁹, Luz Martin-Carbonero³, Sari Arponen¹⁰, Jose Sanz-Moreno¹¹, Sara De la Fuente¹², Otilia Bisbal¹³, Ignacio Santos¹⁴, Jose Luis Casado⁷, Jesus Troya ¹⁵, Miguel Cervero-Jimenez¹⁶, Sara Nistal¹⁷, Guillermo Cuevas¹⁵, Javier Correias-Lauffer^{1,2}, Marta Torrens¹⁸, Pablo Ryan^{15,19,20}, on Behalf of the U-SEX GESIDA 9416 Study¹

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Table 2. Self-reported psychiatric symptoms during and after non-injecting sexualized drug use and slamsex.

	Total sample (N = 216)	Non-injecting sexualized drug use (n = 182)	Slamsex (n = 34)	P value
3 or more dependence symptoms, No. (%)	60 (27.8)	40 (22)	20 (58.8)	.000
3 or more withdrawal symptoms, No. (%)	98 (45.8)	72 (39.6)	26 (76.5)	.000
Intense craving, No. (%)	55 (25.5)	34 (18.5)	21 (61.8)	.000
Interference with work, social, or family life, No. (%)	68 (31.5)	46 (25.3)	22 (64.7)	.000
Paranoid ideation, No. (%)	30 (15.3)	20 (11)	10 (29.4)	.004
Suicidal ideation, No. (%)	33 (15.3)	22 (12.1)	11 (32.4)	.003
Suicide attempt, No. (%)	30 (13.8)	19 (10.4)	11 (32.4)	.001
Loss of consciousness, No. (%)	33 (15.3)	23 (12.6)	10 (29.4)	.001

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220272.t002>



3 or more withdrawal symptoms

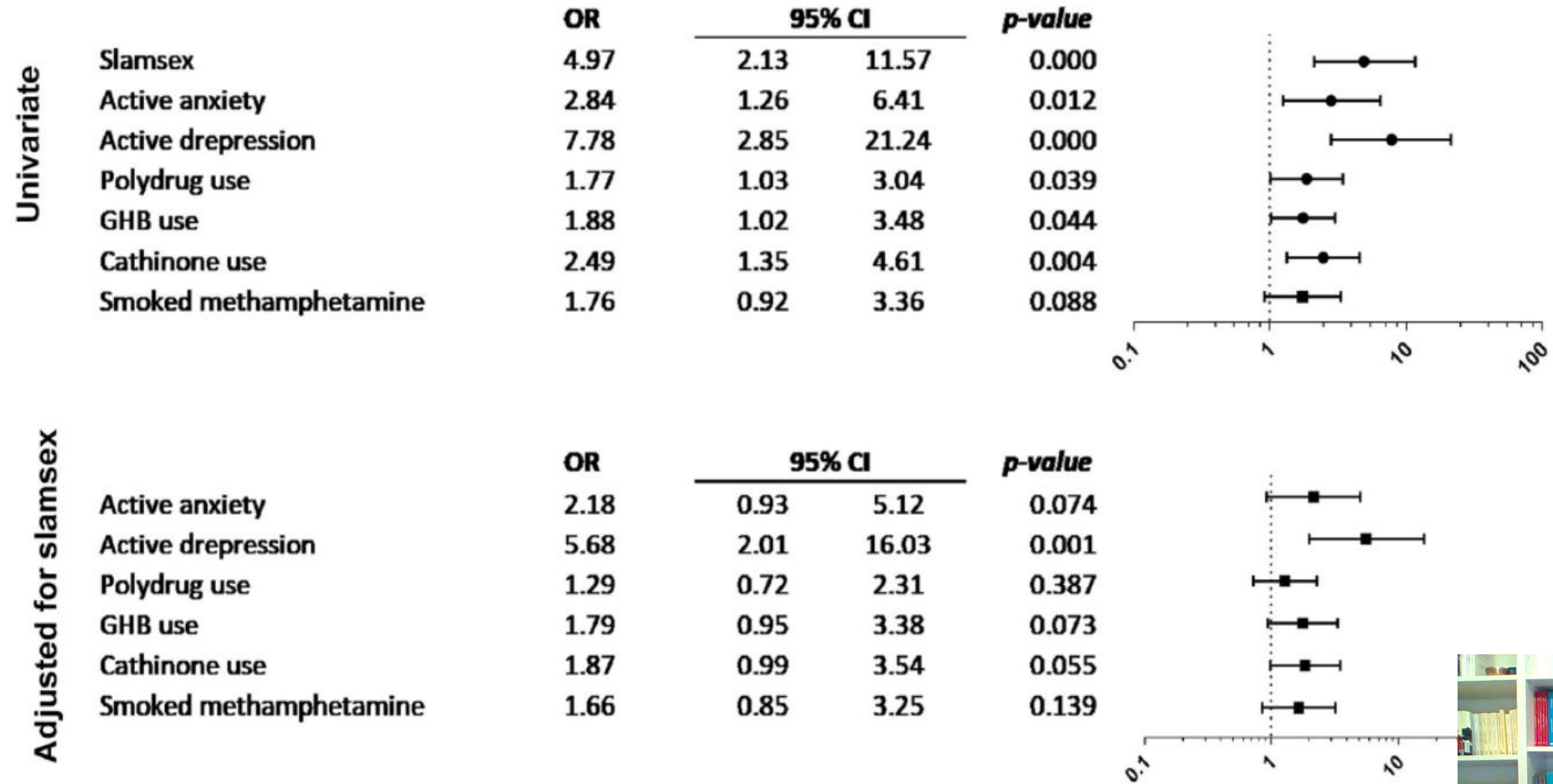


Fig 1. Association between current self-reported psychiatric diagnosis and 3 or more withdrawal symptoms.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220272.g001>



3 or more drug dependence symptoms

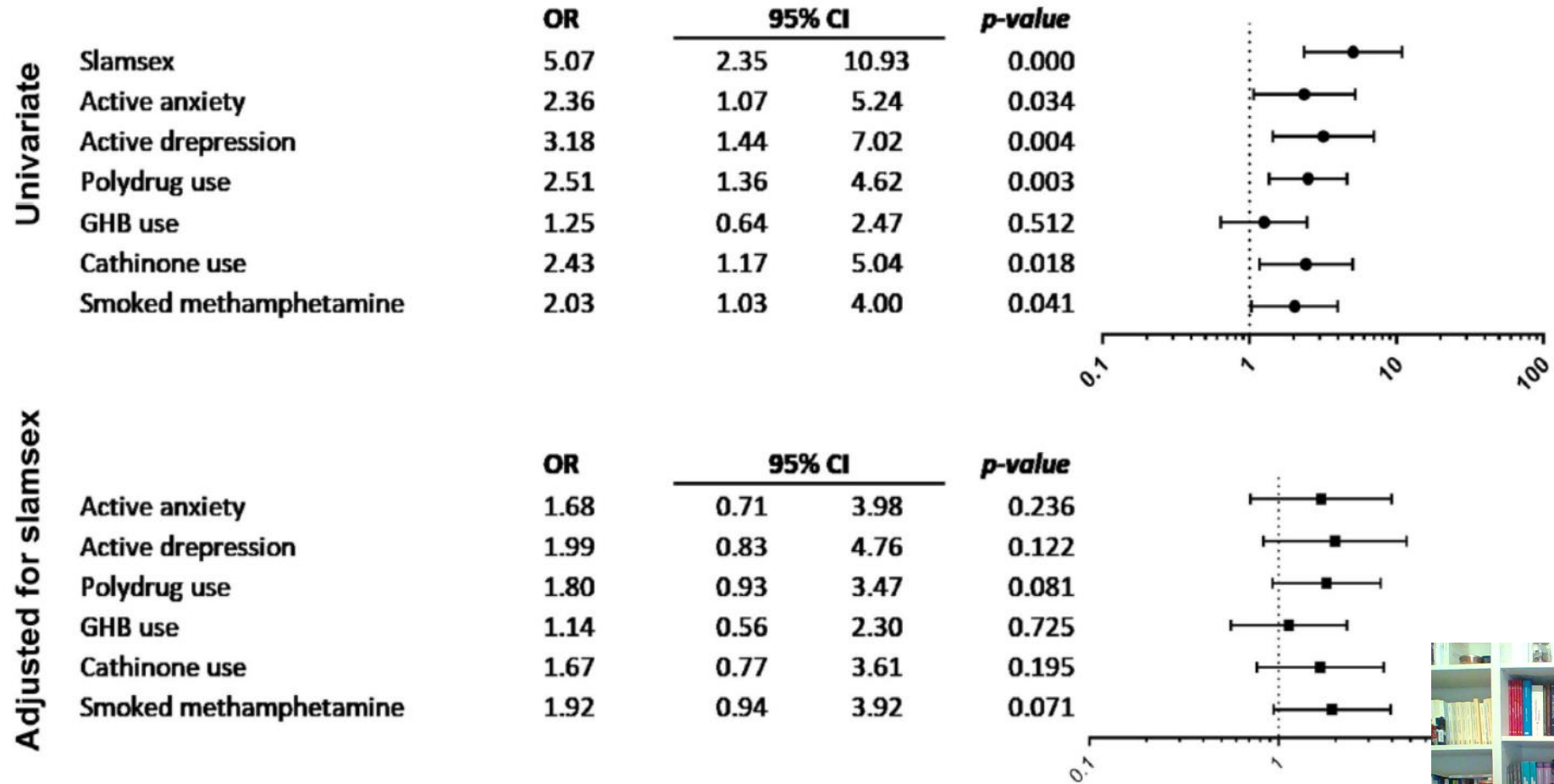


Fig 2. Association between current self-reported psychiatric diagnosis and 3 or more drug-dependence symptoms.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220272.g002>



Psychotic symptoms

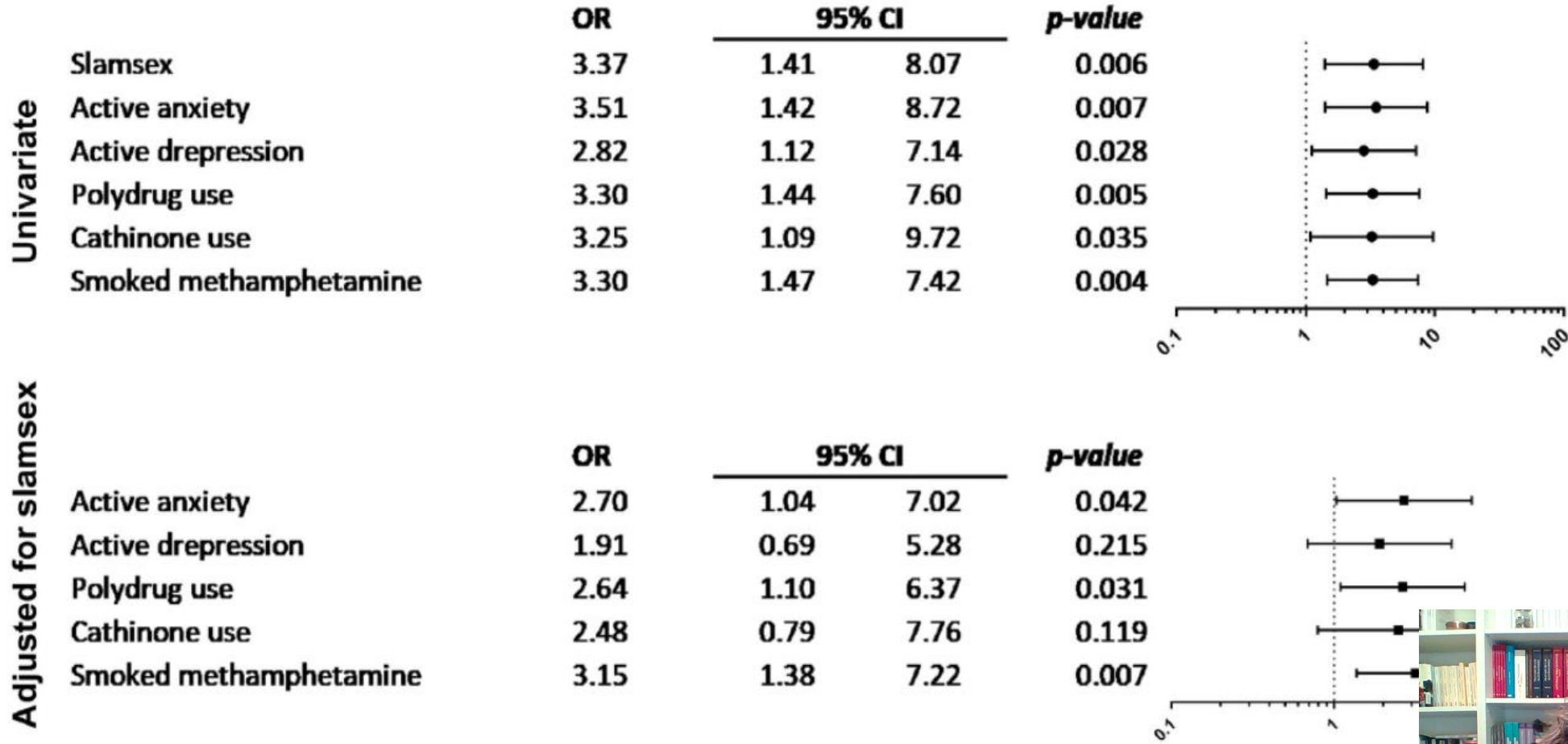


Fig 3. Association between current self-reported psychiatric diagnosis and psychotic symptoms.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220272.g003>



Suicidal ideation or attempt

		OR	95% CI		p-value
Univariate	Slamsex	3.48	1.49	8.10	0.004
	Active anxiety	3.68	1.53	8.88	0.004
	Active drepression	5.47	2.30	12.99	0.000
	Polydrug use	1.34	0.64	2.81	0.442
	GHB use	0.89	0.40	2.00	0.775
	Cathinone use	1.21	0.53	2.76	0.657
	Smoked methamphetamine	1.97	0.88	4.43	0.100
Adjusted for slamsex		OR	95% CI		p-value
	Active anxiety	2.97	1.18	7.45	0.020
	Active drepression	4.13	1.63	10.47	0.003
	Polydrug use	0.91	0.40	2.09	0.827
	GHB use	0.80	0.35	1.84	0.599
	Cathinone use	0.80	0.32	1.98	0.629
	Smoked methamphetamine	1.84	0.80	4.22	0.149

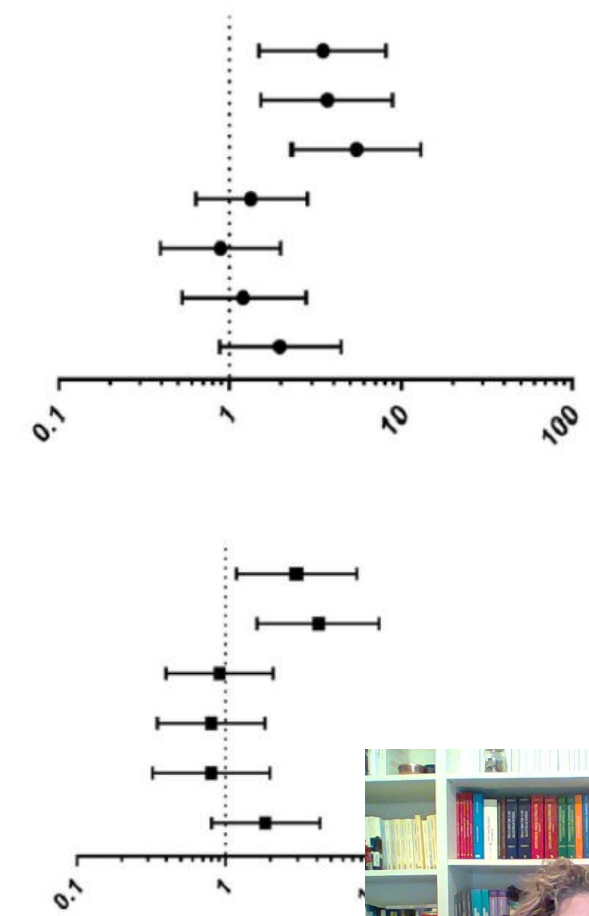


Fig 4. Association between current self-reported psychiatric diagnosis and suicidal ideation or attempt.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220272.g004>



CONCLUSIONS

- PLHIV and use drugs have higher risk of having complicated COVID-19 infection.
- The practice of chemsex is growing among MSM with HIV and has to be addressed from a multidisciplinary point of view, including psychiatrists.
- The practice of slamsex seems to be related to higher rates of severe psychopathological symptoms: paranoid delusions, suicidal conduct



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION

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